



Australian
Koala
Foundation

A.C.N. 010 922 102

media release

***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE ***

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Tuesday December 15, 2009
AKF RESPONDS TO IUCN RED LISTING KOALA

In response to the IUCN top 10 Red listing of the koala, the Australian Koala Foundation has urged Prime Minister Kevin Rudd to use his international platform at Copenhagen to announce the listing of the koala as an endangered species under the EPBC Act and more importantly its trees.

According to AKF CEO Deborah Tabart OAM, the IUCN guidelines have worked against the koala in the past as they were too narrow.

However, she said its latest listing of the koala, as one of the top 10 species in the world to be threatened by climate change, demonstrates how dire the marsupial's fate is and that the Australian government should waste no more time in making the listing.

She said Environment Minister Peter Garrett must use his "precautionary powers" under the EPBC legislation to step in and protect the koala immediately and Mr Rudd could make the announcement at Copenhagen demonstrating to the world that Australia is committed to conservation.

"This is an opportunity for the Australian government to make a commitment to not only the protection of one of its beloved icons, but to protecting its habitat – the Eucalyptus forests.

"I don't understand how Mr Rudd can tell developing nations not to destroy their native forests, when he refuses to protect the koala forests which are in his own backyard.

"The trees in these forests store tonnes of carbon and protecting them is a vital step towards fighting climate change and reducing Australia's emissions."

In response to the IUCN's Red Listing of the koala, Ms Tabart said it had been well known that AKF did not believe the IUCN guidelines should apply to the koala because they were narrow and based upon European landscapes, not those the size of Australia.

"But the fact the IUCN Species and Climate Change report lists the koala, this demonstrates how vulnerable it is," Ms Tabart said.

"This report cited increased levels of carbon dioxide in the air causing koala vegetation to lose nutritional value as one of the major threats facing them.

"The report hopes that the species listed can help to share the Polar Bear's burden in representing the effects of climate change. But my hope is that this is another warning to the Australian government to hurry up and list the koala as a threatened species before it is too late."

AKF research, which has reviewed 80,000 trees across 1,800 field sites, estimates the koala population to be as low as 43,000 and no higher than 80,000.

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MEDIA NOTE: BROADCAST QUALITY B-ROLL AVAILABLE

- The Australian Koala Foundation has undertaken extensive research into a koala habitat in west Queensland that is severely degraded and has extensive broadcast quality footage taken of this devastated habitat which is available for media use.
- The AKF also has quality broadcast footage available from Copenhagen. Please go to www.climatetalks.tv and click on "Carbon and koalas collide at COP15" to view footage of the koala, devastated landscape and interviews with Deborah Tabart calling for Prime Minister Kevin Rudd to protect Australia's forests.
- To view the latest letter from the Australian Koala Foundation calling for Australian Environment Minister Peter Garrett to list the koala go to <https://www.savethekoala.com/pdfworddocs/media/20091202minevmaps.pdf>
- To view the IUCN Species and Climate Change Media Release and Report go to <http://www.iucn.org/unfccc/events/copenhagen/?4292/Species-on-climate-change-hit-list-named>

- ENDS -

- **Interview opportunities: AKF CEO Deborah Tabart OAM**
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