

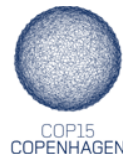


Australian
Koala
Foundation

A.C.N. 010 922 102

media release

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Koalas tell Copenhagen climate change solutions

As the world turns to the United Nations Climate Change Conference for solutions to global warming, the Australian Koala Foundation (AKF) has released groundbreaking research which proves protecting koala trees is an imperative step towards fighting climate change in Australia.

The alarming research estimates it would take trillions of saplings planted across a land mass three times the size of Australia to replace the carbon stored in the koala forests on the east coast of Australia if they were destroyed by fire or deforestation.

For AKF chief executive officer Deborah Tabart OAM, the solution to fighting climate change is simple: "Protect the forests we have".

"Research has shown that Eucalypt forests are some of the most valuable carbon sinks in the world," Ms Tabart said. "Existing forests are our 'carbon vault' – money in the bank –so what is the point of attempting to reduce our carbon emissions if the carbon already locked up, the carbon 'in the bank', is not protected?"

AKF research indicates that, for instance, a tree the size of a telegraph pole holds a ton of carbon, and if that tree was cut down, 2,000 saplings would need to be planted over an area the size of two house blocks to replicate the carbon lost.

While in Copenhagen, the AKF will table this ground breaking research and fight for the protection of the koala and native forests, in Australia and around the world.

"Conservation groups around the world know this is imperative for the future of the planet," said Tabart. "Without these trees, there will be no koalas. So once again, the beloved koala has the answer to Australia's future."

AKF questions why Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and Climate Change Minister Penny Wong have not tabled the protection of Australia's existing forests in the Emissions Trading Scheme

"Australia could lead the way in the international fight against climate change by making a commitment to protecting the koala and its habitat," said Tabart. "Unfortunately, the koala forests of Australia are being cleared because our society fails to place an appropriate economic value on them."

"Instead, our political leaders remain stuck in a robber baron mentality, actively pursuing activities which increase Australia's carbon emissions, whilst ignoring the benefits of protecting existing forests," Tabart continued. "Protecting existing forests, and repairing and restoring degraded habitats will secure and renew the carbon we already have in the bank.

"Until the Australian Government and global community recognises the environmental and carbon value of existing forests, these trees will continue to be destroyed. The writing is on the wall, protect what we have now."

For more information, please visit www.savethekoala.com.

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- For interview opportunities: Please e-mail katrina@savethekoala.com or call +61 439 997 787
- For AKF research and to review the "Carbon and Koalas Collide" document go to <https://www.savethekoala.com/carbonandkoalas.html>

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