

Public submission

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SBKN submission on the Forestry Industry Action Plan

The Sydney Basin Koala Network strongly supports an immediate end to native forest logging in NSW and a transition to a future based on sustainable plantation forestry.

Logging native forests is causing irreversible damage to our ecosystems and driving iconic species like the Koala and Greater Glider closer to extinction. It is clear that native forest logging is neither sustainable nor economical.

Koalas in Our State Forests:

Koalas live in many of our state forests, which are part of our Commonwealth's natural heritage. The devastation of Black Summer saw Koalas uplisted to endangered in NSW, and unfortunately our [2024 report on the state of koalas](#) shows that Koalas in the Sydney Basin Bioregion are continuing to be in decline.

Overall, the proportional area where koalas are found in the Sydney Basin has declined and there are fewer areas supporting long-standing breeding populations.

- The geographic extent (Extent of Occurrence) of koalas across the Sydney Basin shows an overall trend towards decline (0.75%). This represents a decrease of 35,857ha.
- The proportion of this extent which is occupied by koalas (Area of Occupancy) across the Sydney Basin shows a small but significant decline from 12.81% \pm 0.18% (2021) to 12.55% \pm 0.13% (2023).
- Areas of Generational Persistence (long standing source populations) across the Sydney Basin are dynamic, though there is an overall decrease in the number of cells of Generational Persistence between the time frames 2021 (n = 141) and 2023 (n = 125).
- Areas showing significant declines include Cessnock LGA and Wingecarribee LGA.

This is particularly concerning since many of Cessnock's koalas live in State and Private Native Forests vulnerable to native forest logging.

All Public Native Forests must be protected from logging immediately. As shown in figure 1, nearly all state forests in the Sydney Basin Bioregion contain Koala sightings. Without urgent action, koalas continue on their trajectory towards extinction. Protecting all State Forests and Public Native Forests in perpetuity is essential for reversing this decline and safeguarding the species for future generations.

