



Media Release

23 September 2011

Koala Inquiry Welcomed by Wildlife Carers

The NSW Wildlife Council representing some 4,500 wildlife carers, commends the work of the Senate Committee and its Report on the status, health and sustainability of the koala.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the koala fur trade was responsible for the death of several million koalas causing near extinction in many parts of Victoria and complete extinction in South Australia. Small numbers of koalas were then reintroduced creating a southern population that is generally genetically impoverished without long term genetic viability.

Queensland and New South Wales are acknowledged as the genetic stronghold of the koala however they are the states where the biggest declines in numbers have occurred. Declines of 80 per cent in some areas and even localised extinctions in other areas have been documented.

NSW Wildlife Council Chair Lorraine Vass says action in NSW must be immediate to stop the long term and widespread decline in koala numbers. "While the Senate Report's nineteen recommendations are very welcome their content is no surprise to those of our members who are working on the ground." Mrs Vass says she is pleased that the community's concerns have been heard. "Government's preparedness to enact these important first steps in improving the chances of saving koalas will be the test," she said.

The NSW Wildlife Council calls on the Australian Government to adopt the Report's recommendations. In particular the Council calls on the Environment Minister, the Hon Tony Burke to list the koala at Vulnerable under the Commonwealth's national environmental law – the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act)

The Council also calls for the cooperation of the State Government in implementing the Inquiry findings by revising and strengthening the *NSW Koala Recovery Plan* and to provide incentives for local councils to undertake and regularly revise koala management plans.

To read the Senate Inquiry Report

http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/ec_ctte/koalas/report/index.htm

Your comments in support can be sent to the email contact address shown at the bottom of the index page.

To find out more about koala care and rehabilitation in New South Wales see:

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/wildlifelicences/RehabFauna.htm>

Media contact: Chair, Lorraine Vass: (02) 6629 8388