

Committee Secretary

Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts

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Concerning the inquiry into the status, health and sustainability of our koala population, which I believe is long overdue and possibly too late, I would like to make the following submission.

Concerning the iconic status of the koala it has great aesthetic appeal with tourists and visitors to our shores. According to a study carried out in 1996 (no more up to date studies mentioned) tourism revenue of \$1.8 billion was attributed to our unique koalas. Even from a purely commercial viewpoint this shows the importance of our koalas to the Australian economy.

Estimates of koala numbers vary from state to state. Here in northern New South Wales, the Tweed Coast Koalas numbers have dropped to around a mere 150 and are in serious decline.

Threats to the remaining koala habitats in the Tweed Valley are very serious. Proposed high density mini-cities the Tweed area threaten the last remaining koala corridor between south-east Queensland and northern New South Wales. Apart from land clearance and the trauma caused by these massive building projects, any surviving koalas will have hugely increased traffic flows and domestic pets to contend with.

Please help save our koalas

Chris Degenhardt