



Carbon and Koalas Collide

Governments have short memories and only plan for the next election cycle. That is ever present as the Australian Government continues to put our natural resources and wildlife at risk, according to the CEO of the Australian Koala Foundation (AKF), Ms. Deborah Tabart OAM.

“For nearly twenty five years I have seen the Australian Government making the grave mistake of undervaluing our forests. How in the heck can you sell forests for wood chip for as little as \$6.90 per tonne?,” Ms Tabart said.

“When you consider the damage that removing natural habitat does to native wildlife, especially the koala, Australian trees should be given a higher value by the Government,” Ms Tabart said.

In Copenhagen, the AKF presented the view that our forests were worth more alive than dead, but it fell on deaf ears. With the carbon debate in full swing, it is still hard to get any Government to recognize that carbon is in the bank, in an old growth tree.

According to Ms Tabart, one fully grown Australian Eucalyptus the size of a telegraph pole contains 3.7 tonnes of carbon, which would be worth \$129.50 on a carbon trading market, at the 2009 Government figure of \$AU35 per tonne. The AKF estimate it would take approximately 7400 saplings over nearly a hectare of land to replace this carbon.

Ms Tabart says this means that selling trees for woodchip is not only socially, but economically undervaluing our environment.

As suggested in the AKF's submission to the *Senate Inquiry into the status, health and sustainability of the koala*, Australian forests need to be recognized as valuable carbon sinks.

“Giving our trees a correct dollar value per tonne of carbon means they can be fairly traded in the future, and is the only way both the Australian economy and habitat will endure the most minimal amount of suffering possible.

“Using a carbon trading scheme is overall a much more effective and an intelligent long term solution for Australia,” Ms Tabart said.

Ms Tabart emphasised that destroying Australian forests is not only extremely detrimental to Australian flora and fauna but also to the very functioning of our society.

She said that cutting down large amounts of trees will not only worsen the effects of global warming and kill the wildlife they house, but will also ruin all the other services they provide to on a day-to-day basis. This includes water purification, erosion control, sources of pharmaceutical and industrial products.

“These services are numerous and irreplaceable natural resources that would cost a massive amount of money to be replaced by manmade devices and machinery.

“All the government is interested in is short term economic gain. They have no real long term vision or solutions for Australia or its wildlife,” Ms Tabart said.

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media release