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Private Native Forestry Review
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Dear Sir/Madam

I write on behalf of Friends of the Koala Inc. (FOK), an entirely voluntary organisation widely acknowledged as the lead koala conservation group in the Northern Rivers of NSW. Our mission, which we have been pursuing since 1986, is conserving koalas in recognition of the contribution the species makes to Australia's biodiversity. Our core business encompasses: habitat protection and regeneration; licensed koala rescue, rehabilitation and release; community education; advocacy; and research assistance. We maintain a regional Koala Care and Education Centre in East Lismore, which last year rescued 368 koalas.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on how the Private Native Forestry Review can meet the objectives and scope set out in the Review's Terms of Reference (TORs). FOK's interest in Private Native Forestry (PNF) is focussed on the threat it poses to koalas generally and in the Northern Rivers Region where we operate. After having read the TORs I have little confidence that the interests of the wildlife that live in our forests are being addressed. Additionally, I cannot see how it aligns with the NSW Koala Strategy. To me, it seems clear that the TORs are prioritising harvesting with a view to industrial expansion and that recognition of the environmental values of the private forest estate are almost an afterthought.

PNF's threat to koalas has been long acknowledged, for example in the *NSW recovery plan for the koala* (2008) and the Senate's Environment and Communications References Committee report, *The koala - saving our national icon* (2011). Numerous well-documented community reports of koala habitat destroyed by non-complying operations carried out under the *Forest Operation Plan Guidelines - Private Native Forestry Code of Practice for Northern NSW* have confirmed the extent of the threat. With nearly 40% of New South Wales's remaining native forests on private land and their harvesting viewed as providing 'a key resource for the NSW Forestry Industry', plus the fact that PNF applies to any area of NSW other than those identified in section 60ZS of the *Local Land Services Act*, there is little room for optimism about the long-term outcomes for koalas. For these reasons FOK supports and commends to you EDO NSW's submission to the Review (24 January 2019) and its 25 recommendations which, if adopted, will at least give some hope for the long term future of koalas – an outcome supported by the overwhelming majority of residents.

The NSW Government's primary responsibility should surely be to protect the long-term health of all our forests and the wildlife that live in them. As the Government has locked our public forests into another 20 years of industrial logging, native forests on private land are now absolutely critical for the Koala's long-term survival in a warming world. PNF de-regulation and self-assessment will simply hasten extinction of this amazing and iconic animal, as well as all the other wildlife that inhabit these forests.

In closing, a quote from Bradley Trevor Greive (*Priceless: the vanishing beauty of a fragile planet* 2007) says it all: 'For wildlife we are both their greatest enemy and their only hope. These wonderful creatures will not argue their case. They will not put up a fight. They will not beg for reprieve. They will not say goodbye. They will not cry out. They will just vanish. And after they are gone, there will be silence. And there will be empty places. And nothing you can say will change this. Nothing you can do will bring them back. THEIR FUTURE IS ENTIRELY IN OUR HANDS'. This is the time for the government to give our koalas some hope that only it can do by adopting the EDO's recommendations in their entirety.

Yours faithfully,

Dr. Roslyn Irwin
President
5 February 2019