



Australian
Koala
Foundation

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Study Shows Western Koalas in Steep Decline

Preliminary surveys in Western Queensland are showing koala numbers have declined since the big drought of 2002-03 according to an Australian Koala Foundation (AKF) funded study by the University of Queensland.

AKF CEO Deborah Tabart OAM is visiting the field sites west of Charleville this week to see for herself the declines in the region.

The University of Queensland project leaders, Dr Clive McAlpine and Dr Leonie Seabrook, are aiming to understand koala habitat dynamics and changes in distribution and are including comparative studies with research conducted in the same region during the 1990s and with research of eastern koala populations.

Early results indicate the koala population has contracted to the watercourses.

“The national koala population is in such steep decline and it is interesting and sad to see what is happening in western Queensland.

“We are concerned about climate change on these western koala populations,” Ms Tabart said.

Ms Tabart sees the benefits of the project as two-fold, for the landowners as well as the koalas.

“This is an incredibly important part of the food bowl of Australia and if this research finds that koalas are declining because of increased temperatures and other climate change related factors, the implications for farmers will also be exposed,” Ms Tabart said.

The AKF and The University of Queensland team look forward to meeting anyone in the area interested in the research and hope that the community will record their koala sightings on the AKF website, www.savethekoala.com.

“This is a big country, so we need all the help we can get from the locals and we want to cooperate with the community on this problem.”

Ms Tabart will be in Charleville from the 15th to 18th September and is available for interview. Dr McAlpine and Dr Seabrook are also available for interview.

- ENDS -

- **Interview opportunities: Deborah Tabart OAM, ph 0407 750 668
Dr Clive McAlpine and
Dr Leonie Seabrook, ph 0458 788 848**
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