

9 March 2010

The Honourable Kristina Keneally, Premier of NSW;
Minister Frank Sartor, Minister for Environment and Climate Change; and
Minister Ian Macdonald, Minister for Industry
Governor Macquarie Tower
1 Farrer Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Premier Keneally, Ministers Sartor and Macdonald

We, the undersigned groups, are writing jointly to you as Premier and Ministers responsible for the logging due to commence in Mumbulla State Forest on the Far South Coast of New South Wales, to urge your government take immediate action to save the last known koala colony in this area of the state.

According to a recent interim report released on 23 February 2010 by the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW), *Koala surveys in the coastal forests of the Bermagui- Mumbulla area: 2007-09*, there is a healthy population of koalas in Mumbulla State Forest, including young.

Given these findings, we are alarmed by the news that logging is scheduled to commence any day in areas the NSW government knows are koala habitat.

The presence of these koalas had not been identified at the time of signing the Integrated Forestry Operations Approval for these forests. However, given confirmation by DECCW that the forests do in fact provide habitat for the last remaining colony of koalas in the area, we are calling for logging of these forests to be suspended and for the area to be declared National Park.

We note recent global concern, including from the influential International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), over the status of Australia's koalas, and the listing by them of koalas as one of the species most under threat from climate change.

While koalas may be in viable numbers in some parts of their range, on the Far South Coast they are endangered, with a population of up to 50 animals. Nevertheless, recent surveys have indicated they are healthy and breeding, and the population might recover to viable levels *should their habitat be left undisturbed from logging and fire*.

Leading koala expert Dr Steve Phillips said on ABC radio recently: "We have got the management prescriptions (for koalas) wrong, especially in the South East The small area of koala habitat remaining is such a precious resource They have just got to be protected so they can continue to expand there is no longer any argument about what is important habitat".

We are asking State Government to immediately take action and protect this small, but highly bio-diverse and critical area of forests between Tathra and Bermagui. We are appealing to you, Premier and Ministers, to halt the logging and add this forest to the NSW National Parks System to protect this population of koalas from local extinction and conserve the area's outstanding biodiversity.

Generations to come would admire such a legacy.

Yours sincerely



Cate Faehrmann, Executive Director, Nature Conservation Council of NSW

and

Jeff Angel, Executive Director, *Total Environment Centre*

Nicola Beynon, *Humane Society International*

Kevin Evans, Executive Officer, *National Parks Association of NSW*

Stan Wood, Chairperson, *WIRES*

The Wilderness Society

Joan Papayanni, Vice-President, *World League for the Protection of Animals*

NSW Wildlife Council

Lorraine Vass, President, *Friends of Koala Inc.*

Suzanne Medway, Executive Director, *Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia*

John Hibberd, Executive Officer, *Conservation Council ACT Region Inc.*

Keith Muir, *Colong Foundation for Wilderness*

Gay Spies, President, *Willoughby Environment Protection Association*

John Jeayes, Honorary Secretary, *North Coast Environment Council*

Anne Lanyon, Coordinator, *Columban Mission Institute Centre for Peace Ecology and Justice*

Leonie Blain, Honorary Secretary, *Clarence Valley Conservation Coalition*

John Edwards, Honorary Secretary, *Clarence Environment Centre*

Elizabeth Hole, CEO, *Bicycle NSW*

Graeme Booth, *Sutherland Shire Environment Centre*

SERCA (South East Region Conservation Alliance)

Southern Cross Wildlife Care

Australians against the Commercialisation of Wildlife

Wapengo Watershed Association

Caroline Graham, ***Rivers SOS***

Kris Spike, NSW Branch President, ***Sustainable Population Australia Inc.***

Harold Spies, President, ***Castlecrag Conservation Society***

Maira Ryan, Secretary, ***Scotts Head Protection Group***

Geoff Brown, ***Western Sydney Conservation Alliance***

Frank Breen, President, ***Ryde Hunters Hill Flora & Fauna Preservation Society***

Jo Evans, President, ***Native Animal Network Association***

STEP

Peter Carroll, Company Secretary, ***SCRAP (School Communities Recycling All Paper) Ltd***

Wayne Olling, Secretary, ***Blacktown and District Environment Group***

Dubbo Field Naturalists and Conservation Group Inc.

Friends of the Mongarlowe River

Dodie Green, President, ***Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs Inc.***

Bill Wilkes, President, ***Goulburn Field Naturalist Society***

Halina Thompson, Secretary, ***Kangaroo Protection Co-operative***

Michael Dean, Coordinator, ***SHURE (Save Hawkesbury's Unique River Environment)***

Jacqui Keats, ***Great Lakes Environment Association***