

Peter Elzer's statement re Fasting for Forests – 28 May 2025

My name is Peter Elzer. I have lived in the globally unique and amazing landscapes of the Great Koala National Park for many decades. I have previously served the future of my community by being involved in local campaigns to protect Look-at-me-now Headland from being blown up by Coffs Council for a sewage outfall and at Chaelundi to protect the best examples of old growth tall Eucalypt forest communities and the quintessential Australian arboreal fauna like Greater Gliders with the full complement of apex predators like quolls and powerful owls that depend upon them.

Today Look-at-me-now is a place of great beauty and wonder cherished by locals and renowned around the world for being the interface between Moonee Beach Nature Reserve protecting the land and the Solitary Islands Marine Park protecting the adjoining sea.

At Chaelundi National Park this very day are spectacular old growth forests that we stopped the destruction of by the Forestry Commission of the time. These forests house the highest densities of Endangered Greater Gliders in the region. They are a key component of the Great Koala National Park that Chris Minns and Penny Sharpe promised to protect along with 176 000ha of State Forests making a world class conservation reserve of over 315 000ha in order to stop our Koalas (the biggest colonies in NSW) going extinct.

I am a father and grandfather. I know that the forests of the Great Koala National Park nourish and sustain my family with clean water and that they hold carbon stores that keep the climate and humanity safe. I know that these forests make it rain and keep our region beautiful, desirable and desired. I want my family to be safe and my descendant's to be safe and nourished by these forests. This is why I am now so angry at all the destruction of the Great Koala National Park that me and my community have seen in the two years and two months since Minns and Sharpe were elected in March 2023. It is making me and my family and our community and the future of all much less safe.

I have seen with my own eyes loss of habitat in my own town, caused by urbanisation, where once observances of Koalas, by school children almost daily on their schoolgrounds were a common occurrence, which, sadly, are now devoid of native wildlife.

I have seen healthy beautiful forests full of Koalas destroyed by the Minns Government at Pine Creek, Newry, Little Newry, Boambee, Orara East and Wild Cattle Creek State Forests. These forests and the Koalas within them are badly degraded and in places gone because of the extreme industrial logging practices and clearfelling of Forestry Corporation. Left in their place are weedy wastelands that get burnt and poisoned by Forestry. This is why I give my time and peaceful and non-violent efforts to forests.

Most recently I have been stood over by Forestry Corporation staff seeking to annihilate the many Koalas on the sacred Country of Garlambirla and Garby people (both Clans of

the Gumbaynggirr Nation) at Mt Coramba west of Coffs Harbour. I am aggrieved by this because we know that Mt Coramba is a critical part of the Great Koala National Park. This all makes no sense to me because we know that Forestry Corporation lost \$29 million last year destroying our native forests and has now lost another \$15 million in the last six months alone. This money should be serving our community, not destroying our future.

The Dean of Law at our regional university SCU, David Heilpern has publicly outlined the many reasons why NSW Forestry Corporation is a criminal organisation, with ultimate responsibility accurately falling on the state Minns Labor Government.

Because of the insanity of Forestry Corporation spending taxpayer-money extinction logging and destroying the Great Koala National Park at Mt Coramba, (a sacred forest that was promised to be protected by Chris Minns and Penny Sharpe), I am left with no other option than to fast at Parliament. I now do this to draw attention to this absolutely unacceptable and completely crazy situation in the physical presence of those in the NSW Government who bear ultimate responsibility. I am now compelled to act with my personal liberties and my bodily functions to sit at Parliament to seek an end to the crazy destruction being wrought on the Great Koala National Park by Forestry Corporation and to demand that Chris Minns honour his promise and immediately protect the full 176 000 hectares that he promised would be protected.

--