

Minutes

Coomera Connector Stage 1 Community Reference Group

Meeting 3

Date Friday 23 April 2021 **Time** 9am – 11.30am

Facilitator Al Mucci

Minute taker Natalie Warren, TMR project team

Attendees

Presence

Kevin Cornor	River Cove, Hope Island	Present
Debbi Parker	River Cove, Hope Island	Present
Ann Jones	Monterey Keys, Helensvale	Present
John Pincock	The Surrounds, Helensvale	Present
Bradley Read	Seachange, Arundel	Present
Belinda O'Neill	Arundel/Parkwood	Present
Luisa Williams	Molendinar	Present
Glen Thornton	Ashmore (Nerang River precinct)	Present
Yvette Dempsey	Carrara	Present
Karina Waterman	Coomera Conservation Group	Present
Nicole Taylor	Coomera Conservation Group	Present
Lois Levy	Gecko Environment Council	Present
Rose Adams	Gecko Environment Council	Present
Craig Rowston	Gold Coast Suns	Present
Wade Arthur	TMR project team	Present
Kate Taylor	TMR project team	Present
Malcolm Tilgner	TMR Project Director	Present
Larissa Burke	TMR project team	Present
Amy Kinnane	Foreshore Coomera	Apologies
Paul Hogan	Foreshore Coomera	Apologies
Tim Carey	Metricon Stadium	Apologies
Stacey Taverna	Arundel Springs estate	Apologies
Trenton Gay	Gold Coast Marina & Shipyard	Apologies
Roy Bekkeli	The Surrounds, Helensvale	Apologies
Mark Hunter	The Shores, Helensvale	Resigned

Kate Taylor welcomed members and introduced a new member of the CRG:

- Belinda O'Neill – CRG member for Arundel/Parkwood area whose partner Sean (also a CRG member) has attended previous two meetings.

Kate Taylor introduced additional TMR representatives attending the meeting:

- Malcolm Tilgner – Project Director, Coomera Connector. TMR has recently appointed Malcolm to lead the delivery of Stage 1 of the project.
- Larissa Burke – Senior Communications Advisor, Coomera Connector Stage 1. Larissa has joined the team to lead the communications and stakeholder engagement for delivery of Stage 1 of the project.

Agenda item 1 Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country

- Al Mucci welcomed attendees and provided an Acknowledgement of Country in Yugambeh Language of the Gold Coast Region.
- Al Mucci shared story of the history of the local indigenous people of the Nerang River.
- Thanked the group and acknowledged everyone's time and effort being a member of the CRG.

Agenda item 2 Update on Stage 1 business case and project timing

- Wade Arthur provided an update on the status of the business case.
- Business case is now complete due to accelerated program. It will be considered by Queensland Government, then Infrastructure Australia and the Australian Government.
- CRG feedback has been considered in development of business case including the issues raised in the first meeting and responded to in the Questions, Issues and Opportunities report.
- Additional input from today's meeting will be considered in the development of the detailed design. Malcolm Tilgner and Larissa Burke will continue to take feedback on board during the design and delivery phase of the project.
- Stage1 North procurement is progressing with the contract expected to be awarded to the successful contractor from September 2021.
- Environmental approvals are required before construction contract can be awarded and construction can commence.

Agenda item 3 Project negotiables and CRG input on artist's impressions

Wade Arthur provided a recap of the purpose and objectives of the CRG and noted that together, we have achieved all three objectives:

- Facilitate coordinated meetings between TMR and the community to allow sustainable, well-supported project outcomes.
- Draw on local knowledge and gain an understanding and sharing of issues in Stage 1.
- Provide an opportunity for the community to provide input into identified project negotiables.

Wade Arthur revisited the identified project negotiables:

- Design of noise barriers.
- Design of retaining walls.
- Landscaping and planting in and around the project corridor.
- Design of shared paths including shade trees, viewing platforms, rest areas, seating and bubblers.

