



Australian  
Koala  
Foundation

A.C.N. 010 922 102

EMBARGO : 20 November 2008

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## Now That's a Real Bear!

***... That is what "Koala Woman" Deborah Tabart OAM will be saying when she sees her first Polar Bear in the wilds of Canada in November.***

Ms Tabart is swapping hemispheres to see how the koala can help save polar bears from the effects of global warming at Polar Bear Point, Churchill from the 12<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> November.

The two iconic species have shared solutions for their survival.

"Unless the forests of the world are protected, and in our case koala forests, the polar bear's ice will continue to melt," Ms Tabart said.

"Under the Kyoto Protocol, existing forests have no worth despite the fact that they are the most valuable carbon sinks in the world.

"Except rarely in the third world, carbon trading means funds only flow to reforestation or afforestation, meanwhile in Australia, the most valuable trees are getting chopped down faster than ever. No wonder so many countries signed up to the Kyoto Protocol – they can continue to log their own forest with impunity," Ms Tabart said.

According to new research from the Australian National University, eucalyptus trees, including koala food trees, are extremely carbon rich.

"Enormous amounts of carbon on the east coast of Australia should be protected to restore the natural balance of the planet, protecting koala habitat means saving the world's biodiversity and slowing ice melts for the polar bear's habitat," Ms Tabart said.

"When I began at the Australian Koala Foundation twenty years ago, we never thought we'd be entering the global warming world, but now we're in the thick of it.

"Our science is proving extremely valuable especially because of our database of 60 000 trees. Accurate measurements of existing trees will be essential for a realistic carbon market and I don't really think there is another organisation on this planet that has a data base of this size. I am only just starting to realise its potential. It was originally gather for the Koala Habitat Atlas – our award winning mapping project.

"The world's forests are more valuable alive and full of biodiversity, than destroyed for development," Ms Tabart said.

Deborah will be visiting the polar bears at Polar Bear Point between November 12 and November 19 with renowned Polar Bears International President, Mr. Robert Buchanan.

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media release



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San Diego Zoo Curator Carmi Penni suggested the partnership.

“Both AKF and PBI, even though focusing on specific iconic species located on opposite sides of the Earth, are similar in their efforts to both address and modify human attitudes towards the global crisis of rapid climate change and subsequent global habitat degradation which, if left unchecked, will lead to an unprecedented decline in the quality of life for the human species. AKF and PBI offer better alternatives and choices for humankind,” Mr Penni said.

“Robert and I have a joint vision of protecting our beautiful species that I think will gain global momentum. I feel very privileged to have been invited to this unique place on earth,” Ms Tabart said, “The polar bears will thank the koalas for this!”

To find out more about the Australian Koala Foundation, visit [www.savethekoala.com](http://www.savethekoala.com).

- ENDS -

#### Interviews:

##### **Deborah Tabart** **CEO Australian Koala Foundation**

Contact Sophia Walter at the Australian office on 011 617 3229 7233, or by cell on 011 614 1299 6158 or email [sophia@savethekoala.com](mailto:sophia@savethekoala.com).

Deborah is available at

- San Francisco (8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Nov)
- Vancouver (10<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> Nov at the Vancouver Club, ph: 604 685 9321)
- New York (20<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> Nov at Hotel Mela, ph: 212 710 7000)
- D.C. (22<sup>nd</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> Nov)
- Cornell University (24<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> Nov)
- Los Angeles (29<sup>th</sup> Nov – 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec at Bayside Motel, ph: 310 396 6000)

Or contact Ms Amy Frey, Director Friends of the Australian Koala Foundation on 202 320 9926 to contact Deborah if unavailable at the above.

##### **Robert Buchanan** **CEO Polar Bears International**

Ph: 813 335 3585

##### **Carmi Penny** **Curator San Diego Zoo**

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