



**Australian  
Koala  
Foundation**

A.C.N. 010 922 102

## **PRESS RELEASE: Koala Culling – Australian Koala Foundation’s Stance**

**26<sup>th</sup> May 2015**

The Australian Koala Foundation (AKF) is condemning the Victorian Government’s announcement that further Koala culls may be imminent in the Cape Otway region in Victoria.

The AKF said that although culling should never be an option for Koala management, it is important to note that they don’t want to see Koalas suffer.

AKF Chief Executive Officer, Deborah Tabart OAM said that it is easy for the Government to say that these culls are needed because of animal welfare, but the real problem is gross mismanagement of habitat over the last 60 years or more.

Tabart said the Koalas in Cape Otway were put there over 30 years ago for tourism purposes, and that the repercussions are now obvious.

‘I wonder how our Foreign Minister feels about this cull?’ said Tabart.

‘You cannot have it both ways, you either want to protect our national icon (and its habitat) and use them as ambassadors or you ruin Australia’s reputation with this shocking cruelty.

‘It is a complex problem and there are no easy fixes. At least in this instance the Victorian Minister is not saying they are pests to be eradicated. This has been the mantra from that Government in my whole professional career as the Koala Woman.’

The AKF has made a number of recommendations to the Victorian Government regarding the Koala population in the region in the past, but have said that their recommendations have fallen on deaf ears.

Tabart said that she visited the site of the cull in 2011, and issued a warning to the Government at the time. Now, she said they’re using animal welfare as an excuse to cull.

‘It is not over population of Koalas; it is under population of trees and linked habitats.

‘It is also important to ask why Koalas in this area do not enjoy the protection of the Federal Government? When the Koala was listed as a Federally Threatened Species in May 2012, Koalas in Victoria and South Australia were specifically excluded from protection,’ said Tabart.

‘I have asked Minister Hunt to reconsider that position.



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'I have a feeling the Victorian Government may now need to be totally accountable. I have seen shocking cruelty perpetrated on Koalas in Victoria, often done in secret. These lovely creatures are now under the international spotlight and the Minister even more so', she said.

Tabart encourages the Minister to investigate her Department who has continually called the Koala a 'pest', as she thinks some of the information is shocking.

'As we know, Mr Obama, Mr Putin and Ms Bishop don't think they are a pest species', she said.

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Contact [rebecca@savethekoala.com](mailto:rebecca@savethekoala.com) for a Koala habitat map of the Cape Otway region.

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