

Dear Minister Upton and Office of Environment and Heritage,

With extreme weather events, climate change whatever you like to call it – habitat destruction for iconic native animals like Koala is undermining what chance they have for survival even with the current plan under consideration.

We have to stop destruction of the Koala and other native animals' habitat with the wholesale land clearing and native forest logging that is going on.

I had possums and birds in my garden the previous weekend in an urban part of Dural so stressed in the 46C heat that they couldn't move and were huddled together in the shade – birds that were territorial – indian and noisy miners, peewees, butcher birds and rainbow lorikeets inches away from one another, beaks open tongues out, wings down – with a possum family distressed because their baby had fallen out of an adjacent tree. Then last weekend we had golf ball sized hail with occasional tennis ball sized pieces rip through foliage and flowers they depend on for food. The numbers of birds are significantly less this week. Just imagine the stresses on all animals in NSW in these weather extremes and their by-products of flood, bushfire the whole Dorothy MacKellar invocation – magnified for the poor Koalas with their habitats being strip mined with land clearing and native forest logging. It's not a good long term strategy for Australia to keep it's unique fauna and it looks set to happen first here in NSW if this proposal doesn't take a more wholistic view.

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

Sincerely,

Frayne Dyke-Walker 