



The Hon Greg Hunt MP

Minister for the Environment

MC15-010512

Ms Deborah Tabart OAM
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Koala Foundation
GPO Box 2659
BRISBANE QLD 4001

26 AUG 2015

Dear Ms Tabart

I refer to your email of 5 March 2015 concerning the euthanasia of koalas in Victoria. I regret the delay in responding.

The Australian Government is committed to the protection and recovery of the koala, one of Australia's iconic species. The listing of the combined koala population of Queensland, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory as a threatened species under national environmental law, provides such protection. Populations in Victoria and South Australia are large and broadly stable and hence did not meet the listing criteria.

The Australian Government is working with state governments, including Victoria, to implement the National Koala Conservation and Management Strategy which identifies actions to conserve koalas across their natural range. One of the objectives of the strategy is to manage overabundant koala populations to stabilise or reduce koala numbers.

I acknowledge your concerns regarding Victoria's euthanasia programme undertaken in Cape Otway. I understand that these koalas were euthanized for welfare reasons and to protect habitat in areas where translocation and reducing breeding through the use of contraceptives are not viable strategies. I have written to my counterpart in Victoria, the Hon Ms Lisa Neville, Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water, expressing concern at the management practice and asking for further information on the decision process used. In response, my Department will be informed about the results of any further health assessments undertaken by Victoria as well as future management options proposed.

As the koala is not listed under national environmental law in Victoria and the state has day-to-day responsibility for the management of its koala populations, you may wish to contact the Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning regarding concerns about the conservation and welfare of Victorian koalas.

Thank you for writing on this matter.

Yours sincerely

Greg Hunt