

Performed by Steve Davis at the Sth East Qld Save the Koala rally - Brisbane, September 25th 2009

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Good Morning citizens.

I am from the government. I am from a government that cares. I am from a government that cares about being seen to care.

Ladies and gentlemen I want to assure you that this government cares about the environment, we especially care about koalas, but we mostly care about being re-elected.

I am here to tell you that the government is committed to doing something, anything to appear to be concerned about this issue and that is why I was volunteered to be here. Ladies and gentlemen, as junior minister for the Environment and Urban Development, I have been groomed to demonstrate government in action.

So, why are we here today? Save the koalas...right, but what are we here to save the koalas from? The government knows that we need to save koalas from the five major threats: habitat loss, dogs, cars, and disease. OK, habitat loss, dogs, cars, disease and terrorism....sorry tourism.

Recently the government hired the most expensive consultants we could find. Their motto is "No Fee, No Me" They gave us a report with the answers that we wanted, and you lot still aren't happy.

So we convened the Koala Taskforce which came up with an astonishing 38 recommendations ranging from protecting individual mature trees to enforcing koala speed zones. Well citizens, if that's what you want then the government is committed to adopting these recommendations as policies.

Next week we will be releasing a report on which committee should oversee the inquiry into deciding the budget for an independent research program into whether or not we should consider the matter. And you can believe me when I say that it will be transparent, thorough and all encompassing. You can also believe me when I say it will likely be shelved if and when it is ever completed.

The koala taskforce specifically made these recommendations

Recommendation 1.Reverse processes that contribute directly to the death and injury of koalas.

Well, a survey was done recently and there were found to be 2,279 koalas on what we have affectionately called The Koala Coast. 2,279 koalas...that's impressive! Look around you, there aren't even that many people here today but you wouldn't regard yourselves as threatened with extinction would you? (mobile phone call) to phone: Oh..really, a dog? To audience. There are now 2,228 koalas on The Koala Coast. But I give you the government's guarantee that we will to continue to call it the Koala Coast long after the SEQ Regional plan and lack of action have resulted in the death of the last koala.

Recommendation 2.It is Government policy that there will be no net loss of Koala habitat in SEQ. It is Government policy to provide a net gain.

As well as today's announcement of a massive MASSIVE 5.6 hectares of koala habitat protected, I am delighted to announce that there will be an overall 15% increase in koala habitat in South East Queensland. I would also like you to welcome the city of Townsville to South East Queensland.

For the cynics, I also point out that we have recently demonstrated that we will expand the habitat of native animals. By approving the Traveston Dam we are providing all that extra swimming room for the lung fish.

Recommendation 3.Acquire funds to increase habitat

It's time you all noticed what the government has been doing to support for fund raising for many years. That guy rattling the can in the koala suit is on the dole – a great example of the government providing ongoing funding.

Recommendation 4.Implement community education and extension.

Education is well known to be the key to survival of koalas and the government is formulating a comprehensive education program regarding the dangers of dogs, cars, disease and habitat loss. This will use the latest technology to get the message across and I am sure it is going to make a tremendous difference. Folks, we are confident you will witness remarkable results once we get the koalas into these programs. Additionally, to prevent the spread of Chlamydia we will also be providing koalas with free and anonymous access to condoms. Throughout south east Queensland you will soon see condom dispensers hanging in trees...rubber trees of course.

Recommendation 5.Publicly report on changes in koala numbers and habitat with full data accessibility. (mobile phone call) to phone: Oh..really, a car? To audience. There are now 2,227 koalas on The Koala Coast. (see here's an example of us reporting on changes in koala numbers)

We will continue keep our word on this. We will continue to report publicly. Reports will be made available at parliament house at midnight on every full moon that falls on a Sunday.

Finally, the Government wants to thank you all for making a public issue out of koalas, a cute symbolic animal. You doing this means that we can safely ignore all the other species that need help across our region.

Ladies and gentlemen, we know that you expect the government and all ministers to be committed and I am here to assure you that you won't be disappointed. (mobile phone call) to phone: Oh..really, a developer? To audience. There are now 2,226 koalas on The Koala Coast. Thank you.

