



**Australian
Koala
Foundation**

A.C.N. 010 922 102

What is there to hide? Queensland Government should come clean on Koalas

Wednesday, 1 March, 2017

The Queensland Government must stop playing games and release historical data on Koalas deaths, Australian Koala Foundation CEO Deborah Tabart OAM said today.

Requests by the AKF for specific information on Koalas from the Queensland Office of Environment and Heritage spanning decades has been met with lethargy, indifference and outright incompetence.

The AKF continues to be stonewalled in its attempt to access vital statistics on Koala deaths, which have resulted from the impact the destruction of Koala habitat.

Attempts by the AKF to get a handle on up-to-date figures have continually been met with excuses and stalling tactics from a revolving door of Queensland Government ministers and their staff.

“If the Australian Koala Foundation had not been relentless in pursuing the Koala deaths that have been documented, Environment Minister Steven Miles would not have had to admit that the South East Queensland Koala population is now functionally extinct,” Ms Tabart said.

“We started pursuing this after the 1995 road debate where then Premier Wayne Goss lost an election and it seems history is repeating itself. I wonder whether Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk is worried that she might have a ‘Koala election’ on her hands as she heads to an uncertain electoral race? Recent requests from OEH have been met with the same old story: ‘We cannot give it to you this unless you agree to be silent’.”

Koala death statistics obtained by the AKF in the years from 1997 to 2011 show that of the almost 22,000 Koalas admitted at just three care centres in South East Queensland 10,993 Koalas died from three primary causes: dog attack (1419), hit by a vehicle (4714), disease (4839), and 2334 deaths from other causes. It is well recognised that there could be twice that number with Koalas dying in the bush and not coming into care.

“The saddest part for me is that when you read post mortems you read the word ‘wasted’,” Ms Tabart said. “If most of them were wasted I think we can assume that you have not eaten. If you do not eat, then you become sick, and then you become very vulnerable.

“It is no wonder the Queensland Government doesn’t want to hand this data over; it will show that nothing is working to protect habitats. We asked for information on Koala deaths from 2012-2017 in November 2016. We are confident the figures will be shocking and I am confident the Government has everything to hide.”

The call comes as details of the draft SEQ Regional Plan (2005-2026) come to light; plans that would further place at risk an already vulnerable species where we can see that Koala habitat is being cleared at twice the rate of other landscapes.



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AKF mapping data from 1788 to the present day show an unsustainable level of Primary Koala habitat in the area of the SEQ Regional Plan. 'Primary' habitat refers to a 'suite' of trees containing the most nutritional source of food for Koalas.

AKF expert mapping shows that Primary Koala habitat is down to just 23.9 per cent. So as the most nutritional source of Koala food declines, so begins the chain of events that lead to Koalas becoming susceptible to disease and vulnerable to attack, and, as made clear above, a further decline in an already vulnerable species.

Link: [Koala habitat changes since 1788 – South East Queensland Planning Area](#)

"They are complex charts but they paint a grim picture," Ms Tabart said.

"As a result, I will again call for a moratorium on the clearing of any Koala habitat in South East Queensland until this Government understands the impact on a now functionally extinct Koala population. No other measure than protecting trees will make the grade."

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