

EPBC Amendment Bill (Save the Koala) - Landscape Foundation of Australia Submission



Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications
Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600
ec.sen@aph.gov.au

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Save the Koala) Bill 2021

The **Landscape Foundation of Australia** (LFA) welcomes the opportunity to make this submission to the inquiry into the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Save the Koala) Bill 2021*.

The LFA is a not-for-profit organisation engaged in the protection, restoration and sustainable management of landscapes and ecosystems in Australian cities and towns. LFA pursues its purpose through support for community-based projects, research and scholarships/fellowships. The LFA is a member of the Restoration Decade Alliance which is a consortium of peak Australian national environmental organisations that are committed to jointly supporting the aims of the United Nations Decade of Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030.

The LFA is pleased to confirm its support for the Bill that proposes to amend the EPBC Act to significantly increase habitat protection for koalas, which are listed as threatened under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act), by a combination of actions that include:

- Establishing a statutory test that would ensure greater specificity for determining whether an action has or will have or is likely to have a significant impact upon koalas for the purposes of ss18 and 18A of the Act
- Providing a statutory definition of *koala habitat* and *koala habitat tree*
- Prohibiting the Minister from approving an action “consisting of or involving the clearing of koala habitat”
- Removing the exemption for Regional Forest Agreements from application of the Act pursuant to Part 4, Division 4, Subdivisions A and B in respect of forestry operations that “*have, will have, or are likely to have a significant impact on koalas*”.

We have reviewed the detailed submission lodged by WWF-Australia to the Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications on the 15 April 2021, which is publicly available on the Australian Parliament website.

The LFA is pleased to confirm our full support for the WWF submission and the recommendations presented in it. These include implementation of the reforms recommended in the Independent Review Report prepared by Professor Samuel, which involve:

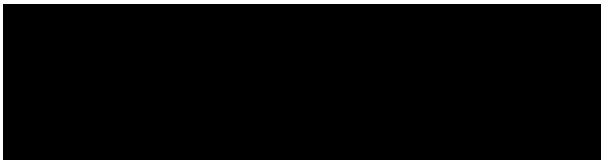
- Establishing new legally enforceable National Environmental Standards that would underpin any streamlining measures.
- Establishing new independent bodies, including a National Environment Commissioner and statutorily independent Commonwealth Office of Compliance and Enforcement.

EPBC Amendment Bill (Save the Koala) - Landscape Foundation of Australia Submission

- Improved transparency and accountability of decision makers, including establishing limited merits review.
- A stronger focus on actively restoring the environment through improved environmental planning and facilitating the scale of investment needed to deliver the required high quality and sustainable outcomes.
- A 'quantum shift' in the data and information systems underpinning national environmental law, including establishing a statutory data custodian.
- A major review and amendments to biodiversity offsetting provisions; and
- Dramatically reshaping and improving Indigenous participation and cultural heritage protection.

The LFA strongly urges the Senate Standing Committee to proceed with adoption of the Bill to facilitate decisive action to protect endangered koala populations.

Yours sincerely,



Noel Corkery

Director

Landscape Foundation of Australia Ltd

ABN 4765 2846234



website: <http://www.landscapefoundation.org.au>

