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Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Queensland Parliamentary Service
Parliament House
Cnr Alice and George Streets
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 10 October 2003 forwarding a copy of a petition tabled in the Parliament on 9 October 2003 regarding the survival of koalas in the Gold Coast region.

In late March 2003, the Honourable Peter Beattie MP, Premier and Minister for Trade and I announced that the State Government would develop a Koala Conservation Plan for Queensland. The Plan is being prepared under the Nature Conservation Act 1992, in line with the Government's commitment to developing a more comprehensive approach to koala preservation.

The Government already commits nearly \$700,000 a year to koala management in south-east Queensland, including research, hospital and rescue and rehabilitation programs. Options identified during the new conservation planning process will strengthen the protection of koala habitat. Issues such as research, education and the management of koala habitat will all be addressed in this Plan. We will also work in partnership with local and State Government agencies to examine whether existing laws - such as the Vegetation Management Act, the Integrated Planning Act - and methods like roadside barriers and over-passes can provide better protection for koalas.

There are already a number of success stories, based on localised strategies such as the Koala Coast Strategy for the Redlands, Logan and southern Brisbane suburbs area.

Councils in this region are commended for their foresight in koala management to date. Liaison with local government will continue to determine how local laws and town planning processes could help preserve habitat and manage impacts of dogs and cars in urban settings.

Clearly, we need to do more to provide statewide protection for koalas, on top of local planning schemes, a State Planning Policy and some provisions of the Nature Conservation Act. It is our intention to address a unique management challenge in ensuring the internationally recognised species remains secure in the wild for all time.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

DEAN WELLS
Minister for Environment