CRG questions and comments in relation to Agenda item 3

- Al Mucci asked how the noise barrier discussions of the group will be integrated into the design of the Coomera Connector?
- Malcolm Tilgner advised that as part of the Stage 1 North contract tender process, the scope of works included technical criteria and requirements for community engagement, landscape design, noise attenuation. CRG feedback will be fed through to the tenderers to consider in the development of their design, which will be refined as project moves forward. The successful proponent will work through technical detail to confirm whether absorptive or reflective barriers will be most appropriate in each location.
- Karina Waterman asked if the group will get to see if and how CRG input is incorporated into the design and tender documents?
- Malcolm Tilgner advised this is not possible during confidential competitive tender process but after the successful proponent is appointed, they will go back out to the community to continue engagement.
- Larissa Burke noted that the two proponents received all documents which included CRG feedback. Larissa has met with both proponents to give them all the information and talk them through it, noting TMR has fed them as much information as possible.
- John Pincock asked if the non-negotiable elements on the community 'wish list' were included so that proponents don't just go to the lower end/cheapest options to get the cost down and win the tender? Is there rigour in evaluation and not purely on cost?
- Malcolm Tilgner advised the decision to appoint a successful contractor will not only be based solely on price. The decision will also include consideration of each proponent's technical ability and their proposed overall solution. It is the overall solution they come with to deliver for the project.
- Ann Jones commented she prefers clear noise barriers to let in some have light but she's not sure how it affects noise attenuation.
- Malcolm Tilgner advised that reflective noise barriers including clear acrylic and standard concrete barriers bounce noise away. In detailed design phase, noise monitoring results will be used to confirm the height and type of barrier needed in each location for the best outcome.
- Debbi Parker noted a resident in River Cove mentioned noise panels that arch over road, like seen in Melbourne.
- Lois Levy mentioned that the RMIT proposal uses curved barriers.
- Wade Arthur reminded the group that the RMIT proposal was discussed in a previous meeting.
- Kevin Cornor asked whether noise barriers on the Coomera River Bridge would be on eastern side of the road nearest the River Cove estate?
- Malcolm Tilgner advised that one option is to have the noise barrier between road and shared path then anti-throw barriers closest to River Cove, or noise barriers could be placed on the eastern side of the shared path, which is also expected to be placed on the eastern side of the road. This will be worked through with the proponents.

- Kevin Cornor asked how the Coomera Connector will connect to Shipper Drive and Foxwell Road?
- Malcolm Tilgner advised initially the Coomera Connector will connect to Shipper Drive at an at-grade signalised intersection. TMR is working with Council to see what it looks like and how it will work.
- Belinda O'Neill commented that her property backs onto light rail and train line and soon to be Coomera Connector and there is no noise barrier currently there. Belinda asked if a noise barrier will be installed there when the road goes through? Belinda noted she had a noise monitor in her backyard when the noise monitoring was done but this was during COVID so she didn't think there was as much noise.
- Kate Taylor advised that TMR looked at traffic count data before noise monitoring was undertaken, noting traffic was almost back to normal levels before noise monitoring took place in the area.
- Malcolm Tilgner advised that TMR will meet the TMR Traffic Noise Management Code of Practice and noise barriers will be installed where they are needed in order to meet the Code of Practice. Noise levels will be assessed before and after construction.
- Kevin Cornor asked who is responsible for construction of the links to Council roads like Helensvale Road?
- Malcolm Tilgner advised TMR will build the interchange at Helensvale Road and then work with City of Gold Coast on upgrading the road.
- Kevin Cornor asked about the extra traffic which will use Monterey Keys Drive.
- Malcolm Tilgner advised TMR is considering if traffic calming measures are needed on Monterey Keys Drive.
- Glen Thornton noted the project is scheduled to commence mid-2021. What will commence at this time?
- Malcolm Tilgner advised that enabling works such as investigations, property works, setbacks and other smaller works will commence this year. Some investigations have been completed for Stage 1 North to inform reference design, but more investigation will need to be undertaken. Between now and the end of the year will be the tender process and detailed design, with major construction commencing next year.
- Rose Adams asked if the extra investigations will be included in the Public Environment Report (PER)?
- Wade Arthur advised TMR must address the PER guidelines as published on the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment website. The PER will be reviewed by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment before it goes to the public.
- John Pincock asked if residents of The Surrounds are losing the access to the light rail car park at Helensvale? John noted labels on the website are covering detail.
- TMR noted the imagery on the website would be reviewed.
Following the CRG meeting, TMR confirmed the labels referred to were in the online 360-degree panorama viewer which is unable to be amended. TMR to consider the position of labels in future visual materials to minimise confusion.

