



Hon Kate Jones MP
Member for Ashgrove



**Queensland
Government**

**Minister for Climate Change
and Sustainability**

Ref: CTS No. 14230/09

24 DEC 2009

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 25 November 2009 enclosing a copy of Petition Numbers 1352-09 and 1260-09 lodged in the Queensland Legislative Assembly on the 24 November 2009 concerning the protection of the koala population in the Redlands portion of the Koala Coast. It is encouraging to see so many people support the need to make changes critical to the survival of koalas in South East Queensland (SEQ).

The Queensland Government acknowledges the immediate action that must be undertaken to halt the decline in the SEQ koala population, particularly in the Redlands area. A Government Koala Response Strategy has been in place since December 2008 to better protect koalas and to expand koala habitat in the region by the year 2020.

We have secured more than 52,000 hectares of koala habitat for conservation as protected areas just this year. Our commitment to conserving and expanding koala habitat has been highlighted more recently by the removal of approximately 900 hectares of land in the Thornlands and Southern Redland Bay area from the urban footprint in the South East Queensland Regional Plan that had been earmarked for future development.

A key focus of the Strategy is the commitment to fast track the development of a State Planning Policy (SPP) for koala conservation by the end of 2009. The overriding goal of the proposed SPP is to maintain the viability of all major koala populations across the region by increasing the size of their habitat through local government planning schemes.

As well as the SPP, a new State Planning Regulatory Provision (SPRP) for koala conservation will be made to assess developments in the region. This will mean that local government will be required to assess the protection of koala habitat development by development and ensure that any developments that proceed in habitat areas incorporate koala safety fencing and measures.

The SPRP identifies the Redlands region as one of the Priority Management Areas in SEQ and will place further restrictions on development occurring in areas containing koala habitat. More information on the new SPP and SPRP for koala conservation can be found at www.derm.qld.gov.au.

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I would also like to take this opportunity to provide an update on the State Government's initiative to protect and conserve SEQ koalas.

On 31 October 2009, I released the Government's latest package of reforms in relation to koala protection.

The package includes:

- \$15 million focused on buying new habitat and rehabilitating existing habitat;
- Compulsory acquisition powers for koala habitat outside the urban footprint;
- New planning laws for councils to minimise koala impacts when assessing development applications in key koala areas;
- New controls for councils to ban dogs in new developments in koala habitat; and
- New planning laws to allow land swaps in and outside the urban footprint for strategic koala habitat corridors.

As well as this package, I recently announced that the Government will provide an additional \$400,000 to further study diseases in koalas. The funding will complement the expenditure the Government is already making on koala research and welfare this year. This includes spending \$343,000 on the Daisy Hill Koala Centre for community education and \$440,000 on the Moggill Koala Hospital for sick and injured koalas.

In addition our Strategy addresses a number of key threats to koalas and includes the development of a model local law to assist local government in reducing threats to koalas from dogs, and introducing exclusion fencing and other koala safety measures for all new main roads in koala habitat.

While the new planning instruments are being developed an immediate ban on koala bushland habitat clearing in designated areas has been announced to complement the interim measures already applying on state land until the new SPRP is in place.

We are also setting up the Queensland Koala Fund to allow businesses, householders, local government and other organisations to contribute to the Koala Response Strategy. All donations are fully tax-deductible and will be used to restore vital koala habitat and reduce threats to koalas in south-east Queensland. For more information about the Queensland Koala Fund, please contact the Department of Environment and Resource Management on 1300 130 372.

I would like to acknowledge the leadership that Mayor Hobson has taken in the Redlands community in relation to koala protection.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention. If any further information is required, please do not hesitate to contact Michael Dart of my office on telephone 3336 8032.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kate Jones', written in a cursive style.

Kate Jones MP
Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability