



Australian
Koala
Foundation

A.C.N. 010 922 102

media release

***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE ***

Page 1 of 2

**Wednesday November 11, 2009
SCIENTISTS URGE KOALA LISTING**

The world's leading koala experts have agreed the koala population is in trouble and should be listed as vulnerable under the Australian Federal Government's EPBC Act.

As part of a process which could see the species listed as vulnerable by September next year, 20 of Australia's leading koala scientists met yesterday with the Government's Threatened Species Scientific Committee head to review the plight of Australia's koala population.

Except for two koala populations in Victoria (Cape Otway and the Strathbogie) and one in South Australia (Adelaide Hills), Australian Koala Foundation (AKF) scientists who attended the meeting, said there was a general consensus that the koala was in dire straits along the east coast of Australia and should be listed.

After being briefed on yesterday's proceedings, AKF chief executive officer Deborah Tabart is convinced the Australian Government has no definitive data to counter AKF data and as a result Environment Minister Peter Garrett should list the koala immediately.

When AKF scientists asked the Government to provide research data in relation to the east coast koala population, she said by and large the Government managers could not identify either the size of field sites or estimates of the koala population.

AKF research, which has reviewed 80,000 trees across 1,800 field sites, estimates the population to be as low as 43,000 and no higher than 80,000.

"It is obvious to me after a briefing by our scientists in the room yesterday that Minister Garrett is now under immense pressure to list the koala," Ms Tabart said.

"As a matter of urgency and as the Federal custodian of the koala, Minister Garrett must use his "precautionary powers" under the EPBC legislation to step in and protect this species.

"If he does not, then it shows that there are other sinister or hidden agendas for him not to.

"The AKF is now convinced the Australian Government has no definitive data to counter what we put on the table.

"The world must remember that our data comes from actually looking up into the trees - 80,000 of them over a twenty year period.



Australian
Koala
Foundation

A.C.N. 010 922 102

media release

***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE ***

Page 2 of 2

"If Mr Beeton believes that he or the Minister can replicate that amount of field work either by December this year or September 2010 - the date Mr Garrett repeatedly cites as his final decision date- in the words of the famous Australian movie "they're dreamin"."

Minister Garrett's Threatened Species Scientific Committee (TSSC) will meet on December 1 this year.

"By this time the chair of the committee, Associate Professor Bob Beeton, should have plenty of time to evaluate what he heard yesterday and advise the Minister to list the koala as vulnerable," Ms Tabart said.

"Minister Garrett - if you want to counter what AKF is saying, then it is time for you to get out into the bush and have a look for yourself.

"I challenge you to visit anywhere you like in the Australian landscape and show me why you should not act upon your powers.

"The Australian Koala Foundation has done the hard work, now it is your turn."

For more information, please visit www.savethekoala.com.

- ENDS -

- **Interview opportunities: AKF CEO Deborah Tabart OAM
Ph: 0407 750 668**

(Deborah will be in Melbourne today and tomorrow for TV interviews)