

Koala Chlamydia vaccine to be tested

The first trials of an Australian vaccine designed to protect koalas from Chlamydia infection is being planned.

Scientists who developed the vaccine at the Queensland University of Technology said Chlamydia is a major threat to the survival of Australia's iconic koalas, with nearly all populations affected by the disease.

"The trial is planned to begin before the end of the year and will test the vaccine's ability to induce a good immune response in the koala against Chlamydia," said Professor Peter Timms of the university's Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation. Timms said Chlamydia in koalas is a significant cause of infertility, urinary tract infections, and inflammation in the lining of the eye that often led to blindness.

"We will have initial results within the first six months, but we will continue to monitor the koalas for 12 months to determine how long the vaccine stimulates an immune response" and whether a booster shot is required, he said.

The project was presented Monday during the International Chlamydia Conference being held at the university.

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