



Who is the Koala's Custodian?

A landmark Senate Inquiry may answer the question of koala custodianship could establish who is responsible for the deaths of koalas.

Deborah Tabart OAM, CEO of the Australian Koala Foundation believes there is no level of Government that takes full responsibility for the protection of the koala, or more importantly its habitat.

"If you can imagine 25,000 cats and dogs being starved to death, ripped apart by predators, or run over by cars over a lengthy period, you would imagine that "someone", could find "someone" to take responsibility," Ms Tabart said.

"Not when it comes to our Australian icon."

What exists is a vicious cycle of poor policies and lacking legislation that leaves the Koala in critical danger.

The Federal Government passes responsibility to the States who pass the chore to local councils Ms Tabart explained.

"Local councils protest to State Governments about limited resources and expertise in wildlife management. However state Governments report back to the Federal Government that everything is under control," Tabart said.

Ms Tabart asks the Federal Government a question: "If everything was under control, then how come there are hundreds of dead animals found every week across Australia?"

"When a developer cuts down a koala tree and the animal is killed because it is homeless and starving, nothing happens."

"It is the view of the Australian Koala Foundation that the Australian Federal Government, who has the required recourses, should declare itself the custodian of the koala and ensure its protection."

That is the solution being tabled by Ms Tabart as the Senate investigates who is responsible for the protection of the species during an inquiry into the status, health and sustainability of the Australian koala.

'This is one simple solution that could come out of this Inquiry. "Someone" saying I will take care of the koala. At the moment it just falls between the stools.

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

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- **Interview opportunities: Deborah Tabart OAM, ph 0407 750 668**