Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
PO Box 6100 Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600 Australia

7 February 2011

To whom it may concern

I wish to make comment to this inquiry as a farmer in the Felton Valley, Queensland.
I am gravely concerned that the negative impact to the Koala species will be irrecoverable if the current rate of mining development continues across the state of Queensland. Given the over-riding nature of the Mining Act over the Nature Conservation Act, many areas with Koala habitat will be cleared with little regard for the impacts on the Koala population. At best, some tree species may be replanted, but given the time these take to re-grow, populations will be forced to relocate or may even die out.
In the situation at Felton, populations of Koalas are known to return to particular trees, or clumps of trees, for the mating season (June to October) (Postle, pers. comm.). Other sightings of Koalas have occurred in the Felton Valley at other times (for example a survey by the Friends of Felton in January revealed three animals), indicating that the area is a desirable habitat for Koalas. If the proposed Ambre Energy coal mine and petrochemical plant is allowed to proceed, the resident koala population will be threatened by loss of habitat and significantly increased traffic on roads.
We have only ever seen one Koala on our farm, but are making efforts to provide safe travelling corridors for them by planting native trees including forest red gum (Eucalyptus tereticornis), mountain coolibah (Eucalyptus orgadophila) and narrow-leaved red ironbark (Eucalyptus crebra).
The loss of a few habitats here and there doesn't seem much; but when the cumulative impacts of these developments are considered, it paints a grave picture for the Koala. Let us protect one of our true Australian icons.
Regards

Mrs. Vicki Green