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Call to list koala as endangered

- From: AAP
- April 20, 2012 12:06PM

THE NSW Opposition's environment spokesman Luke Foley has called on the Federal Government to add the koala to the national threatened species list, saying the national icon could go the way of the panda unless action is taken.

Federal Environment Minister Tony Burke on April 30 is to hand down his decision about whether to add the koala to the list.

Mr Foley called on his Labor colleague to buck the action of previous federal governments, which he said had put the animals' future in the "too hard basket".

"When the white man came to Australia there were 10 million koalas in Australia, today in NSW there's around 10,000," Mr Foley said in Sydney today.

"Federal governments, Liberal and Labor, for far too long have put this in the too hard basket.

"I'm calling on (Mr Burke) to do what no federal environment minister has ever had the courage to do: add the koala to the national threatened species list, which will give it added protections."

Mr Foley said NSW's koala population was being threatened by loss of habitat through logging and development, diseases like chlamydia, and dogs.

"I don't want to see the koala go the way the panda where there is a couple of thousand in captivity, in zoos, in captive breeding programs, but nothing in the outdoors," Mr Foley said.

"We want to keep the koala in their natural environment."
