

**INQUIRY INTO THE STATUS, HEALTH AND SUSTAINABILITY OF
AUSTRALIA'S KOALA POPULATION
Public Hearing, Melbourne, 1 August 2011.**

QUESTION ON NOTICE to Bronte Somerset

“How many koalas are in the Bermagui Forest?”

On request from the Committee, I submit the following ANSWER:

Extract from:

**INQUIRY INTO THE STATUS, HEALTH AND SUSTAINABILITY OF
AUSTRALIA'S KOALA POPULATION**

**SUBMISSION REGARDING KOALAS IN SOUTH EASTERN NSW
Chris Allen Bega NSW**

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3.2 Current population estimates

3.2.1 Overview of population estimates in SENSW

On request from the Commonwealth's Threatened Species Scientific Committee Allen (2009) provided the following estimates of Koala numbers for known populations in south-east NSW to assist its assessment for listing the Koala as a threatened species under the EPBC Act.

STUDY AREA	LOCALITY	Min	Max	Average
Far South Coast	Bermagui Mumbulla	21	42	32
	Kooraban	Probably smaller		
	Tantawangalo/Yurammie	Probably smaller		
	Other?	Probably smaller		
NE Monaro		80	320	200
Southern Highlands (southern section)	Tolwong Plateau	100	400	250
	Broader study area excluding Tolwong	60	240	150
		160	640	400

The estimates were primarily based on the results of field surveys undertaken between 1996 and 2009. However, variations in survey method, and difficulties in assessing widely scattered, cryptic populations in forested areas meant that the above estimates were tentative best-guess assessments.

3.2.2 Koala numbers and trends in the SENSW Far South Coast

Subsequent to the preparation of the report to the TSSC, DECCW undertook an extensive Koala survey in the Tantawangalo/Yurammie area (Allen 2010). No definite Koala evidence was located at any of the 168 sites sampled, compared with more 10% of sites assessed in the study of the Bermagui/Murrah/Mumbulla forests (DECCW 2010). The results suggest the population in this former area is either extinct or close to extinction.

With the probable extinction of the Tantawangalo and Yurammie population it is now broadly accepted that the only Koala population now persisting in the Eden region is the Bermagui/Murrah/Mumbulla population to the south west of Bermagui. This population probably consists of between 21 and 42 Koalas (Allen 2009).

Immediately to the north of the Eden region Koalas are persisting in the Kooraban National Park. The results DECCW-initiated surveys, commenced in 2010, currently suggest this may only be a remnant outlier of the Mumbulla-Bermagui Koala population. Koala numbers appear to be again very low although fieldwork planned for the coming months may locate other Koala activity cells.

Allen C D (2009). Assessing Koala numbers and trends in South Eastern NSW. NSW Department of Environment Climate Change and Water.

Allen C D (2010). Koala survey in escarpment and hinterland forest to the south west of Bega 2009-10. NSW Department of Environment Climate Change and Water, Southern Zone.

DECCW (2010). Summary report on surveys conducted in 2007-2009 for Koalas in the coastal forests of the Bermagui/Mumbulla area. NSW Department of Environment Climate Change and Water, Southern Zone.