



TIMBER NSW

Forestry and koalas

The welfare and protection of koalas and the conservation of their habitat is seen as vitally important by the timber industry in NSW.

There are seven million hectares of national park and reserves in NSW covering the full range of koala habitat types.

In addition there are two million hectares of sustainably managed state forest

For decades regulated timber harvesting has occurred in almost half of the state forest areas.

The highest densities of koalas occur in an area that has supported the timber industry for over 100 years.

That area is home to large numbers of koalas which are attracted to the higher proportion of healthy regrowth trees.

In NSW we can have healthy koala populations and high quality timber products coming from the same native forests.

What is the threat?

The New South Wales Office of Environment and Heritage lists the top five threats to koalas as:

- habitat loss and fragmentation,
- habitat degradation (pests and weeds),
- road kills,
- dog attack, and
- fire.

Protecting koalas so that they can thrive means focusing on the threats that they face.

The New South Wales Government imposes strict operating conditions on timber harvesting, which along with the industry's Koala Guide ensure



that timber harvesting does not pose a threat to koala habitat.

State Forests vs. National Parks

State Forests are managed to sustainably supply forest products, and other services to the community, meeting social, environmental and economic values.

National Parks are areas that have been set aside to protect places of natural beauty, places important to Aboriginal peoples, and places that show how people lived in the past.

In State Forests, New South Wales employs ecologically sustainable forest management

At a glance ...

- The highest densities of koalas occur on the North Coast—an area that has continuously supported the timber industry for over 100 years.
- Dog attacks and vehicle strikes are two threats to koalas that are associated with urban expansion.
- Koalas often prefer State forests to National Park because these forests have a higher proportion of healthy regrowth which, to a koala, tastes much nicer.

certified to the strict Australian Forestry Standard and recognised internationally.

Koalas living in State forest are safer than those living in National Parks because of the threat of wildfire which causes immediate death and, in the long term, habitat loss.

You may ask why is this the case? National Parks have fewer fire breaks than State forests and their policies do not support regular fuel reduction burning. This means higher fuel loads which, when ignited, are more likely to lead to catastrophic wildfires like those in 2013 in the Warrumbungles and Blue Mountains.

The North Coast

On the NSW North Coast there are 2.4 million hectares of forest set aside in National Park reserves. Timber production is limited to just 415 000 hectares of State forest.

There are over 2000 operating conditions enforced by the

Environment Protection Authority many designed to ensure that koala habitat is identified and protected.

Foresters in NSW have even used a sniffer dog—the first koala dog in the world— to complement extensive koala surveys by expert ecologists.

“Allowing koalas to thrive will need a management plan that looks at all factors threatening the species.”

Maree McCaskill
General Manager, Timber NSW

Working among the koalas

One of the most appealing aspects of working in NSW forests is that foresters get to spend time in the bush, sharing the environment with koalas, echidnas and wombats. To them, a koala isn't just a picture in a book or an animal

in a zoo, it is an integral part of the environment that they know and understand.

A little known fact is that koalas often prefer State forests and private lands to National Park because these areas have more regrowth trees— with fresh leaves which are more succulent and nutritious.

The future

Allowing koalas to thrive will need a state-wide management plan. The focus of the plan should be on habitat loss from land clearing or fire as those are undoubtedly the most devastating threats.

Dogs and cars also pose a major threat being directly linked to more people living in areas that once were koala habitat.

The timber industry wants koalas to thrive and welcomes any realistic, holistic approach that supports the recovery of this iconic animal.



TIMBER NSW



+61 2 9279 2344



info@timbersw.com.au



www.timbersw.com.au

