



Australian
Koala
Foundation

A.C.N. 010 922 102

14 September 2011

Page 1 of 1

Is the Australian Government prepared to sacrifice northern Koalas for inbred southerners?

“One could, perhaps cynically, argue that the Federal Government’s Threatened Species Scientific Committee (TSSC) has in effect ruled they are comfortable with the loss of all koalas from Queensland and New South Wales because there are sufficient animals in Victoria to ensure the long-term survival of the species”, states Deborah Tabart OAM CEO of the Australian Koala Foundation (AKF).

Ms Tabart made the statement in a letter to the Senators overseeing the Senate Inquiry into the health of Australia’s Koala Population.

Tabart is convinced the TSSC is taking the view that the koala should not be listed nor protected under the federal EPBC Act.

“It is easy for the TSSC to take this stance and constantly criticize AKF science, but after these hearings it is clear that our Governments cannot produce a clear and concise view of their own; it appears the greatest threat to the koala is in fact the dissembled information that comes out of Government Departments.

“Whatever the numbers, this is all ‘fiddling while Rome burns’”, said Ms Tabart. AKF has consistently argued there are less than 100,000 koalas left in Australia. I think the average Australian would be shocked to see how petty the arguments have been when dealing with such an important icon”.

Ms Tabart wrote the letter as a right of reply response to the TSSC’s answers to questions taken on notice during the Senate Inquiry. In her letter Ms Tabart notes that the TSSC thinks the AKF have failed to produce the necessary science to support their argument.

“[If the AKF haven’t got the numbers right] we have to then wonder why the Australian Government and its agencies have not done this work before over many decades, if this is such an impediment to listing”, said Ms Tabart.

Ms Tabart went on to say that if it were correct that the AKF have no science to support their argument then the Foundation would be happy for the millions of dollars in funds they have raised for koala research to be returned by the Universities who received them.

“This is a clear fault of the scientific process. Because we fund individuals and their name appears on the papers with only a cursory acknowledgement of funding, it appears that AKF has not contributed. It is shocking really”, said Tabart.

- ENDS -

- Interview opportunities: Deborah Tabart OAM, ph 0407 750 668
- A copy of the letter is available at http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/ec_ctte/koalas/submissions.htm and is number 33 under the heading Answers to Questions on Notice

Public Relations, Ph: 07 3229 7233
Email: akf@savethekoala.com

media release