



10 August 2011

Mr Stephen Palethorpe  
Secretary  
Senate Environment and Communications References Committee  
Status, health and sustainability of Australia's koala population  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra  
ACT 2600

Dear Mr Palethorpe

**RE:** *Questions on notice, HVP Plantations*

Please find attached further information addressing questions taken on notice through my appearance as a witness at the final public hearing of the above Committee in Melbourne on Monday 1 August.

We note that HVP has been asked to provide extensive additional information.

Most of the information requested is detailed in documents internal to the company and, as such, have not been provided publicly to date. We therefore provide this information in good faith to the Committee such that Committee members can be adequately informed when making recommendations to Government following the Inquiry.

We stress that in most instances, the information provided here is not in a form for use by the public, particularly without the context to which it is provided.

HVP's management systems, its operational practices, transparency (evidenced by provision of the information here), plus its demonstrated commitment to the conservation of the Strzelecki Koala and the needs of native flora and fauna present across its diverse estate **warrant greater recognition.**

As a plantation company operating across Victoria, HVP is acutely aware of the iconic status of the koala, and acknowledges its responsibility to help protect the species. Hence, I take this opportunity to reiterate HVP Plantations' perspective and commitment in relation to the koala:

- HVP manages 245 000 hectares of land across Victoria, the bulk of which is plantation. The bulk of that plantation is the exotic softwood species, *Pinus radiata*

- HVP harvests no native forest. Further, in 2007, we reached agreement with the Victorian Government to permanently protect 20 000 hectares of native forest in our estate
- We manage working plantations alongside this native forest. HVP recognises this collective estate provides habitat for an array of native flora and fauna, and so its management practices give great consideration to environmental needs
- HVP is a good steward of its land, demonstrated through being the first Australian company to achieve internationally recognised Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification. In addition, HVP was first to achieve dual certification under two internationally recognised forest certification standards, FSC and the Australian Forestry Standard
- HVP is strongly collaborative in its complete management approach, but particularly with reference to environmental practices. This is demonstrated by our deep engagement with leading research bodies, third party experts, community groups, our neighbouring landholders and our local communities

HVP was asked by the Committee how our activities collectively enhance the koala habitat. I would like to reiterate how we do this:

- Our plantations provide complementary habitat to the native forest estate. Without our plantations, the overall habitat area would be less;
- We have an extensive fire fighting capability, existing to protect the plantations and the surrounding forest estate. Without our plantations, this fire fighting capability would not exist and arguably, natural damage such as that which occurred in a devastating fashion for the koala on Black Saturday, would have been worse;
- We have voluntarily reserved important areas within our estate for permanent protection – both native forest and plantation, despite the fact that in doing so we have foregone commercial gain;
- Our staff work on a number of projects and initiatives on an ongoing basis to enhance habitat at a very local level, such as reserving certain trees to enable important wildlife corridors for the koala and other native fauna to move through; and
- We have funded, and continue to fund, important third party research to enhance our collective knowledge of the koala.

With respect to the final point, the Committee asked a number of questions about research relationships, particularly HVP's involvement with Monash University. With the permission of the University, we have provided a complete copy of an Australian Research Council proposal submitted earlier this year by the University. This document describes some of HVP's commitments to a better global understanding of the Strzelecki Koala - and the company's productive support for the University's work.

We believe that our organisation is more proactive in this area than most other companies.

Attached to this letter are:

1. Responses to 10 questions on notice; nine from 1 August 2011 and one subsequent
2. Monash University submission to Australian Research Council

3. Koala habitat atlas excerpt for HVP's custodial land in the Gippsland region
4. Copy of HVP's Policy and Procedure for the Management and Protection of Koalas
5. Copy of HVP's Koala Operating Standard
6. Details of presenters and content of HVP's koala training workshops
7. Details of HVP-only content for its koala training workshops
8. Copy of HVP brochure, "The Strzelecki Koala"

Yours sincerely

Linda Sewell  
Chief Executive Officer  
HVP Plantations