

**Inquiry into the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment
(Retaining Federal Approval Powers) Bill 2012**

On behalf of the Australian Koala Foundation (AKF), I welcome the opportunity to contribute to the Inquiry.

The AKF fully supports Senator Waters' Bill and urges our Parliamentarians to retain Federal Approval Powers. The Report of the Senate Inquiry into Koalas, *The koala - saving our national icon* clearly demonstrated that the States are incapable of managing koalas without Commonwealth oversight provided by the EPBC Act. We commend this Report to the present Inquiry in its deliberations. As a result of that report Minister Burke was compelled to list the Koala as Vulnerable under the EPBC Act. Given the Act's limitations, there is still grave concern given many projects have already been approved prior to the listing, but if the States were to gain control again, then thousands of koalas will die as a result of rampant development and lack of environmental oversight. AKF has witnessed this carnage and in South East Queensland alone, some 25,000 koalas have been lost because of improper oversight.

Indeed, the AKF believes that now is the time to strengthen the EPBC Act, not weaken it, and more importantly provide adequate funding so that SEWPaC can adequately safeguard koalas and our environment.

Both myself and AKF CEO Deborah Tabart OAM would be happy to provide testimony to the Inquiry if requested.

Yours sincerely,

Dave Mitchell
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Australian Koala Foundation