

**Question on Notice
No. 1925
Asked on Wednesday 14 November 2007**

QUESTION:

MR WEIGHTMAN asked the Minister for Sustainability, Climate Change and Innovation (Mr McNamara)—

As the Minister recently attended and opened a koala summit held in the Redlands, will he advise what strategies his departments are undertaking to ensure the survival of koalas in south east Queensland?

ANSWER:

In 2004, the Queensland Government listed the koala as a vulnerable species in the South East Queensland Bioregion. Since then, the *Nature Conservation (Koala) Conservation Plan 2006 and Management Program 2006-2016* (the Koala Plan) came into effect on 2 October 2006. The Koala Plan outlines the key threats facing koalas and sets out strategies to stop the decline of koala numbers to enable the species' recovery. The Plan is the principal legislative and policy instrument by which the current decline in koala populations in south east Queensland is being addressed. Although the Koala Plan applies state-wide, its most active strategies for conserving koalas are heavily focussed towards the high growth areas of south east Queensland where threats to koalas are greatest.

The Koala Plan, which is administered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), focuses on three principal actions in south east Queensland, namely, development assessment in association with the Integrated Planning Act (IPA), koala habitat mapping, and community and government engagement.

The EPA has an active field research program in the south east, particularly in the Koala Coast, to ensure that management actions are based on sound science. That research is assisted by critical databases that have been developed by the EPA, such as the Koala Hospitals Database that records combined data provided by the EPA's Moggill Koala Hospital and the Australian Wildlife Hospital at Australia Zoo, Beerwah, operated by Wildlife Warriors.

Development assessment – under the Koala Plan, the EPA has a concurrence role, which makes it mandatory to refer development applications within Koala Conservation and Koala Sustainability Areas to the EPA to assess whether the development is conducive to koala conservation and koala habitat.

To date, the majority of applications received by the EPA under the Koala Plan have been for committed development. EPA assessments have ensured that development applications deemed to be committed may only proceed if koala-sensitive design and operational conditions (such as habitat rehabilitation) specified under the Koala Plan are met.

The EPA has also been active in providing comment on a number of draft local government planning instruments, such as Local Growth Management Strategies, in

order to ensure that appropriate koala conservation considerations are incorporated into future local government development and infrastructure planning.

Koala habitat mapping – in the 2006-07 financial year:

The EPA allocated almost \$130,000 in dollar-for-dollar matched funding grants to four south east Queensland local governments to undertake new koala habitat assessment and mapping projects. Under the grant arrangements, those local governments (Caloundra, Caboolture, Pine Rivers and Redcliffe) will provide the EPA with new koala habitat mapping for approval and subsequent incorporation into local government planning schemes by 1 June 2009. Such mapping will extend the EPA's Concurrence Agency function to those new mapped areas, which will further enhance koala conservation efforts.

Negotiations with other south east Queensland local governments with respect to Round 2 (2007-08) mapping grants are ongoing.

Community and government engagement - since commencement of the Koala Plan:

The EPA has delivered 76 formal presentations on koala conservation and the Koala Plan to local government, community and industry bodies. Attendance at formal presentations exceeds 3,300 persons to date. The EPA has also attended and delivered koala presentations at large public events such as the RSPCA Million Paws Walk and the Spectacular Petacular, as well as important events such as the recent Redland Koala Summit.

Over the last 10 years, dog attacks on koalas have resulted in the deaths of approximately 1,700 koalas in south east Queensland. To date, more than 1,100 dog-owners have signed EPA pledges in which they undertake to restrain their dogs to reduce dog-related koala mortality.

Over the last 10 years, motor vehicles have caused the deaths of approximately 3,800 koalas on Southeast Queensland roads. Negotiations are underway with the Department of Main Roads to identify potential solutions to reducing koala deaths due to vehicular strikes, such as road underpasses.