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Koalas in fight to stop mining

Peter Foley | 20th February 2012

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Tags: koala, mining, sanctuary

ONE of Australia's richest people is setting up a koala sanctuary on Ipswich's doorstep, partly as another step in stopping mining in the area.

Graham "Skroo" Turner, who owns Spicers Hidden Vale at Grandchester among a swag of resorts under the Spicers banner, is passionately anti-mining in the Ipswich region.

In an ironic twist, while the State Government is helping him set up the sanctuary, he is opposing them in the battle to stop mining.

Mr Turner, whose fortune is listed at \$365 million, is heading a legal fight against planned coal projects at Ebenezer and west through Grandchester.



Graham Turner has flagged a koala sanctuary in a bid to thwart coal mining.

Contributed

Lawyers for the groups opposed to the mine submit that Mines Minister Stirling Hinchliffe had no legal right to renew Zedemar Holdings' lease on the mine.

Zedemar is selling the 675-hectare Ebenezer mine and the nearby 9202ha Bremer View coal project to OGL Resources, which plans to reactivate the mine.

On Friday, legal representatives for OGL and Zedemar won the right to be co-respondents in the case.

A hearing on the application to stop the mine has been scheduled for March 8.

"Certainly there's a place for mining but this is a semi-rural area that's just not appropriate for this, let alone the havoc and destruction that's going to come down on the wildlife which is already under some pressure, particularly the koala," Mr Turner said.

"This is a big koala area, or was; the numbers are down 40% over the last four or five years in the Ipswich region."

He said details were still being worked out but he expected help from the State Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM).

"I think DERM is behind this and hopefully they (will) fund some of the improvements we'll be doing, mainly in planning suitable vegetation to supplement what's already there," he said.

"I think the deal is we fence off about 2000 acres (800 hectares) and then over a couple of years we plant a significant number of trees.

"Obviously we won't run cattle there while they're young and we get financial support from the government to the tune of \$200,000 to \$300,000 to help fund that.

"This area has a lot to offer Ipswich and Brisbane in terms of leisure and tourism, and outdoor activities. If we're not careful, it's going to be lost forever - as well as the wildlife."

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