

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.

Koalas are one of the many iconic creatures that are currently teetering on the brink of extinction, and we should be fighting to protect them, not ignoring their plight.

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.

The equity code makes no sense. How can planting a tree or even a grove of trees in one place balance the destruction of an existing forest with its thriving ecosystem and all the plants and creatures that it currently supports? Clearing land isn't just cutting down trees, it's destroying all the animals, insects and other plantlife that co-exist with those trees.

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

Sincerely,

Jo McEwan 