



**Australian  
Koala  
Foundation**

A.C.N. 010 922 102

**23 May 2016**

**Press Release: Koala Protection Act sent to Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull**

The Australian Koala Foundation (AKF) has written to Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, Opposition Leader Bill Shorten, Nationals Leader Barnaby Joyce and Greens Leader Richard Di Natale today to request their support for a Koala Protection Act.

The Koala Protection Act is a piece of national legislation that has been formulated by the AKF in consultation with legal teams in Australia and overseas focusing on protecting Koala habitat. Current legislation focuses on the Koala itself but not their habitat.

A draft of the Act was enclosed, along with a Statutory Declaration for all leaders to sign prior to the election that states that they will seek to support the Koala via this legislation should they be re-elected.

CEO of the AKF Deborah Tabart OAM said that the Act is based on the USA's Bald Eagle Act that brought the Bald Eagle back from the brink of extinction.

She said as Australia's national icon, the Koala needs the same strength of purpose.

"It is not our intention to offend the leaders by requesting they sign a Statutory Declaration, but rather a determination borne of frustration over the AKF's 30-year experience," said Ms Tabart.

"Since 1988 when I was appointed as CEO of the AKF I have had conversations and correspondence with the who's who of Australian politics; Environment Ministers at the Federal level and Premiers at the State level."*[see notes below]*

Ms Tabart said the number of Environment Ministers in each State and the Mayors of the 320 Councils in Koala Habitat that she has also corresponded with is too high to remember.

"All of them have a case to answer regarding the destruction of Koala habitat on the eastern seaboard. With the next Parliament I am going to seek a Senate Inquiry to investigate the role of each and every one of them with particular reference to their relationship with development and other industries that have wantonly killed Koalas."

The AKF endured a Senate Inquiry in 2012 that did list the Koala in Queensland, New South Wales and Canberra under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act. This did not include the state of Victoria.

"I have now signed off on the Koala Protection Act," Ms Tabart continued. "The legal team said that it will be politically unfavourable – that says to me it will work to save Koalas and their habitats."

"I can assure you that the AKF will not negotiate one point on this Koala Protection Act. We believe the plight of the Koala is dire and the Senate Inquiry proved that the EPBC Act is too weak to stop the declines. Strong action is needed to ensure the survival of the Koala for future generations."



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### Notes for editors

Since 1988 Deborah Tabart OAM has had correspondence with the following Environment Ministers regarding the protection of Koalas:

Graham Richardson (Labor), Ros Kelly (Labor), John Faulkner (Labor), Robert Hill (Liberal), David Kemp (Liberal), Ian Campbell (Liberal), Malcolm Turnbull (Liberal), Peter Garrett (Labor), Tony Burke (Labor), Mark Butler (Labor), Greg Hunt (Liberal)

And the following Premiers:

- Queensland: Mike Ahern (Nationals - Premier 1 December 1987 to 24 September 1989); Russell Cooper (Nationals); Wayne Goss (Labor); Rob Borbidge (Nationals); Peter Beattie (Labor) and his Deputy Premier Terry Mackenroth; Anna Bligh (Labor); Campbell Newman (liberal) and his Deputy Premier Jeff Seeney; Anastacia Palaszczuk (Labor)
- New South Wales: Barrie Unsworth (Labor - Premier until 25 March 1988); Nick Greiner (Liberal); John Fahey (Liberal); Bob Carr (Labor); Morris Iemma (Labor); Nathan Rees (Labor); Kristina Keneally (Labor); Barry O'Farrell (Liberal); Mike Baird (Liberal)
- Victoria: John Cain Jr (Labor); Joan Kirner (Labor); Jeff Kennett (Liberal); Steve Bracks (Labor); John Brumby

### About the AKF

The Australian Koala Foundation (AKF) is the principal non-profit, non-government, self-funded organisation dedicated to the conservation and effective management of the wild Koala and its habitat.

The AKF was formed in 1986 and will be celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2016. Since its founding and under the direction of Chief Executive Officer Deborah Tabart OAM, the AKF is a well-known, global organisation with a strong track record in strategic Koala research, conservation and community education with a huge focus on Koala habitat mapping.

In 2012, the Koala was listed as 'vulnerable to extinction', under Australian Law: the EPBC Act. This was the result of endless lobbying by the AKF and its team.

savethekoala.com

Why Australia needs a Koala Protection Act -

[www.savethekoala.com/sites/default/files/docs/2016Imagine\\_an\\_Australia\\_with\\_no\\_Koalas.pdf](http://www.savethekoala.com/sites/default/files/docs/2016Imagine_an_Australia_with_no_Koalas.pdf)



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