



**Australian  
Koala  
Foundation**

ACN 010 922 102

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

# **Australian Koala Foundation has lost faith in the political system to protect Koalas without the Koala Protection Act**

**Thursday 12 May 2022**

Australian Koala Foundation (AKF) is making a final plea to voters to realise that their political leaders and an incoming Government needs to support the Koala Protection Act, before it's too late, as the Government's recently released Koala Recovery Plan does not go far enough!

Conveniently just 3 days prior to the election being called and the Government going into 'caretaker' mode, Environment Minister Sussan Ley released the Koala Recovery Plan – just a cool 10 years later than promised in 2012 and the Shadow Minister, Ms. Teri Butler was equally cavalier about the plight of the Koala.

AKF Chair Deborah Tabart OAM, said the Koala Recovery Plan does not go far enough. It has no legislative power and does not cover Koalas in Victoria or South Australia; the Koala Protection Act would cover all Koalas across all tenures.

"We've waited 10 years for this Koala Recovery Plan, the exact time it took for Koalas to go from 'vulnerable' to 'endangered' and conveniently the Environment Minister released it just 3 days before going into 'caretaker' mode – No doubt a strategic ploy to pass the buck to the incoming Environment Minister, the 15<sup>th</sup> of my time at AKF, and worse still ensure that Australians had little time to review and rebut the plan," said Deborah.

The Recovery Plan has no new funding attached to it, the \$74 million has already been splashed around in promises, photo ops and announcements by the Government ahead of the election.

The Recovery Plan calls for fine-scale Koala habitat mapping, which AKF has spent over three decades engaging the very best scientific minds to develop detailed habitat mapping, population data and carefully considered solutions to save the Koala. Despite many attempts to work with successive Governments, AKF has been met with little more than a 'standard response' letter.

The Recovery Plan does little to tackle climate change or talk about how it will actually stop the bulldozers ripping through Koala homes. Our forests are under continual onslaught and nothing, but a specific piece of legislation, will halt the clearing. The Australian Government does not think large enough for this recovery, they continue to monitor sites that have Koalas, rather than thinking 50-100 years ahead.

Of course, the Plan does come with a big BUT, "*Implementing this recovery plan is subject to budgetary and other resource opportunities and constraints affecting partners*" - there we have it, the *get out of jail free card* and why nothing but the Koala Protection Act will truly save our beloved Koalas and their trees.

The Koala Protection Act requires no funding, just strong legislation that works! The Koala Protection Act is a revolutionary piece of legislation which will change environmental law

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forever by proactively protecting Koala habitat. The Koala Protection Act is firm but fair and any industry that is afraid of its powers should not be in business.

Whilst the AKF acknowledges that the Greens have put a Bill in the Senate to protect the Koala – it is still linked to the not fit for purpose Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation ACT 1999 (EPBC ACT) and they too should consider supporting the Koala Protection Act.

So, Mr Morrison and Mr Albanese now is the time for you to show the Australian public what your respective future Governments will do to save the Koala. The Koala Protection Act is written and ready to be tabled into the Parliament as soon as the new Government is elected on the 21st May, will you support it?

### **About the Australian Koala Foundation:**

- The Australian Koala Foundation (AKF) is the principal non-profit, non-government organisation dedicated to the long-term conservation and effective management of the wild Koala in Australia.
- Over 80% of the Koala's natural habitat has been destroyed since white settlement of Australia, and almost none of the remaining 20% is protected. The AKF's proposed Koala Protection Act aims to change this.
- Since its founding in 1986, the AKF has grown from a small group of people interested in researching koala disease, to a well-known, global organisation with a strong track record in strategic koala research, conservation and community education.

To find out more about AKF's plans to save the Koala, visit [savethekoala.com](http://savethekoala.com)

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