

Wednesday 22 August 2012

Letter to the Editor of the Northern Daily Leader

The NSW Government intends to maintain or improve protection for koala habitat ('Koala habitats under threat, *Northern Daily Leader*, 22/8/12).

Our proposals for a new State planning system will provide better upfront protection for natural resource areas through strategic planning, including koala habitat.

These protections will be outlined in regional and subregional plans and will be subject to input from the community and environmental groups. Additionally, existing legalistic State environmental planning policies (SEPPs) will be converted into plain-English NSW planning policies, including one with a focus on protecting koala habitat.

In respect of the Boggabri Coal Project, the department's assessment found it was unlikely to significantly affect core koala habitat due to a low density of koalas in the Leard State Forest. Furthermore, the department will carefully consider any potential impacts on flora and fauna in its assessment of other nearby proposals for the Maules Creek and Tarrawonga mines.

Yours sincerely,

SAM HADDAD
Director-General
NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure