



Queensland
Government

Our ref 450/00765
Your ref 2017/7941

Department of
Transport and Main Roads

31 July 2018

Mr Tim Ipkendaz
Assistant Director
Queensland South and Sea Dumping Section
Assessments and Governance Branch
Department of the Environment and Energy

Dear Mr Ipkendaz

I refer to the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act approval application for Bruce Highway - Cooroy to Curra, Section D: Woondum to Curra project (Section D). The public consultation phase as required as part of the approval process was completed on 3 July 2018. A total of two letters were received as part of the consultation phase, the comments and responses to which have been summarised below.

Comprehensiveness of Population Knowledge and Monitoring within Hot Spot Areas and Spotter Catcher Expertise and Methods

Concern: Both letters expressed concern with regard to the proposed method of monitoring for koalas during the clearing phase and recommended that more advanced techniques were adopted in 'hot spot areas'. Concern was also expressed as to the monitoring of the greater glider in the area around Curra State Forest.

TMR Response: The Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) is assessing options for additional fauna monitoring for identified hot spot areas along the Section D alignment. The results of the extensive surveys completed as part of the design of Section D have identified four areas with known koala populations, located at Woondum State Forest, Penny Road, near to Gympie Railway Station and Keliher Road.

TMR acknowledges that the monitoring of koalas at these locations requires an increased effort to minimise potential impacts to the species. In this regard the project team is developing a program of monitoring works in consultation with community groups, the University of the Sunshine Coast and experienced consultants. At this stage a number of options are under consideration including the use of detection dogs, technology such as vhf collars, ear tags or drones as well as suitably experienced fauna spotters. It is anticipated that the monitoring will be undertaken prior to, during and post construction for a period of time. TMR welcomes continued consultation with Koala Action Gympie Region (KAGR) in the preparation of this program.

The program of monitoring works will also assist in the identification of other fauna in these areas, including the Greater Glider. Furthermore, a procedure for monitoring hollow bearing trees, which are potential habitat for Greater Gliders, has been prepared and included in the preliminary documentation report, and is summarised below:

- Prior to vegetation clearing in each zone, a terrestrial fauna specialist will undertake a pre-clearing survey to identify and mark habitat features (i.e. hollow bearing logs, hollow bearing trees, areas of wetland vegetation, banks along waterways with burrows etc.). This will assist in detecting fauna that are present within the clearing area directly prior to vegetation clearing and allow these individuals to move away from the impacted area, where possible.
- A sequential approach to clearing will be implemented where hollow bearing trees have been identified. Non-hollow bearing trees will be cleared before hollow bearing trees, to allow fauna an opportunity to move away and allow time to concentrate rescue efforts on the trees that are most likely to be inhabited. Sequential vegetation clearing is to occur from disturbed areas and move progressively towards areas of vegetation to be retained.
- Hollow bearing trees will be felled following a minimum 24 hour delay after clearing of non-habitat trees. The terrestrial fauna specialist will be on site for all clearing works including individual clearing of hollow bearing trees. Individual hollows of felled hollow bearing trees will be inspected using a torch or similar by the terrestrial fauna specialist and the relevant fauna contingency actions initiated. Once the trees are deemed clear by the terrestrial fauna specialist, further processing can occur.

Wildlife Fencing

Concern: Concern was raised as to the management of fauna movement at interchanges and how TMR was addressing this issue, as well as the provision of escape hatches and assurance that fauna fences would be maintained.

TMR Response: Wildlife fencing has been included along both sides of the new alignment in all areas of known koala populations as well as the majority of the vegetated areas and will be regularly maintained. The total approximate length of the fauna fence is 53.8 km. TMR is currently reviewing options for fauna management at interchanges.

Signage

Concern: It was requested that TMR undertake general awareness raising and include signage on the Bruce Highway informing the public of the phone number to call if fauna is wandering on the highway.

TMR Response: TMR is reviewing options for signage and communication with regard to fauna management on the Bruce Highway. Options being considered at present include the following:

- A social media campaign to raise awareness of how to report the presence of fauna on the Bruce Highway (and other state-controlled roads).
- A social media campaign informing the public about fauna control measures including fauna connectivity structures.
- Signs highlighting location of fauna underpasses.

Project Reporting and Transparency

Concern: Regular communication with community stakeholders throughout the construction of Section D was requested.

TMR Response: TMR has been committed to consulting with the local community and interested community groups through all sections of the Cooroy to Curra project, including during the design of Section D, and we welcome the opportunity to continue to do so throughout the construction phase. The project team will maintain regular contact with local community groups and will be available to attend meetings as relevant to provide updates on the project.

Yours sincerely



Hendrik Roux
District Director