- Ann Jones asked if the shared path will go all the way over Coomera River and Saltwater Creek? Malcolm Tilgner advised that it would.
- Ann Jones asked how far sound carries when noise barriers are in place?
- Wade Arthur advised that TMR and specialist noise consultants would be guided by the TMR Noise Code of Practice.
- Nicole Taylor commented that the East Coomera community is concerned about anticipated higher levels of traffic on and off Shipper Drive and that the City of Gold Coast will need to pay for local road upgrades.
- Karina Waterman commented she was concerned about what traffic near Shipper Drive and Foxwell Road will be like. She said it often takes 20 minutes to get through the roundabout and asked what funding will be provided to City of Gold Coast to do the works?
- Malcolm Tilgner advised TMR is working with the City of Gold Coast on impacts on the local road network related to the introduction of the Coomera Connector. Malcolm noted the Coomera Connector will relieve pressure and congestion on the M1. It is designed to improve the traffic around the area. The City of Gold Coast is responsible for managing upgrades to the local road network using rates and developer contributions to meet traffic demand. TMR is continuing to work with the City of Gold Coast on the impacts.
- Kevin Cornor asked if the City of Gold Coast can start works on Shipper Drive before construction on the Coomera Connector commences, so that it is ready to go when the Coomera Connector opens?
- Malcolm Tilgner advised that a lot of work is being done in the background on what needs to happen at Shipper Drive.
- Belinda O'Neill commented that she had met with the City of Gold Coast to find out impacts on the local roads in her area. City of Gold Coast advised Belinda they have on their plans to put traffic signals in near her place.
- Brad Read asked if the Coomera Connector is still planned to be six lanes? He noted the corridor is very constrained near Arundel.
- Wade Arthur confirmed the corridor is constrained in some locations and advised the ultimate design of the Coomera Connector will allow for six lanes for the length of the corridor.
- Belinda O'Neill asked if the road will be the same height as the light rail pedestrian bridge at Parkwood? Wade Arthur confirmed the Coomera Connector will be a similar height to the existing pedestrian bridge, over Smith Street.
- Brad Read asked about how the Coomera Connector will be designed and constructed to take into account the overhead power for the light rail? Brad noted concerns from Seachange residents about noise travelling more to their estate from an elevated road.
- Malcolm Tilgner confirmed the Coomera Connector will go over the light rail and the overhead wires will be fixed under the Coomera Connector bridge structure.

Agenda item 4 Environmental management

- Wade Arthur outlined the environmental management process for the Coomera Connector project, including:
 - Comprehensive environmental surveys completed over 18-month period including:

- Acid sulfate soil assessment and soil sampling
- Contaminated land risk assessment and soil sampling
- Surface water sampling for 6 months
- Groundwater monitoring
- Noise monitoring
- Aboriginal and Non-Indigenous Cultural Heritage surveys
- Koala Management Plan, including the following strategies:
 - Tagging and monitoring
 - Fauna movement structures in design
 - Fauna exclusion fencing in design
 - Maintenance of critical movement corridors in conjunction with CoGC
 - Local land offsets
 - Assisted dispersal to manage welfare of individual animals
 - Proactive chlamydial disease management
- Wade Arthur outlined potential impacts to Matters of National Environmental Significance leading to a referral under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).
- Stage 1 was determined as a controlled action under EPBC Act.
- Public Environment Report (PER) is currently being developed and is expected to be available for public comment around May-June, depending on the assessment by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment.

