

Plea for New Zealand to house fire-threatened koalas

January 13 2020



Koalas and their habitats have been hit hard by Australia's devastating bushfires

Thousands of people have signed a petition for koalas to be introduced to New Zealand to escape Australia's devastating bush fires, but the proposal has been given the thumbs down by officials.

A group calling itself the Koala Relocation Society said [koalas](#) were "functionally extinct in Australia" but could thrive in New Zealand which has nearly 30,000 hectares planted in eucalypts.

There have been estimates of up to a billion koalas and other animals affected by the fires raging across Australia and there are concerns about how the survivors will cope given the loss of vegetation.

As of midday Monday, the [online petition](#) had 7,500 signatures, but a spokesman for Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern told Television New Zealand that the government's focus was on helping to get the fires under control so koalas "can stay in their [natural habitat](#)".

Wellington Zoo animal science manager Simon Eyre believed any assistance should be provided directly to the Australian authorities dealing with the fallout from the fires.

"For us, it would be assisting in Australia and it wouldn't only be koalas, it would be other species affected by the fires as well," he said.

© 2020 AFP

Citation: Plea for New Zealand to house fire-threatened koalas (2020, January 13) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2020-01-plea-zealand-house-fire-threatened-koalas.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
