



**Australian
Koala
Foundation**

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OBAMA CALLED TO HELP SAVE THE KOALA

At the recent G20 Summit in Brisbane, the world's leaders were all smiles as they had the opportunity to cuddle and take pictures with our national icon, the Koala. Now, the Australian Koala Foundation (AKF) is calling on US President Barack Obama to help save them.

Deborah Tabart OAM, the CEO of the Australian Koala Foundation, has penned a letter to the President, in the hope that it will reach his desk and inspire him to help after his close encounter with his Koala ambassador.

“Koalas are under threat, due to continual loss of habitat. Now we are seeing increased sickness. If you do not have food, then you get sick.” Tabart said. While Australia's own leaders have no difficulty ignoring the Koala's plight, American leaders have helped them in the past.

In 1929 President Hoover ensured the survival of the Koala by not allowing the importation of furs to the US from Australia.

It is estimated that nearly 10 million Koalas were shot at that time, and is fair to say that without Mr. Hoover's actions, the Koala may have gone to extinction.

“Now,” says Tabart, “there are less than 100,000”. Can any of us imagine Australia with 10 million Koalas – how different it would be?

Obama's predecessors, Bill Clinton and Al Gore also helped by listing the Koala as vulnerable under the U.S. Endangered Species Act in the year 2000.

While Koalas are protected under Australian law, their homes and food sources are not. The AKF is working on securing a Koala Protection Act, which will ensure that no-one can cut down their vital food source.

The law will be similar to the Bald Eagle Act; which is a simple one page document protecting their national icon.

“It's hard to imagine Australia without the Koala, our own national icon,” said Tabart.

“My team needs research and legal help to enact the Koala Protection Act. Then of course political will from around the world. We hope Mr. Obama will help us,” she said.