

LETTER to Environment Minister Robyn Parker Lois Katz, 02.11.2011
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Dear Environment Minister Parker,
Below is a short history of the koala. I hope you will you read it.

The koala is found only in Australia; has been on Earth for at least 25 million years and has co-existed with humans for 60,000 to 120,000 years. Before the arrival of Europeans there were millions of koalas living in Australian forests. As late as 1865, koalas were seen on the main street in Bega. However, by the 1930's the koala was almost hunted to extinction for its fur. Now, the koala is protected but, sadly much of what is left of its native forest environment is up for sale, about 90% of which will be sold as wood chips.

Because the koala's home has been cleared and logged for wood chips for decades, the once common native icon is now rarely seen in southern New South Wales. Tragically, Bermagui State Forest, the core of the last remaining 30 to 50 koalas in southern New South Wales, is undergoing wood chip logging right now. The koala that lives in Bermagui is genetically distinct from other populations in Australia and is on the verge of extinction. Other potential koala habitat forests on the south coast of NSW that are on the logging schedule are Yurammie, Mumbulla, Murrah and Tanja.

Australia is losing its native animals at a faster rate than any other developed nation. Why does this matter to humans? Biodiversity is the key to our planet functioning properly. It is essential to pollination, (bees are beginning to disappear), good water quality and agriculture.

However, in a recent statement in NSW Parliament you said all is well because koalas like logging. Never mind that they are on the way out. Our new tourism slogan can be: Come visit the Wilderness Coast, where koalas used to live!

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