

Dear Minister Upton and Office of Environment and Heritage,

I am urgently calling on you to ensure koalas are protected into the future, so that the world's favourite animal is not lost from NSW.

I am on a Wildlife Rescue Hotline in the Port Stephens area where koalas numbers are being decimated by development. There are huge contradictions between trying to keep koalas and wholesale clearing of feed and habitat trees. The development process and lack of containing the urban sprawl across the east coast of Australia will mean not just the koalas demise but many other species.

Dogs and cars are huge koala killers. All speed zones in the Port Stephens area should be set at a maximum of 70kph so people have time to stop for koalas as they trundle across the roads. There are too many 80 kph zones where people travel at 90kph or more. They do not need to go this fast.

The key to the survival of any species is protection of its habitat. I urge you to implement stronger measures to save koala habitat, including ending native forest logging on public land, improving protection of koala habitat in private native forestry, ensuring urban development does not wipe out koala habitat and reversing the recent changes to our land-clearing protections.

Under the government's new land-clearing laws, WWF estimates we could see 2 million ha of koala habitat lost via the 'Equity Code'. The \$10 million earmarked to purchase koala habitat as part of your strategy will buy only 6,000ha of land on 2015 prices. Ten farmers applying the Equity Code could clear this in a single year.

I urge you to take meaningful action to save this beloved, iconic species.

Sincerely,

Charmian Eckersley 