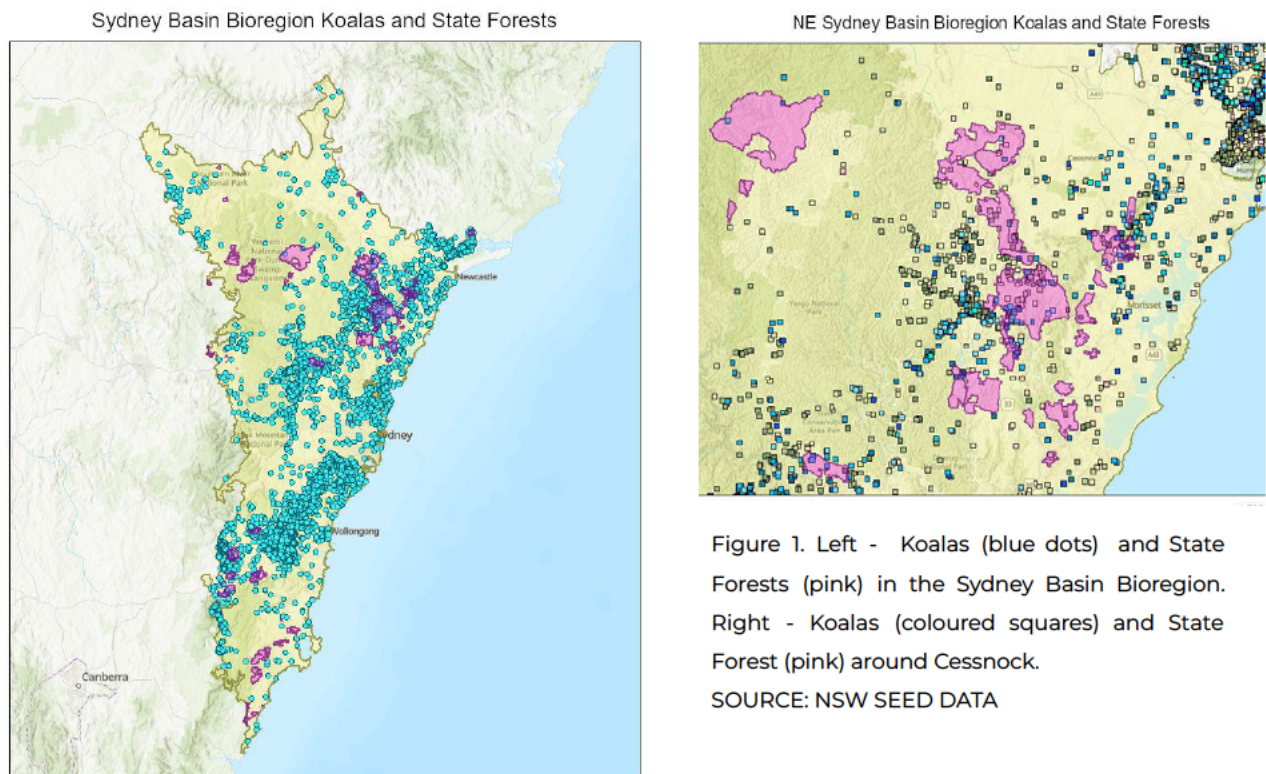


Figure 1. Left - Koalas (blue dots) and State Forests (pink) in the Sydney Basin Bioregion. Right - Koalas (coloured squares) and State Forest (pink) around Cessnock.
SOURCE: NSW SEED DATA

Economic and Environmental Costs:

The economic justification for continuing to log public native forests does not hold up. Native forest logging is costing taxpayers millions while causing permanent damage to our forests. These funds could be much better utilised in a just transition to genuinely sustainable forestry, including the retraining of workers. Furthermore, **continuing to log public native forests is ludicrous, as it directly undermines the conservation and rehabilitation efforts that the government is already spending millions on. We cannot afford to invest in restoration while simultaneously allowing destruction to continue elsewhere.**

We also implore unions in this industry to support workers in a just transition to new sustainable employment, rather than continue to lobby against public opinion on this matter.

The Importance of Healthy Forests:

Healthy forests are vital. They store carbon, clean our water, provide critical habitat, improve fire management, and offer recreational and spiritual value. Hollows that house endangered animals such as Greater Gliders, Gang Gang Cockatoos, and Powerful Owls take over a century to form. **Logging native forests directly undermines these essential functions, leading to long-term consequences that extend far beyond the immediate damage to trees and wildlife.**

The Urgency for Change:

The [NSW Biodiversity Outlook Report 2024](#) paints a grim picture of our biodiversity. **Almost all measures of biodiversity are trending down while native forest clearing continues at an alarmingly high rate.** In the Sydney Basin, habitat conditions and ecosystem diversity have plummeted. Statewide, 89% of ecosystem resilience to climate change has been lost, and only **29% of capable habitat remains. These figures underscore the urgent need to protect all remaining habitat and fast-track restoration efforts to reconnect fragmented habitat.**

A Global Responsibility:

As noted in the independent review of the BCA, "The consensus among global leaders is that the environment is now so badly degraded that biodiversity agendas must aim for more than just conservation. They must instead aim to protect, restore, and improve natural ecosystems to reverse the trajectory of decline." This aligns with the need to protect our precious native forests, which are key to halting biodiversity loss and addressing the climate crisis.

In conclusion, we urge the NSW Government to end native forest logging. Continuing to log public native forests is undermining conservation and rehabilitation efforts, costing taxpayers millions, and accelerating biodiversity loss with our own research indicating Koalas continue to decline towards extinction. A transition to sustainable plantations is the only viable path forward, both economically and environmentally.

Thank you for considering our submission.

Yours sincerely,

Jade Peace & Stephanie Carrick

[Sydney Basin Koala Network](#)



References:

SBKN ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT (2024): *STATE OF KOALAS IN THE SYDNEY BASIN, FIRST ANNUAL ASSESSMENT 2024*, Biolink Ecological Consultants, NSW.