

To whom it may concern,

My name is Roger Park, I have a Bsc in Biodiversity and Conservation and contract to OEH working on the Far South Coast Koala project. It has been a privilege to work on the project for the last 8 years and to know that the data collected has helped to inform decisions about the management of the Koala population and the forests on the South Coast as a whole.

The points that I would like to raise in this submission include:

A long term commitment from Government.

Translocations.

Surveys through all OEH managed forests.

Better public information about Koala's on private property.

1. A long term commitment from Government – Koala's are slow to recover from catastrophic events such as habitat loss (including logging and development), disease outbreaks, dog attack and bush fires. It can take decades for a population to recover due to their slow breeding rate and only breeding when conditions are suitable therefor it is extremely important that there is a long-term funding commitment from government to maintain the viable populations that are already present and to facilitate recovery of populations that have the potential to do so.
2. Translocations – Through my time working as a contractor in the RGSAT program I have surveyed areas where there are suitable tree species to maintain a Koala population but where there are no Koala's known to be present. I also had the opportunity to work in Victoria where there are still large numbers of Koala's which are under threat from private forestry. I understand that translocations are a complex issue with disease risk and other factors to be taken into account but when there is vacant Koala habitat (where there has been historical records of Koalas) in one part of the country and Koala's under serious threat in another surely a solution can be found whereby some of these animals can be translocated and given a second chance. I believe that a solution can be found and that this outcome would be a win, win for everyone and great publicity for OEH.
3. Surveys through all OEH managed forests – I understand that this point could be seen as a conflict of interest on my part as I gain employment from conducting Koala surveys. There is now an exceptional data base from the RGSAT surveys that have taken place and continue to take place. Without this data management decisions would be much more difficult and that is why I believe that all the National Parks, Floral and Nature reserves managed by OEH should be surveyed in this manner. This would not only identify where Koala populations are it would also identify potentially important koala habitat and that is why I believe it is necessary to expand the program.
4. Better public information about Koala's on private property – I think it would be good for OEH to inform property owners neighbouring Koala populations of their rights and what occurs if there happens to be a Koala on their property. I raise this point because I have met some landholders that have voiced their concern that if there is a Koala on their property then (quote) "Park's will come in and lock the place up". I said that I did not believe that that would be the case but a bit more information to landholders from OEH will always be beneficial.

Thank you  
Roger Park