

# Coastal logging threatens koalas

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Logging and prescribed burning of NSW South Coast forests will push the region's koalas to extinction, a government scientist has told a Senate inquiry.

Chris Allen, an ecologist with more than 20 years' experience in forest conservation, told the Senate environment committee inquiry only "one population of less than 50 koalas now persists in the region".

The six-month inquiry, initiated by Australian Greens leader Senator Bob Brown, is investigating the future survival and increased protection of Australia's koala populations.

In a personal submission, Mr Allen said there was a "profound contradiction" between koala habitat conservation requirements and contractual logging obligations under a regional forestry agreement.

Under the federal and state endorsed agreement, "tens of thousands of cubic metres of sawlogs" can be felled within or near koala habitat in the Mumbulla, Murrah and Bermagui forests.

"My view is that anything less than a very significant reduction in logging activities in these forests will probably lead to the extinction of the koala population," Mr Allen said.

Felling of koala feed trees caused "a massive interruption" to food supply, and degraded habitat "for many generations".

Mr Allen's submission said fuel reduction burning in logged areas was an additional threat, because of difficulty in controlling flame height in dense regrowth areas.

**For more on this story, including details of a Brisbane couple's two-year battle to ensure a suburban development complied with planning codes and environment protection laws, see the print edition of today's Canberra Times.**



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