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Dear <insert name>

We are writing to you seeking urgent action to protect endangered koalas. The situation has now reached crisis point and we fear will soon be irreversible.

We are the Directors of Koala Rescue Queensland, one of the longest established koala rescue groups. We are a not-for-profit 24 hour rescue service for sick, injured and orphaned koalas throughout Queensland.

We have dedicated our lives to rescuing and rehabilitating koalas but we recognise that our efforts alone cannot save koalas as a species. But we will never stop fighting for them.

The federal, state and local governments are at fault for the demise of the koala.

In the 1920s, a Labor government was responsible for forcing koalas to the brink of extinction by supporting a fur trade. In the 2020s, koalas face ruin once more, this time through habitat destruction and again at the hands of a Labor government. This time they will not survive.

Koalas have long been one of the biggest drawcards for Australian tourism. A unique species to Australia that can never be replaced.

The Australian Government needs to see Koalas as a national treasure, deserving of absolute protection and long-term survival. It is paramount that koalas are given more priority for funding than foreign aid and immigration.

The government has as duty of care to protect native species. Do not pass the responsibility to rescue organisations.

Koalas need the government to step up and provide the duty of care that they deserve.

Our Observations

Koalas are in serious decline, suffering from the effects of habitat destruction, domestic dog attacks, bushfires and road accidents.

At Koala Rescue Queensland, we have observed habitat loss over the last ten years exceeding what we have ever seen before.

The biggest land clearing in Australia is Moreton Bay, Gold Coast and Redland Bay. However, we are also observing significant land clearing for development across the Sunshine Coast Region (supposedly a biosphere), Redland Bay, South Burnett, Kingaroy and Toowoomba.

By far, the biggest issue and the root cause for koala population decline is loss of habitat. In our travels throughout the state, we observe rapid development in recognised koala habitat. This is proven where there are large areas of land clearing directly next to koala crossing signs. I have enclosed a number of photographs as evidence (just a few examples, there are many more across the state).

There are areas across Queensland where, years ago, we would be called to frequent rescues. Now there are no rescues as there are no koalas.

In addition, it is increasingly difficult to locate and harvest food for the koalas we have in care and often not feasible to release rehabilitated koalas back to the areas they were rescued. In some cases, we find ourselves rescuing the same koala repeatedly as its home range habitat is destroyed more and more.

No amount of rescue and care will resolve the root cause of the issue. Koalas need safe, protected areas to thrive.

Government Acts and Legislation Are Inadequate

1. In February 2022, the Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth) (EPBC Act) and the Nature Conservation Act 1992 (Qld) (NC Act) upgraded the status of the koala from 'vulnerable' (status assigned in 2012) to 'endangered' in Queensland.

It is clear that any actions taken since the previous 'vulnerable' status have not been effective in improving koala populations and the situation has worsened significantly. A new approach is needed.

2. The Sunshine Coast was declared a Biosphere by UNESCO in June 2022, joining the existing Noosa and Great Sandy Biosphere Reserves.

A biosphere is an international site of excellence, recognised by UNESCO as an area of natural beauty where people live and work. Biospheres are places, where active conservation sits alongside responsible development and people living sustainably.

If this is the case, there ought to be an active conservation plan that includes protection of koala habitat from development.

3. There is currently no legislation, anywhere in the country, that protects koalas and koala habitat in Australia.

4. Application approvals for land clearing for development, agriculture and logging in koala habitat continue at an alarming rate.
5. Development applications approved as far back as 20 years ago are not revoked or reviewed despite knowingly destroying the habitat of endangered species.
6. Planting new trees elsewhere as an offset does not nearly compensate for the losses incurred. Mature food trees will take decades to replace. At the current rate, koalas do not have decades to survive.

Action Required

At Koala Rescue Queensland, we propose a number of actions that need to be taken urgently:

1. Continue to plant new trees but prioritise the protection of existing trees. There is simply not enough time for new trees to grow to maturity before koalas risk becoming extinct.
2. Void and re-assess all pre-approved development proposals that are in or adjacent to known koala habitat. Historical approvals prior to February 2022, when koalas were listed as endangered, need to be revisited.
3. Do not allow development in areas where specific koala food tree species are present.
4. Put a moratorium on logging of native forests.
5. Introduce significant fines and jail time for individuals and companies who destroy koala food tree species.
6. Do not allow any quotas or permits that exempt developers from prosecution if they kill a koala during their operations.
7. Put incentives, support and planning in place to regenerate farmland with native species.
8. Establish land for koalas; large land parcels over which koalas hold the land title in perpetuity.

In the immediate term, the Government should support and fund koala organisations to establish and run sanctuaries and breeding programs in dedicated locations, protected from predators. When the above 8 actions are in place, these sanctuaries will assist to repopulate koala habitat across Queensland. Koala Rescue Queensland has identified possible locations and would be keen to discuss with you further.

Koalas are at crisis point. They need our help.

We look forward to your written response and would welcome a face-to-face discussion.

Yours Sincerely,

Ray and Murray Chambers

Koala Rescue Queensland

Photographic Evidence of Development in Koala Habitat



PHOTO A: Koala food tree species razed for sale of acreage block.



PHOTO B: New housing estate on right with limited remaining koala habitat on the left.



PHOTO C: A very large pending development that is believed to have been approved over 20 years ago.



PHOTO D: Development in a clearly signposted native animal area.



PHOTO E: Stark contrast of diminished koala habitat on the left and large new housing estate in destroyed koala habitat to the right.



PHOTO F: Destruction of the last remaining pocket of koala habitat in one area.



PHOTO G: One of many McDonalds and service stations approved to be built in known koala habitat.