



Koalas Need Protection from Cruelty

According to the CEO Of the Australian Koala Foundation Deborah Tabart OAM koalas are in need of a watchdog that ensures they are not treated cruelly.

“When I read post mortems that say ‘wasted’ and you realise that they have probably starved to death, you have to think if this was a cat, dog or a sheep someone would be either charged or pursued in the courts” said Ms Tabart.

“When Frodo was shot, the Minister comes out guns roaring and says the full force of the law will follow, but what about the insidious slow death of animals living in the Australia bush that is under siege from unruly development”.

Ms Tabart says that those who kill koalas by destroying their habitat should be brought to justice in the same way those who torture domestic animals are.

“In my whole 24 year history at this Foundation, I have never seen one person, in any forum prosecuted for this slow form of annihilation.

“If someone was torturing and killing domestic animals at the rate koalas are being displaced and killed by development they would be investigated and brought to face charges.

“Developers and the State Governments that allow them to destroy koala habitat, therefore killing koalas, need to be held accountable for their actions”, said Ms Tabart.

“Ironically in New South Wales you can get a permit to ‘take koalas’, which sort of exonerates you if you kill animals in the bush, but this is a real loophole for the protection of all species in the bush”.

Ms Tabart went on to say that the media would sensationalise cruelty to domestic animals on this scale but the plight of the koala goes relatively unreported.

“How do we expect the koala to be protected when no one is held accountable for their dire predicament not only legally but also publicly”.

The statements come after the AKFs submission to the *Senate Inquiry into the Status, health and sustainability of Australia’s koala population* in which Ms Tabart outlined numerous recommendations to save the koala including providing a list of trees for an immediate moratorium on destruction.

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The AKF’s submission is no. 25 and can be found at <http://bit.ly/gQtI ZZ> or http://www.apf.gov.au/Senate/committee/ec_ctte/koalas/submissions.htm

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media release