



**Australian
Koala
Foundation**

A.C.N. 010 922 102

AKF calls for oversight of new Koala cull

19/9/2015

The Australian Koala Foundation (AKF) is calling on the Victorian Government for increased oversight of the further Koala culls proposed for next week in the Cape Otway region.

AKF Chief Executive Deborah Tabart OAM has written to Victorian Environment Minister, Lisa Neville, outlining her concerns after receiving a 'courtesy call' from the Department of Environment.

'Every question I asked during that call regarding mapping, guidelines, outcomes, research protocols, ethics and habitat management was met with no response,' Ms. Tabart said.

To be rolled out next week, the Victorian Government's plan includes trial translocations of Koalas, sending dependent Joeys into zoos, sick Koalas being euthanised after assessment, and fertility control for female Koalas in the region.

'Ms. Neville has said there have been consultations with a panel of animal welfare and ecological experts, and we would like to know whose advice has been sought.

'We'd like to know why our world-class scientists with mapping prowess weren't included.

'It seems the best way for me to ensure that the Victorian Government has oversight is for my scientific team to be included in this assessment, and an independent TV Show, like *60 Minutes*, to accompany us all,' she said.

AKF is also concerned about the Department's lack of mapping expertise, and wants to know how release sites are chosen for translocations.

'Lack of maps and understanding of how Koalas use the landscape over the past 50 years is exactly the reason that these problems are coming up,' Ms. Tabart said.

Ms. Tabart is also calling on the Minister to make research and ethics protocols publicly available, and says that an assessment of 400 Koalas in 10 days can neither be thorough nor meaningful.

'We've also been told that orphaned Joeys that are healthy will be put into zoos.



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'This puts a nice spin on the fact that during the last cull, healthy Joeys were euthanised along with their extremely sick mothers.

'This could be seen as sanitising the removal of healthy Koalas from the bush for commercial gain.

Ms Tabart said the AKF is totally opposed to fertility control in Koalas, and has asked the Minister to provide ethical and research protocols for this action.

'I don't believe these protocols exist,' she said.

AKF says the current situation in the Otways is the result of severe habitat mismanagement.

'Rather than looking at the trees and landscape and solving problems that way, the Victorian Government is instead killing Koalas.

'We've offered our advice over the years, unfortunately to no avail,' she said.

'Perhaps this time, with the world watching, next week's actions will be more respectful.'

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For interview opportunities Deborah Tabart OAM – 0407 750 668

For a copy of the letter sent to Lisa Neville contact Rebecca Andersen – 0431 711 835 –

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