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To/ Department of Planning and Infrastructure,

RE: Kings Forest, Kingscliff, 08_0194 Stage 1 Project Application

Dear Sir Madam,

I wish to comment on the above Kings Forest residential development.

I am concerned that the development will have a detrimental effect on the survival of the Tweed Coast's Koala population. The Bogangar/Kings Forest/Forest Hill Koala population, estimated to be between 5-66 individuals (Philips, 2004), is isolated from other local Koala populations and at high risk of becoming extinct due to continuing loss of habitat and other urban pressures.

The Kings Forest (Stage 1) Koala Plan of Management (Warren& Associates, 2011) comprehensively discusses the main threats to this population from the development. Recommendations and objectives have been listed (pp33-35) to increase the chance of this Koala population surviving into the future. These objectives need to be adopted by the developer as a minimum level of Koala protection. The habitat improvement recommendations by Philips (2011) (pp29-31) to improve habitat connectivity and linkage corridors should specifically be adhered to.

The issue of dog attack on Koalas from the resulting housing development has not been adequately addressed. The list of dangerous dog breeds to Koalas is underestimated (p20). Many more breeds could be added to the list and many smaller dog breeds would impact on Koalas through barking, chasing and causing stress. A total ban on dogs within the Kings Forest development would improve the chances of long term survival for the Bogangar/Kings Forest/Forest Hill Koala population and reduce the impacts on other wildlife. No dogs in the upper catchment would benefit downstream aquatic values with less dog faeces entering the waterways. A total ban on dogs and cats (a well documented threat to wildlife) should also be added to the above objectives. Extreme measures are necessary in the case of this development. Even without the Kings Forest development, the Tweed Coast Koala population is on the brink and close to the point of no recovery.

Considering the history of the developer, Leda, in regards to illegal clearing of native vegetation and non-compliance with planning and environmental laws, I am gravely concerned that Koala protection regulations will not be honoured. An environmental officer or independent environmental supervisor should be on site during the construction and revegetation phases to ensure obligations are met. If they are not then the developer should be penalised or precluded from further development approvals, fining is not enough.

The completed development will have long term consequences on Koala populations and local ecosystems e.g., Cudgen Lake. All efforts must be made to alleviate the impacts from the development on aquatic environments, wildlife and natural areas of the Tweed coastline.

In summary I ask the department of Planning and Infrastructure to ensure the developer:

1. Adopts the objectives of the Kings Forest Koala Management Plan (pp33-35);
2. Adopts the habitat improvement recommendations by Philips (2011) in the Kings Forest Koala Management Plan (pp29-31);
3. Incorporates a total ban on dogs and cats in the Kings Forest estate during and after construction;
4. Abides by the regulations imposed on the development, especially in regards to Koala management, wildlife preservation, native vegetation clearing and maintaining aquatic values or risk serious penalties; and
5. Has an employee or independent environmental officer on site during construction and for a minimum of 2 years post development to ensure environmental and Koala regulations are met.

Yours sincerely,



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References

Philips, S. (2011) Tweed Coast Koala Habitat Study. Report to Tweed Shire Council. January Parks and Wildlife Service.