



Koala numbers have fallen steeply since the 1970s. Picture: Craig Borrow *Source: HWT Image Library*

THERE is a strong case for the Federal Government to add the koala to the list of nationally threatened species but only in certain parts of the country.

Federal Environment Minister Tony Burke today announced a further 10 week extension to the due date for his decision on whether to add the native animal to the list.

He said the government was seeking further information from the threatened species scientific committee in relation to the precise boundaries of where koala populations are dwindling.

The committee has found that while koala numbers are high in some areas, such as South Australia, they are declining in parts of Queensland and NSW.

“There is a strong case that a nationally threatened species listing is required for koalas in areas where numbers have been under greatest threat,” Mr Burke said.

“But I can’t provide a blanket threatened species listing across Australia when there are many places where koala numbers remain high.

“That means any listing would need to apply only to specific parts of Australia.”

Mr Burke said advice he had received from the committee suggested he would generalise these areas to state boundaries.

“I agree with the committee’s findings about the need to treat populations differently in different parts of Australia but am seeking further advice on whether there are more precise habitat boundaries than simply adopting state boundaries,” he said.

“I’ve asked the committee to come back to me with more precise boundaries which detail the areas where koala populations are dwindling.”

Mr Burke will make his decision by 30 April.

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