CRG member questions and comments in relation to Agenda item 4

- Al Mucci commented that all koalas tagged as part of the tagging and monitoring program will get a full health check before being relocated to offset sites. Chlamydia treatments and vaccination will likely form part of the relocation process.
- Wade Arthur noted that qualified veterinary specialists will undertake the work.
- Karina Waterman asked how long will the monitoring program go for? Will the duration of the monitoring program be included in the EPBC submission?
- Wade Arthur confirmed there will be an ongoing monitoring program following construction with the duration to be confirmed based on advice from qualified koala management specialists.
- Lois Levy asked if there were compensatory measures as part of the EPBC Act?
- Wade Arthur confirmed there are environmental offset requirements and opportunities to invest in conservation of the wider koala population, for example, by testing the genetics of koalas that need to be relocated to determine the best locations to place koalas to strengthen the genetic base of different koala populations.
- Ann Jones asked how many koalas were found in the survey?
- Wade Arthur advised 30-40 koalas were found in the survey area for the Stage 1 corridor.

- Nicole Taylor noted the number of koalas in the future stages section of the Coomera Connector will be higher. Compensatory measures will need to be proportionate for what is to come.
- Al Mucci commented that 40 koalas is a significant number and shows the resilience of the koala in an urban environment.
- Wade Arthur mentioned that there will be a community consultation period for the PER as required under the Act. The feedback will be incorporated into the PER before it is sent back to Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment for approval.
- Al Mucci referred to the study by Griffith University on koala movement pathways near Coombabah Creek at Helensvale.
- Wade Arthur confirmed that research led by Professor Darryl Jones on fauna movement pathways at Coombabah Creek is an example of the work TMR has commissioned as part of the business case.
- Al Mucci commented that the study can be repeated during and post-construction to see effect on wildlife.
- Lois Levy asked what were the geographical boundaries of the study of Coombabah Creek? Wade Arthur advised the study was done locally within the area of Coombabah Creek at Helensvale.
- John Pincock asked if the environment information from the meeting could be circulated to CRG members.
- Kate Taylor advised all environmental information presented in the meeting will be in the PER which the community will have the opportunity to comment on.
- Kevin Cornor commented that the section of Hope Island Road between River Links and River Cove has flooded since rail duplications works were completed. Kevin asked if this likely to happen with the construction of the Coomera Connector?
- Malcolm Tilgner advised TMR would take this information on board.
- Karina Waterman asked which version of the Koala Management Plan will be included in the PER – the one environmental stakeholders viewed in the meeting of 15 April 2021, or the full version provided by Jon Hangar?
- Wade Arthur advised this was still to be determined.
- Karina Waterman expressed concern that the Koala Management Plan they viewed was not detailed enough and the full report should be included in the PER.
- Rose Adams asked if the draft Koala Management Plan will be circulated for comment? Rose advised Gecko Environment Council wanted to table a letter to TMR to ask why this hasn't happened.
- Karina Waterman noted the Coomera Conservation Group would also be tabling a letter to TMR, asking for this to be noted in the minutes.
- Yvette Dempsey asked if an artist's impression was available for the area near Nerang?
- Kate Taylor advised that only a limited number of artist's impressions had been produced so far and that more information would be made available about the design in the Nerang area once detailed design is undertaken in that area.

