



### Australian Icon: Just a Con.

Deborah Tabart OAM, CEO of the Australian Koala Foundation says the political and corporate leaders of this nation are paying lip service when they say they understand the iconic status of the Koala and the 'special' place it holds in the hearts of Australians.

"If they did understand how important the koala is to our nation, then how come logging, habitat loss, disease, dog attacks and car collisions are allowed to wipe them from our landscape?" Ms Tabart said.

"Since white settlement, our Federal laws have never stepped in to protect our species that they claim is iconic of Australia."

"Bogus rhetoric about supporting our biodiversity, the koala and achieving 'balance' are just words in hollow documents and I cannot wait to tell the Senate, or more importantly ask the Senators, why isn't this stopped?"

"I am tired of how easily science is ignored while our Minister for the Environment extends the date for a decision to protect the koala. It is shocking really. Ministers have the power to take a precautionary approach and it never happens. You have to wonder why?"

Ms Tabart said it is time the Australian public took notice of governments' empty promises and manipulative public relations that suggest koala numbers are sustainable.

"Sadly, Government does not have data to match ours and like children they pretend they do. The joke is they have to be dismissive of the massive amount of work achieved by our organization to keep face."

Tabart has long argued that the plight of the koalas is a reflection of what is happening with the Australian bush.

"The degradation of Australia's natural environment, the reduction of arable land, the increasing dependence on finite resource extraction – issues that directly affect every Australian – are inextricably linked to koalas."

"Everywhere I go when asked to help koalas I find that to fix that problem you have to look at the bigger picture. The koala is just a jigsaw piece in a very flawed puzzle."

"The koala is a barometer of the overall ecological and environmental health of Australia, so it's time we started thinking seriously about the koala as a symbol for what is being lost."

The AKF's submission is no. 25 and can be found at <http://bit.ly/gQtIzz> or [http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/ec\\_ctte/koalas/submissions.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/ec_ctte/koalas/submissions.htm)

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