

Your Ref:
Our Ref: ADG717



15 MAR 2011

Mr Stephen Palethorpe
Committee Secretary
Environment and Communications References Committee
The Australian Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Palethorpe

Thank you for your letter of 17 February 2011 concerning allegations of bias by staff of the former Department of Natural Resources and Mines.

The proposal by Barro Group Pty Ltd to expand their existing quarry at Mount Cotton has been opposed by local residents for several years. A key contention is that protection of koala habitat from extractive industry activities will be negated by the designation of the Mount Cotton Key Resource Area (KRA 71) in Queensland's State Planning Policy 2/07: Protection of Extractive Resources (SPP 2/07). However, the SPP is designed only to prevent encroachment of incompatible developments into the vicinity of the extractive resource, not provide approval for quarry development.

Land use conflicts are addressed during the development assessment process set out in the Integrated Development Assessment System (IDAS) under Queensland's *Sustainable Planning Act 2009*. Queensland koala conservation legislation requires development such as extractive industry development, if it will impact on koala habitat values, to provide a net benefit for koala habitat regardless of its location in a KRA.

Public consultation on the draft version of the SPP 2/07 followed the process set out in Schedule 4 of the repealed *Integrated Planning Act 1997*. In response to a high level of public concern in Redland Shire, a meeting was held at Redland on 22 December 2004 where 100 local residents attended. The majority of submissions were concerned with potential quarrying impacts, focussing on the erroneous perception that identification of a resource as a KRA will negate the thorough environmental assessment process triggered by IDAS.

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Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention and I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

DAN HUNT
Associate Director-General