- Yvette Dempsey asked how the floodplain and acid sulphate soils in the area would be managed?
- Malcolm Tilgner advised a management plan will be put in place to manage acid sulfate soils. There are different options for treatment depending on the specific circumstances of each location and more geotechnical investigations will need to be undertaken. Malcolm also explained how pre-loading is used to build up embankments – where soil is built up and then left to settle over time.
- Yvette Dempsey asked if embankments would negatively impact on the floodplain?
- Malcolm Tilgner advised TMR will undertake hydraulic modelling to ensure the design and construction of the Coomera Connector doesn't affect existing flood levels.
- Yvette Dempsey asked about tree removal and whether the same sort of trees will be replanted?
- Malcolm Tilgner advised it will depend on location and viability. TMR will need to deliver offsets in certain locations.
- Karina Waterman asked about offsets and whether a plan for offsets would be included in the PER?
- Wade Arthur advised a plan for offsets will be addressed in the PER as per the guidelines.
- Lois Levy expressed concern that works for the Coomera Connector will start before offsets have been acquired, asking where will the animals go? Lois further asked when offsets will be acquired?
- Wade Arthur advised offsets will be delivered in a staged approach, with the approach being stipulated in the PER. TMR is also currently working with the City of Gold Coast to have some offsets in place for start of construction.
- Nicole Taylor noted this is the last CRG meeting and asked whether there would be an ongoing process engaging with relevant community groups and environment groups?
- Kate Taylor advised the scope of the CRG was for the business case phase only. The project will continue to engage with stakeholders throughout design and construction.
- Malcolm Tilgner advised engagement about the project will be ongoing, including with TMR and design and construction contractors, once appointed.
- Rose Adams commented she wanted a formal group to discuss issues, not just on an ad hoc basis.
- Malcolm Tilgner advised that once the PER is published, the project will be able to engage with the community about environmental issues more openly.
- Nicole Taylor asked when the PER will be published for comment? Wade Arthur advised it is expected to be around mid-year following assessment by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment.

Agenda item 5 Potential light spill to residences

- Malcolm Tilgner explained that lighting for the Coomera Connector will be designed in accordance with relevant Australian standards.
- Lighting will be used at interchanges including on- and off-ramps rather than lighting the entire length of the Coomera Connector.

- Strategies to minimise light spill include:
 - using LED lights which limit light spill compared to older style lights
 - using flat face lights rather than dome face lights (dome light spreads the light more in the horizontal direction compared to the flat face lights)
 - reviewing the road light heights (lower heights have less spread).
- Lights will be included on the shared path for safety of pedestrians and cyclists.
- There is a difference between road lighting and path lighting. Lighting on paths is installed at a lower height and is not as bright as road lighting.
- Height of lights – when road lighting is installed higher it is more economical as light will spread further and each light can be spaced further. In areas closer to houses, lights will be lower to avoid excessive light spill.

CRG member questions and comments in relation to Agenda item 4

- Brad Read commented that the Coomera Connector will be elevated near Arundel and Smith Street, which means the streetlights will be higher and light will spread across to the Seachange, Arundel. Brad suggested a mitigation measure used by the City of Gold Coast could be used – a lamp shade to stop light spilling out. Brad also commented that the owner of Seachange has agreed to plant 500 trees on western side of village to help with light and noise.
- Malcolm Tilgner advised that LED lights have a back-light control that achieves a similar result as the lamp shades by directing the light where it needs to go. Malcolm also reiterated that lighting will be installed in the areas surrounding interchanges only, but not on the main route of the Coomera Connector.
- Belinda O'Neill asked where the road is elevated, if consideration be given for the type of lighting used close to houses? TMR noted this request.
- Al Mucci noted that in his experience of walking on the shared path near Nerang station, the new LED lights really do only light the path and that they do not spill into surrounding areas.
- Malcolm Tilgner suggested CRG members could have a look at lighting on the M1 at Varsity Lakes to see an example of the type of lighting and what can be expected.
- Lois Levy asked about light spill and potential effects on animals near fauna crossings, especially for nocturnal animals?
- Wade Arthur advised that consideration of the effect of the Coomera Connector on this fauna forms part of the PER, as per the guidelines
- Yvette Dempsey asked what changes would be made to the Lakeview Drive intersection signals when the Coomera Connector is built?
- Malcolm Tilgner advised there are not expected to be any changes to this intersection as works for the Coomera Connector will start closer to Nerang station.
- Yvette Dempsey commented that phasing of the traffic signals is poor in the area with local motorists regularly experiencing long wait times. Yvette asked when there is extra traffic from the Coomera Connector, how will the phasing work?
- Malcolm Tilgner advised traffic signal phasing will be reviewed and may work on a trigger outside of peak hours.

