

Dear Minister Upton and Office of Environment and Heritage,

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.

I live on the mid north coast and the amount of koala habitat lost for new housing development in and around Port Macquarie is disgusting. Developers are required to do offset work, which may involve koala tree planting, however there is no guarantee the trees will survive as usually the minimum effort is employed – ie no mulch for the juvenile trees and no follow-up watering. Even if the trees do survive, they will take 10-15 yrs before they provide suitable habitat. Where are the dispossessed koalas meant to live in the mean time? Stop clearing their habitat for housing = an influx of cars, dogs and cats.

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,

Gavin Hughes 