

# Threatened koalas listing creates unnecessary 'green tape'

By Jo Skinner

*Posted May 01, 2012 07:47:13*

**The Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA) says the listing of koalas as a threatened species in Queensland will create unnecessary delays for developers.**

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The Federal Government has listed koala populations in Queensland, New South Wales and the ACT as vulnerable, under national environment laws.

UDIA Queensland chief executive officer Brian Stewart says it has the potential to cause major delays for developers by a further level of unnecessary checking of developer applications at the Federal Government level.

"They could be quite profound," he said.

"The Commonwealth Government already has a number of species throughout the country that are endangered.

"In some places, the mechanisms to provide a level of protection are very comprehensive, so the application may be delayed for six months or 12 months even while negotiations go on.

Yesterday, Queensland Premier Campbell Newman said the listing of koalas as a threatened species would add unnecessary green tape.

Mr Newman says the Federal Government's decision is at odds with the Government's previous commitment to reduce regulations, and existing state protection could simply have been improved.

"It's more needless duplication, it's more mindless green tape, it's more delay and obstruction by Canberra," Mr Newman said.

"I just ask the Prime Minister to go and have a long hard look at what her Government are trying to achieve, because this is counter to what she announced to the nation only a few weeks ago."

Meanwhile, Central Queensland University koala researcher Dr Alistair Melzer says national laws to protect the native animal are much needed in mining regions.

Dr Melzer says mining companies and big developers should take notice of the ruling.

"In terms of rehabilitation of disturbed landscape - post-mining landscapes," he said.

"But also in terms of fitting their infrastructure with measures to protect koalas from say being run over on the roads, injured by trains and other infrastructure as well."

Sunshine Coast Environment Council spokesman Wiebe ter Bals says he has mixed feelings about the listing.

"I feel really double about it because on the one hand it's great that we're getting more serious about protecting this species and the listing gives us greater power under core environment legislation - both at state and national level to try and protect the species and its habitat," he said.

"Sad - because it had to come to this - the fact that it's now listed as vulnerable means that we're losing a species and that's not a good thing."

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