

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 1452

asked on Wednesday 7 October 2009

DR ROBINSON ASKED THE MINISTER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY (MS JONES)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister provide the advice used as the basis for the claims in her ministerial statement on 25 September 2009 that the land gifted to the Redlands City Council at Windemere Road, Alexandra Hills was 'strategically significant koala habitat'?

ANSWER:

I am sure that you and your colleague the Member for Redlands, a former Chairman of the Development Assessment Committee of the Redland City Council, know very well the impacts of the development decisions of the former council has had on the local koala population.

Windemere Road is a bushland site that is a vital refuge. It provides an essential link in an urban habitat area that has the second highest koala sighting density in southeast Queensland.

The site contains a mix of koala food and habitat trees, consisting of a number of eucalypt species of varying ages/growth stages, including *Eucalyptus racemosa*. The vegetation is classified as open-forest to woodland.

As part of the recent comprehensive koala habitat mapping, this area was identified predominantly as high quality bushland, with some medium quality rehabilitation.

Decisions regarding the purchase or protection of significant tracts of land are made on the advice of a range of experts who have spent much of their lives dedicated to studying and formulating strategies to protect koalas.

It is disappointing to see the hard work and dedication of these men and women brought into question. I am more than happy to organise a briefing for you on the role they play to go through the methodology related to koala habitat mapping.

As I have said I can only gather from your statements that your preference is for the Government to put developer and commercial interests ahead of protecting koalas in the Redlands. I do not believe this position is supported by the wider community.

I am sure you would recognise the urgent action taken by the Queensland Government that includes a new \$15 package focused on buying new habitat and rehabilitating existing habitat, new planning laws for councils to minimise koala impacts when assessing development applications in key koala areas including the ability to ban dogs in new developments in koala habitat and new planning laws to

allow land swaps in and outside the urban footprint for strategic koala habitat corridors.

Regardless of the lack of support from the LNP this Government will continue to build on our actions including the freeze on the clearing or disposal of State land, the development of a new State Planning Policy for koala conservation, koala-friendly design for all new main road construction and a model local law for councils to regulate dog control.

We are also developing the new State Planning Policy for koala conservation which is being fast tracked for completion. When finalised, the planning policies will provide for koala populations in the region to be enhanced through the protection, management and the achievement of a net gain in bushland koala habitat, and for the management of conflict between urban development and koalas to increase koala populations in South-East Queensland.