Agenda item 6 Other business

CRG members raised the following items:

- Rose Adams asked what percentage of the PER is complete?
- Wade Arthur advised the PER is about 90% complete. There will still be an opportunity for community input during the public consultation period which will be at least 20 days.
- Kate Taylor advised that TMR will need to address the comments received during the public consultation period as part of finalising the PER.
- Lois Levy asked if she could have a copy of the KMP as she missed the meeting TMR had organised for environmental stakeholders?
- Kate Taylor advised the PER wouldn't be circulated but environmental stakeholders and the community will have the opportunity to comment on the KMP as part of the PER public consultation period.
- Nicole Taylor noted that during meeting (when TMR invited key environmental stakeholders to review and provide input into the KMP), there was discussion about who will be undertaking works outlined in the KMP. Nicole asked if there was a process for determining who will do this work?
- Malcolm Tilgner advised that as part of the tender process, respondents would be asked to nominate who would be undertaking all works included in their proposals.
- Yvette Dempsey mentioned that Nerang-Broadbeach Road (near Lawrence Drive) is often congested and gridlocked leading to the M1 and asked if there are plans for it to be widened in this area?
- Kate Taylor advised that TMR responded to this question in December via email to Yvette.
Response: The Queensland Government has committed funding in the Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program 2020–21 to 2023–24 to prepare a business case for upgrading Nerang-Broadbeach Road between the M1 and Lawrence Drive.
- Larissa Burke advised the Coomera Connector will be an alternative route to the M1 so not as much traffic will be forced to take the M1.
- Ann Jones asked how construction of the Coomera Connector will be prioritised?
- Malcolm Tilgner advised prioritisation of works will be driven by the appointed contractor's program – they will determine which works need to be completed first. Typically bridge structures take the longest and the contractor will likely start with these.
- Luisa Williams asked if other the other two Stage 1 contract packages will start while Stage 1 North is being constructed?
- Malcolm Tilgner advised that the Stage 1 packages will overlap. Once the tender process is complete for Stage 1 North, then TMR will start the tender process for the Stage 1 Central contract.
- Belinda O'Neill asked if construction will occur at night?
- Malcolm Tilgner advised most construction works will be done in daylight hours except when there is a need to interact with traffic on existing roads. For example, TMR works in the Smith Street Motorway area are likely to be done at night to avoid the need to close the Smith Street

Motorway during the day which would cause a high level of disruption. Contractors will do as much as possible to mitigate impacts.

Agenda item 7 Close

Kate Taylor thanked the CRG members for their contributions and reiterated TMR's commitment to engaging with community and keeping the community informed throughout the life of the project.

Meeting closed at 11.30am

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23 April 2021

Coomera Connector Project Team

South Coast Region | Program Delivery and Operations

Infrastructure Management and Delivery | Department of Transport and Main Roads

Re: Community Reference Group Involvement

Statement from Gecko Environment Council

Lois Levy and Rose Adams have been actively participating in the consultation for the Coomera Connector to date, representing Gecko Environment Council. We have attended both Community Sessions as well as several smaller meetings at TMR offices in Nerang to discuss many issues, but principally matters relating to environmental management of the project. At today's 3rd Reference Group meeting we request that this letter is tabled and recorded in the Minutes.

We would like to express our strong disappointment concerning the draft copy of the Koala Management Plan (KMP) which was presented to myself and members of the Coomera Conservation Group last Thursday at Nerang. This product lacked detail and did not supply the information requested over many months on how koalas would be managed and protected in the road corridor. We were obliged to speed read this document during a short meeting and were not permitted to take a copy away. The draft copy of the Koala Management study prepared by Dr Jon Hanger for the project was on the table but we were not permitted to view this. During this brief discussion it appeared the draft Plan lacked detail, timelines were vague and a great many key issues had yet to be finalised including offsets, securing suitable habitat for translocation and appointment of a monitoring team. Accordingly we are unable to provide any comment on the draft Koala Management Plan that is being discussed at today's meeting and cannot endorse its inclusion in the package that will shortly be submitted to the federal Department of Environment under the EPBC Act.

