Deborah Tabart OAM, is affectionately known as 'the Koala Woman', and heads up the Australian Koala Foundation. Recognised around the world as the Koala’s most passionate advocate, she works with government, individuals and the community to deliver on AKF’s vision for a future where humans live in harmony with Koalas and their habitat. Deborah has transformed the Australian Koala Foundation into an internationally recognised scientific organisation and leading voice for Koala conservation.

In 2008 Deborah received one of Australia’s highest individual honours, the Order of Australia Medal (OAM). She believes the country’s decision to award her with an OAM signals a positive shift in community awareness of the indispensability of healthy, functioning ecosystems to sustain all life.

“This recognition shows the increasing importance of protecting our koalas and the world’s natural environment. I plan to use the honour to raise the profile of our cause further and encourage the community, the government and businesses to do everything they can to lend a hand.”

In her lifetime, Deborah is determined to see the enactment of a Koala Protection Act and the establishment of Koala conservation zones where people live respectfully with neighbouring Koalas and other wildlife. With the courage of communities, individuals, and our political leaders, Deborah is convinced AKF's vision is achievable.