

Mr N Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Legislative Assembly of Queensland
Parliament House
Alice and George Streets
BRISBANE Q 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 14 March 2003 forwarding a copy of a petition tabled in the Parliament on 12 March 2003 regarding the parcel of land at Springbrook known as 'The Settlement'.

The Environmental Protection Agency has received more than 40 submissions in response to the release last year of the draft management plan for "The Settlement" at Springbrook. The State Government, the Gold Coast City Council and several community groups are negotiating a broad planning process for the overall Springbrook area, which will provide further opportunities for public comment.

There are many planning issues current at Springbrook, and there is interest in running a community-driven process to seek wide support in the pursuit of a long-term vision for the area. Springbrook National Park was part of one of Queensland's five World Heritage areas and the Springbrook plateau was of outstanding natural importance. This provides the potential for enormous conservation, community and economic benefits through the protection, enhancement and presentation of the area's World Heritage values.

I am working with the Gold Coast mayor and his council to respond to the community initiative for a comprehensive planning process. It is intended to deal with the future management of 'The Settlement' land in the broader context rather than in isolation. I do not want to have the interests of the area stall so some current initiatives will need to go ahead in anticipation of the broader process.

For example, the State Government has given a commitment to finalise tenure recommendations for the Nerang and Numinbah Forest Reserves under the South East Queensland Forest Agreement during this term of Government.

Therefore, these recommendations will proceed within the SEQFA timetable. However, where such actions need to proceed, they will reflect the overall planning process as far as practicable.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

DEAN WELLS
Minister for Environment