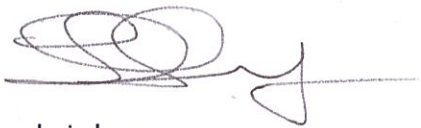
Gecko representatives have cooperatively participated in the consultation process and have been very patiently awaiting the finalisation of the Koala Management Plan, which has been developed over many months. We have kept our members informed on the outcomes of the reference group meetings and have refrained from public criticism of the shortcomings in this process, including only being allowed to comment on a list of "negotiables" of low priority (pedestrian walkways, barrier design and the like). Gecko has supplied input on issues that should be addressed in the KMP but it is unclear from the current document whether there has been any detailed consideration of these matters.

We are cognisant that this Stage 1 of the Coomera Connector will set the example for the next stage, in which matters of environmental significance, both local and national will be impacted in an even more serious way. We seek TMR's strong assurances that the final KMP document presented to the EPBC unit for Stage 1 is much more detailed and demonstrates a best practice approach to environmental management. We would like to be afforded the opportunity to read the KMP report prepared by Dr Hanger and Endeavour Veterinary Ecology in order to properly participate in further consultation.

The process followed for Stage 1 is likely to be followed for Stage 2. Gecko members as well as those from a range of groups in the conservation sector have grave concerns that future stages will be similarly lacking in transparency and engagement with a broader range of environmental stakeholders.

The process followed during the consultation for the Moreton Bay Rail project has been held up as an example of high quality engagement with community on a high-impact project. Regrettably this standard is not evident in the current project thus far.

Gecko remains keen to participate in further discussions on the Coomera Connector. We trust the concerns raised in this statement will be addressed during the reference group meeting. This will apparently be the last opportunity for the community to influence the development application which will shortly be submitted the EPBC unit for preliminary approval and conditioning and accordingly it is imperative that the proposed management plan is as rigorous as possible.



Lois Levy

Campaign Coordinator



Rose Adams

Secretary



Friday 23rd April 2021

Re: Coomera Connector | Community Reference Group

Statement from the Coomera Conservation Group

Representatives Karina Waterman and Nicole Taylor from the Coomera Conservation Group provide this statement for inclusion in the meeting minutes of today's Community Reference Group.

As invited participants in the Community Reference Group, we willingly provide our input, particularly on matters relating to wildlife, in particular the koala. Information provided to date however has been significantly limited, and as such it is our position that we are not being fully engaged in the consultation process.

Information we have been assured would be provided to us in due course has not been provided, i.e., specifics of the Koala Management Plan, and in the absence of this information we are not sufficiently reassured that best practice in terms of koala management is being undertaken at this time. As such we cannot provide meaningful input nor endorse any part of the plan.

So that representatives from our group can continue this working relationship in a meaningful and productive way, we request a more open, transparent, and inclusive consultation process from here out. We note precedence in the Moreton Bay Rail Project which saw relevant groups and government departments engage in regular ongoing workshops and information exchange. Given the significant impact of the Coomera Connector on our wildlife, and our nationally significant and vulnerable koala population, we are calling for immediate engagement with a wider range of community and wildlife groups as well as relevant State and City representatives.

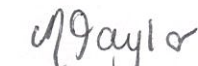
Specifically in relation to the Koala Management Plan, an overview provided to us in a meeting with our colleagues from GECKO on 15th April 2021, there was simply insufficient detail for us to provide input and consequently we are unable to endorse it.

From our previous meetings, it was our expectation that the Koala Management Plan be the work commissioned by TMR and undertaken by Dr Jon Hanger and Endeavor Veterinary Ecology. The document provided for us to review in meeting only, was not the Koala Management Plan produced by Dr Jon Hanger. It was authored by TMR, which omitted key information, including the breadth and depth of specificity that would be expected as part of a Koala Management Plan. It lacked significant areas of detail and provided only broad statements/ objectives rather than clear set actions. Actions and timeframes were not sufficiently quantified. It presented as a non-committal and generic document. The accompanying question and answer time indicated that aspects were still being worked out and open to change, which is reflected by the lack of specifics in the report we viewed.

We now welcome another opportunity to view the Koala Management Plan provided by expert Dr Jon Hanger, which include specifics, enabling us to provide meaningful input and to participate in a broader consultative process as outlined above.



Karina Waterman



Nicole Taylor