



Photo © Susie Eszterhas

## Eco-tourism is at risk

Whether munching on the gum leaves or snoozing in their trees, Australia's Koalas form the backbone of a lucrative tourism industry earning around \$3.2 billion annually.

The Australian Koala Foundation's (AKF) recent study, *The Economic Value of the Koala*, found the Koala is also responsible for generating around 30,000 tourism industry jobs.

[www.savethekoala.com](http://www.savethekoala.com)

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**This figure places the Koala on par with other major Australian tourist drawcards, such as the Great Barrier Reef (\$5.7 billion per annum) and the Sydney Opera House (\$4.6 billion per annum).**

‘Celebrity species’ such as the Koala are true Australian icons, and a critical part of the engine driving our tourism industry.

Seventy-five per cent of inbound tourists report they hope to see a Koala when making the decision to come to Australia.

But almost none of that \$3.2 billion has been reinvested into conserving Koalas and their habitat.

If the Koala becomes extinct, that \$3.2 billion per annum and those 30,000 jobs would disappear.



If we want to protect Koalas along with our tourism industry that benefits from them, we must protect Koala habitat.

The tourism industry must recognise the importance of securing the future of this economic resource and conserving the Koala in its natural habitat.

It’s now time for our Tourism Ministers to be aware of the implications of the loss of Koalas from our country, and support the Koala Protection Act.

## **Koala Protection Act**

A Koala Protection Act (KPA) will not just protect the Koala, but will also protect Australia’s eco-tourism sector.