# Koala Cuddling Faces Potential Ban in Queensland



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Cuddling koalas, a popular activity among tourists and celebrities in Australia, may soon be prohibited in Queensland. This follows a decision by Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary in Brisbane to end the practice, citing visitor feedback and animal welfare considerations. The sanctuary, which has hosted notable figures such as Taylor Swift, Pope John Paul II, and Vladimir Putin, will now focus on observation-based experiences rather than allowing guests to hold the marsupials.

Lone Pine, established in 1927, announced the change as part of a shift towards less intrusive interactions. General Manager Lyndon Discombe stated that feedback from high-profile visitors and the general public has been overwhelmingly positive for the new format. However, he also emphasized that the change was driven by customer demand, not animal welfare concerns.

Animal welfare activists, including Suzanne Milthorpe from World Animal Protection, argue that koala cuddling is stressful for the animals. Koalas, which typically sleep around 20 hours a day, can become agitated due to frequent human contact. The organization is petitioning the Queensland government for a statewide ban on the practice.

Currently, koala cuddling remains legal in Queensland, South Australia, and Western Australia but is banned in other states with significant koala populations, such as New South Wales and Victoria.

The broader concern for koala welfare is intensified by the species' endangered status, driven by habitat loss from land clearing and logging. Despite the push from animal activists, the Queensland government has shown no intent to impose further restrictions on the wildlife tourism industry.