

Koala taskforce slammed by groups

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A special Queensland government taskforce set up to conserve koala populations will only produce bandaid solutions, a member of the taskforce says.

Wildlife Preservation Society Queensland spokesman Simon Baltais, who is one of about 20 people on the taskforce, said unless growth was controlled in the state's southeast, koalas would continue on the path to extinction in that area.

The taskforce is expected to meet on Monday to finalise recommendations on koala conservation ahead of a review of the South East Queensland Regional Plan in October.

Conservation groups, developers, councils, the Environmental Protection Agency, primary industries and natural resources departments form the taskforce that was established earlier this month.

Mr Baltais said previous urban plans have not stopped the biggest threat to koalas, residential and infrastructure growth, and he did not expect this plan to be any different.



"I think we'll be able to strengthen legislation and apply bandaid solutions to give us breathing space, but ultimately if you want to preserve koalas and everything we value, such as less crowded beaches and roads, then the population has to be stabilised," he said.

Australian Koala Foundation chief executive officer Deborah Tabart said she refused to join the taskforce, believing it to be a smokescreen by a government more interested in keeping developers content.

"I am concerned that the state government is trying to manipulate the national strategy by being seen to be doing something about the dire state of koalas in Queensland," Ms Tabart said.

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"I've read 700 post-mortems of urban koalas and I can tell you, a lot of these koalas are simply starving to death."

Ms Tabart said she was lobbying the government to provide comprehensive and transparent mapping of all koala habitat in Queensland rather than the current maps, which she said did not reveal koala habitat being removed for infrastructure and housing.

The taskforce was announced ahead of a federal government review of the National Koala Conservation Strategy and the implementation of a new South East Queensland Regional Plan.

The Queensland government funds the surveying and mapping of additional koala habitat as part of a program established in 2006.

AAP