

# Koala decision not all bad

By PETER GARDNER

WHILE the Australian Koala Foundation (AKF) is outraged the Federal Government has again delayed a decision on declaring this national symbol a threatened species, a Noosa activist is taking a more optimistic stance.

AKF founder Deborah Tabart is incensed by Environment Minister Tony

Burke opting this week to delay the outcome until February<sup>17</sup> next year.

However Noosa's Carolyn Beaton, of the Koala Diaries website said the ongoing procrastination is better than an outright ministerial "no" on a higher conservation status.

Back in September 2010 Mr Burke was asked by the Threatened Species Scientific Committee to delay his decision due to a

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— CAROLYN BEATON, KOALA DIARIES

lack of scientific data and set his a deadline for the end of October 2011.

Mr Burke said this week's delay was triggered when "significant new data was presented to the senate inquiry in relation to koala populations".

"The scientific committee hasn't had the opportunity to deal with this data. This provides the opportunity to keep the process moving."

Mr Burke said. "In addition to the new findings in the senate inquiry, new information

has become available in the year since the committee's advice.

"This includes evidence of more significant population declines than previously identified and more severe threats to the national koala population than those considered by the committee, particularly in the koala's northern range (Queensland and New South Wales)."

Ms Beaton said the senate

committee findings were significant and could provide some fresh hope for the dwindling local koala stocks if recommendations were adopted.

"We live in hope, of course, that common sense will ultimately prevail, sooner rather than later.

"We're at a stage where we have to take a win where we can get it – at least by deferring the koala hasn't got a 'no'." Ms Beaton said.