

KOALAS IN BLUE GUM PLANTATIONS – THE FACTS

1. Currently, there is estimated to be approximately 47,000 Koalas residing in blue gum plantations in the southwest of Victoria. As plantations are now maturing, around 8,000 to 10,000 hectares of these blue gums are being cut down annually.
2. It was thought blue gums were not preferred by koalas when the plantation industry was established in the 1990s however it was soon evident this was not the case when koalas took refuge in plantations. As native habitat has gradually disappeared, blue gum koalas have become dependent on blue gum plantations for survival.
3. In the process of harvesting plantations koalas are being killed and horrifically injured. The industry is self-regulated therefore there is no way to verify exactly how many koalas are killed, injured, or displaced during harvesting across the whole plantation industry. There are no compliance checks by the conservation regulator. The responsibility to report accurately or truthfully lies solely with plantation workers and management staff.



4. If a koala is spotted during a harvest, plantation companies are required to leave 9 trees around a koala. Once the koala moves out of these trees, they are also cleared.
5. There is no legal requirement for plantation owners to retain any habitat for koalas once a plantation has been felled, even when there is no other surrounding habitat. Displacement of koalas from plantations is often in itself a death sentence but these deaths are hidden. Following plantation clearings, wildlife carers see record numbers of displaced koalas, many hit by cars, some found exhausted and in such poor health that they need to be humanely euthanised.



6. Translocation of koalas from plantations to other habitat in the southwest is not supported by DELWP due to the large number of koalas that would likely require translocation and more generally, the lack of suitable habitat across Victoria. Since 1985, most koala translocations have occurred as a means of protecting native habitat, not koalas.
7. The Labor and Liberal Governments have known about these issues for decades. Rather than address the welfare issues for koalas and find solutions, they have chosen to ignore them and have continued to support the timber industry.

Urgent action needs to happen to save the 47,000 koalas currently at risk of dying because of harvesting activity in Victoria.

The Ballarat Koala Advocacy group have contacted Victorian MPs about these issues. Check out our scorecard to see our suggestions for priority government action and, see who supports these actions. For fact checking and more information, please go to www.bwrac.org.au/news/campaigns/