

Minister 'gutless': koala volunteer

BY MATT CARR, PORT STEPHENS REPORTER

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A PROMINENT Port Stephens koala volunteer has labelled Environment Minister Tony Burke a “gutless wonder” after a decision to list koalas as nationally endangered was deferred yesterday.

Mr Burke said yesterday his decision on making koalas a nationally threatened species had been put back 10 weeks to April 30.

It is the second time he has pushed the decision back after setting the February deadline in October saying that he would not rush such a crucial call.

That delay pushed the decision to today.

Hunter Koala Preservation Society president Sue Swain said the listing would “mean the world” to the region’s koalas, giving them greater protection from development.

It would also reduce habitat fracturing, a practice Mrs Swain said led to car strikes and inbreeding among isolated koala populations.

“I’m very disappointed but not bloody surprised,” Mrs Swain said of the deferral.

“I just think he’s a gutless wonder [for not making a decision].”

Mrs Swain said Mr Burke should give koalas a similar level of protection as the Tasmanian devil.

Their east coast habitats left koalas vulnerable due to increasingly dense development, she said.

Mr Burke attributed the delayed decision to a request for more information “on the precise boundaries of where koala populations are dwindling”.

That information could help make any protection more specific than state lines, he said.

No further extension was expected beyond April 30, Mr Burke said.

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The Minister requires more information.

Seems to be the standard statement when they don't want to make a decision. It is necessary for this issue to have been finalised immediately.

Posted by **leolog**, 17/02/2012 9:13:52 AM, on The Herald

Any decision Mr Burke makes must be based on FACTS and not EMOTIONS and hearsay.

Posted by **thinkitthrough**, 17/02/2012 9:17:13 AM, on The Herald

She has hit the nail on the head about this minister.

Posted by **RAYY**, 17/02/2012 9:37:18 AM, on The Herald

I agree Sue, "precise boundaries of where koala populations are dwindling" - isn't that everywhere!!!

Posted by **Agreed**, 17/02/2012 10:35:15 AM, on The Herald

Crikey! How much can a Koala bear?

Posted by **Seven of eight**, 17/02/2012 1:12:36 PM, on The Herald