



This Koala was killed by forestry machines in a Regional Forestry Agreement area.

How did this Koala get chopped in half?

All levels of Government are shirking their responsibility when it comes to the loss of Australia's iconic Koala's habitat.

The creation of Regional Forestry Agreements (RFAs) almost two decades ago made forestry management in RFA areas a state or territory responsibility.

As a result, forestry activities conducted under an RFA are exempt from *Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act* (EPBC Act) obligations, effectively



eliminating any Federal protection for the Koala.

Local councils don't like to get involved.

While State Government does attempt to regulate forestry activities, in most instances this regulation is inefficient and enforcement is weak.

Koala Protection Act

The Australian Koala Foundation has already conducted research into forestry and Koalas. We identified simple measures, such as shelter corridors, which could dramatically reduce the slaughter. The problem is that the forestry industry has chosen to ignore the research, and allow the Koala deaths to continue. Under a Koala Protection Act (KPA), industry will be required to show that their operations have a benign impact on Koalas.

Sadly, the only time anyone acts in the Koala's best interests is when shamed into action by the media.

RFAs were brought into place because industry wanted security. Koalas were not even considered, then or now. RFAs are supposedly up for review and renewal, but they are words, not actions. Forestry conservation groups continue to highlight breaches, but nothing changes.

This Koala, cut in half, was in a RFA area. AKF believes this system is completely broken and the KPA must override forestry agendas.



The 'Queensland Clause'

Why does Southeast Queensland has a specific clause in the EPBC Act, which ensures Koalas do not have any Federal protection from forestry activities?

When the EPBC Act was introduced, a clause was included to exempt areas like South East Queensland, where negotiations around an RFA were already in progress (Section 40). When that RFA was signed, it would presumably introduce protections for Matters of National significance. The problem is, that agreement was never signed. And yet, the exemptions remain.

The AKF has made enquiries to the Federal Government in regards to clearing for forestry that is having a significant impact on habitat critical to the survival of the Koala. These enquiries resulted in a statement that "the Department is unable to intervene in this matter." And this exemption holds for any lands used for forestry in South East QLD, not just those areas that were proposed for forestry activity under the RFA that was never signed.

Basically Queensland got singled out with a special deal – all the benefits of a RFA (no EPBC Act oversight), with none of the costs.



Photo © Janet Murray

Is endorsed wood really Koala-friendly?

The Australian Koala Foundation has lost confidence in forestry product certification.

Certification should foster a safe habitat for our Koalas; protection of biodiversity, species at risk and wildlife habitat is a core aim.

Yet industry members fail to demonstrate any commitment to Koala management, and forestry operations continue to kill Koalas in routine logging.



The AKF supports good forestry operations with strong sustainable practices that demonstrate this commitment in an accountable and transparent way. Our experience suggests that current practice in the forestry industry is a long way from this ideal.

Companies fail to monitor Koala deaths. Companies do not release their koala monitoring data to auditors. Consultation means little more than a phone call so they can 'tick the box.'

Koala Protection Act

A Koala Protection Act (KPA) would require forestry to properly fulfil their obligations towards Koalas. This would give legal certainty and restore confidence in endorsed wood products.

Use of Blue Gum Plantations by Koalas
 (a report to stakeholders in the plantation industry by the Australian Koala Foundation)
 June 2008

Logos at the bottom include: ITC, Central Victorian Plantations, HVP plantations, EPFL, Hancock Natural Resource Group, Midway, Timbercorp, and GPFL.

AKF recommendations were ignored by industry.

