



**Australian  
Koala  
Foundation**

ACN 010 922 102

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **The Koala does not have time to wait while Government re-writes federal laws: Australian Koala Foundation issues a stark warning to the new Minister**

**11 July 2022**

The Australian Koala Foundation (AKF) has issued a stark warning to the new Environment Minister, The Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP as she prepares to present at the National Press Club on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> July because the Koala does not have time to wait for the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act to be re-written, and insists the Koala needs the Koala Protection Act now.

“My question to The Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP, the 15<sup>th</sup> Environment Minister during my 33-year career at the Australian Koala Foundation is why is the Government prepared to wait years to re-write legislation that is deemed not fit for purpose and it is certainly not fit for the Koala. This legislation gives industry a “Permit to Take”, which is a nice way of saying “you can kill anything as you go about your business”; this is completely unacceptable at this time in history and is a relic from the past. No Koalas should be allowed to be killed under any circumstances and I am confident the public would agree with me,” said Deborah Tabart OAM, Chair of the Australian Koala Foundation.

“Koalas were listed as ‘Vulnerable’ under the EPBC Act in 2012 and a Recovery Plan is still only in Draft Form. We imagine the new Government will throw that out the window now as it was written by the previous government, so more and more delays are anticipated by the AKF. The Samuel Review deemed the EPBC Act incapable of protecting endangered species and how can anyone say it worked if the Koala went from Vulnerable to Endangered over the last 10 years. It is important to note too that the recent listing as ‘Endangered’ only applied to Koalas in New South Wales, Queensland and the Australia Capital Territory. Why would the Minister not want to protect Koalas in South Australia and Victorian Koalas? Possibly logging interests,” said Tabart.

“The Koala and thousands of other species that live in those forests need the Koala Protection Act (KPA) – it’s already drafted and only requires the Minister’s signature. This single piece of revolutionary legislation will protect Koalas and Koala habitat by guaranteeing that development and new infrastructure is designed to ensure a benign impact on their habitat.”

Koala forests cover 1.5 million square kilometres of our country, that’s 20% of the continent with thousands of species living within them. At the moment, a shocking 1,700 threatened species are listed just as Vulnerable under the EPBC Act and waiting in line for recovery plans. Environmental laws written in the last century did not have enough vision for the future. Protecting whole landscapes is essential otherwise habitats will continue to fragment as developments are approved.

“There is economic sense to protect the Koala. Assuming recovery plans can cost on average \$3 million, and the AKF has identified that more than 1,000 of these already listed species live in Koala forests it could save our Government a staggering \$3

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billion – the exact amount Koalas bring in, in tourism dollars per year, not to mention 30,000 jobs. I would encourage the Tourism Minister to sit down with the Resource Minister and do the numbers. Forestry is a dying industry and tourism a completely sustainable industry and income for Australia,” said Deborah.

“I’m sure the State Of The Environment report which the Minister will address on the 19th July will show the true extent of the irrefutable damage to our country. I just hope the Minister heeds our warning and chooses to take the appropriate legislative action that is truly needed to protect Koala habitat, before it’s too late.”

AKF has written to the new Environment Minister, offering their expertise, scientific and detailed Koala habitat mapping, population data and carefully considered solutions to save the Koala and its habitat, which they have spent over three decades compiling.

**To find out more about the Koala Protection Act and Australian Koala Foundation, visit: [savethekoala.com](http://savethekoala.com)**

***Deborah Tabart OAM, Chair of the Australian Koala Foundation is available for comment – including on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> July following the Minister’s National Press Club***

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