




Speech By  
**Hon. Dr Steven Miles**  
**MEMBER FOR MOUNT COOT-THA**

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Record of Proceedings, 14 September 2016

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Koala Protection**

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (2.40 pm): I am pleased to provide the House with an update on the work of Queensland's koala expert panel. The Queensland government has appointed a panel of experts to explore ways to better protect koalas in the wake of a recent report confirming that populations continue to decline in South-East Queensland. The panel will provide expert advice on an appropriate response to the continued decline of koalas in the state's south-east.

The panel is chaired by Associate Professor Jonathan Rhodes from the University of Queensland, with Dr Alistair Melzer from the Central Queensland University's Koala Research Centre and Dreamworld Wildlife Foundation's director Mr Al Mucci. Ms Antra Hood from Minter Ellison has since joined the panel to ensure there is a representation of planning expertise.

One of the key roles for the panel will be to provide recommendations on existing regulatory options, particularly to link into the planning and South East Queensland Regional Plan reviews that are currently underway. The panel will also provide advice on various immediate actions which would not pre-empt future changes in policy direction but would allow us to continue gathering important data through surveying and modelling.

The panel has received in-depth briefings on immediate actions and how the planning process can best protect koala habitat. Consultation will also be conducted over the next few months to provide input to the review process. While the panel has an excellent breadth of experience, we recognise that there is a wealth of knowledge in the community and we need to capture that knowledge and ensure a balance of perspectives is considered.

Terms of reference for the panel have been prepared that outline the role of the panel and the timeframes for deliverables. An interim report from the panel is expected by the end of this year and a final report in mid-2017.