

This email accompanied the FOK 2012 submission fwded to plibersek Oct 2023

From: Dale Viola

Sent: Monday, October 30, 2023 7:31 AM

To: Minister.Plibersek@dcceew.gov.au <Minister.Plibersek@dcceew.gov.au>

Subject: RE: "Wallum" 131 Lot subdivision 15 Torakina Rd Brunswick Heads (DA 10.2021.575.1)

Dear Hon. Minister for the Environment, Tanya Plibersek,

I am writing on behalf of Friends of the Koala (FOK), a not-for profit organisation founded in 1996 committed to conserving koalas, preserving their habitat, increasing awareness and advocating for koalas. FOK is the primary licensed koala rescue and rehabilitation organisation, and only dedicated koala hospital, in the NSW Northern Rivers.

In 2013 a proposed development application was approved by the NSW Dept of Planning for a 131-lot residential subdivision known as Bayside Brunswick Estate, more recently renamed as Wallum Estate, at Brunswick Heads in Byron Shire. FOK understands this development is awaiting a subdivision certificate and was never referred to the Federal Government for consideration as a controlled action for a matter of national significance under the EPBC Act.

In 2011 FOK made a submission to the NSW Dept of Planning not supporting the proposed development (attached), due to the potential detrimental impact on koalas in the proposed site and nearby areas. At least some of the koalas in the local area are likely to use the Eucalyptus trees on the site as part of their home range and/or as a corridor to reach other habitat, eg in the Tyagarah Nature Reserve.

Koalas are already facing various threats, such as habitat loss, disease and climate change. Further development in their habitat exacerbates these threats and could lead to a decline in what is a low density population, with numbers constrained by habitat available and ongoing losses from threats.

The proposed development should not be determined without a proper assessment and FOK urges you to exercise your powers and intervene on this development which has the potential to have a severe impact on the already endangered east coast koala population, not to mention other vulnerable species of fauna and flora that inhabit the Wallum Heathland and other vegetation on the site.

The situation for koalas in the area is now made even more dire by the extensive bushfire (730 ha) in the Tyagarah Nature Reserve, which has burnt the majority of koala habitat in the Reserve and adjacent burnt areas. This fire has burnt from Byron Bay north into the proposed development area close to Bayside Brunswick.

There has been an official sighting of a koala moving slowly from the bush in this area on Thursday 19th October at 9pm. This koala was likely displaced or escaping from the bushfire in the Nature Reserve. FOK, with the Northern Rivers Wildlife Emergency Response Team, and in collaboration with the NPWS, will be deploying field search teams onto the fireground and in adjacent and nearby unburnt areas as safe to do.

The above proposed development contains matters of national environmental significance that have been identified in the area and FOK requests that you, as Minister for the Environment, consider this development as a controlled action under the Environment Protection & Biodiversity Conservation Act, 1999 (EPBC Act). Your decisive actions are of utmost importance

in ensuring a comprehensive and unbiased assessment of this Development Application. Thank you for your prompt attention to this critical matter.

Should you require additional information or to discuss these comments further please contact me on phone email.

Yours sincerely,

Dale Viola

Area Coordinator Byron Shire

Friends of the Koala

0428 872154