11 April 2011

Mr Stephen Palethorpe
Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

By email: eca.sen@aph.gov.au

Re: Letter from Associate Director-General, Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation 15 March 2011 - The Inquiry into the status, health and sustainability of Australia's koala

Dear Mr Palethorpe

In 2004 the State directed Redland Shire Council to remove environmental protection overlays put in place in response to *State Planning Policy 1/97 Conservation of koalas in the Koala Coast*, from land contained in a draft quarry overlay (KRA 71) and replace them with a planning overlay consistent with an extractive industry development. In doing this the State has over-ridden a gazetted State Policy put in place to protect and ensure the sustainability of koalas, in favour of draft policy that will allow the destruction of core koala habitat.

The Associate Director-General in his letter fails to address the bias in this and is erroneous in a number of key areas:

1. The proposal by Barro Group Pty Ltd is to develop a new quarry on recently purchased land at Mount Cotton which had environmental overlays consistent with the Koala Coast Policy;
2. There is broad community opposition to the removal of the environmental overlays - two petitions presented to the Queensland Parliament totalling 2317 signatures and 1654 objections submitted to council;
3. The State Department did not hold the Redland meeting on 22 December as implied. The Department failed to issue a public notice in the regional papers and many in the community were unaware of the zoning changes and the proposed quarry overlay. Some members in the community became aware of the draft quarry policy and a meeting was then initiated by the community and the local Councillor to more broadly inform the community. Representatives from the Department were invited.
4. The Associate Director-General states that:

   "*The majority of submissions were concerned with potential quarrying impacts, focussing on the* ***erroneous perception*** (my

> emphasis*) that identification of a resource as a KRA (*quarry overlay*) will negate the thorough environmental assessment process triggered by IDAS.*"

Why then did the State direct the Redland Shire Council to remove environmental protection overlays from the site?

The community concerns were therefore entirely correct and contrary to the assertion by the Associate Director-General, the community did not have an "erroneous perception".

It is clear the State has failed to grasp the community concerns that by directing a change to the environmental overlays, it has perverted the very policy put in place to protect koalas. This is *prima facie* evidence of a strong bias in favour of development that will result in destruction of core koala habitat.