



Speech by
Dr Mark Robinson

MEMBER FOR CLEVELAND

Hansard Thursday, 8 October 2009

REDLANDS ELECTORATE, KOALAS

Dr ROBINSON (Cleveland—LNP) (10.08 pm): I rise to speak about a revegetation plan in the Redlands that I have proposed that will be a modest step in the right direction of good koala management in an urbanised area of the Redlands. Before I canvass this proposal, let me first set the context for it. This Labor government has presided over the worst decline in the koala population in Redland's history and little is being done to stop it. According to koala experts, this Labor government is on track to achieve something no-one else has: the final extinction of the Redlands koalas in just a few short years.

The Minister for Climate Change is charged with the responsibility of turning things around. Unfortunately, her first act this year was to watch the bulldozers mow down prime koala habitat in an identified koala corridor in Thornlands, allowing no koala habitat to stand. The minister's first act regarding koalas was to behave like the proverbial Nero and watch the Rome of Redlands koalas burn while she fiddled with committee formation and interdepartmental buck-passing. The result was an increase in koala deaths in the area.

Fast-forward to September–October. The minister made a statement on 25 September, the same day as the Save Our Koala rally, that a piece of land of high koala value was to be gifted to the Redland City Council in Alex Hills. Koala groups responded swiftly and condemned the act as a joke and stated that the land would support one koala. The minister's claims created the impression that the land was inhabited by a significant number of koalas, that it was rich with koala food trees and that it was part of an identified koala corridor. The reality is that very few koalas have been sighted, it has only limited koala food trees and it is in a blind cul-de-sac, not an already identified koala corridor. So the land is far from being what the minister described it to be.

Having said all of this, it is possible to turn the land into high-value koala reserve that supports a great number of koalas. I have proposed that a revegetation program now be embarked upon. I have received positive feedback and offers of volunteer assistance from koala groups for my revegetation proposal that I put to the community. The federal member for Bowman, Andrew Laming, has also joined me in this goal and is pursuing federal funding.

It is disappointing that, since gifting this piece of land with limited koala value to the council, during question time yesterday the minister rejected my invitation to be involved in the revegetation plan. I would have thought that if the minister was truly interested in the land becoming a high-value koala reserve, as she announced was her intention, she would be keen to see it through to the end instead of cutting and running.

I again invite the minister to join the proposed revegetation project to see the land become a true koala reserve. Joining this plan would help to correct the widespread view in the community that the minister is only interested in koala headlines and that the land gift was at best token and at worst a scam.