

Queensland

Koala listing a threat to building industry, says Campbell Newman

- by: Koren Helbig and Michelle Hele
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- 10 comments

PREMIER Campbell Newman fears the Gillard Government's decision to list Queensland koalas as vulnerable needlessly duplicates the "green tape" threatening the state's struggling construction sector.

As green groups and koala campaigners celebrated the increased protection, the Premier lashed out at what he labelled "more bureaucracy".

"This Government has already inherited strong protection for koalas that we intended to bolster with an investment to actually protect them," Mr Newman said.

"Why does the Federal Government need to get involved?"

Environment Minister Tony Burke yesterday announced at-risk koala populations

(<http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/vulnerable-koalas-to-get-protection/story-e6freoof-1226342567171>) in NSW, Queensland and the ACT would be included on the national list of threatened species, after a Senate inquiry last year found numbers were declining in Queensland and NSW.

QWEEKEND: Queensland's koala population could die out within decades

(<http://media01.couriermail.com.au/extras/koalas/koalas.pdf>)

Mr Newman said he feared further hardship for construction workers already feeling the pinch amid sluggish development rates.

Urban Development Institute of Australia Queensland CEO Brian Stewart said he did not believe the listing would have a major impact on development if the State Government continued to oversee project assessment.

He said state planning policies in place for the past 16 months had already provided a strong framework under which the development industry could ensure populations were protected and habitats maintained.

Mr Stewart feared the Federal Government would become involved in assessing each development application involving koalas, adding a further "significant layer" of bureaucracy that would increase processing times and costs.

Australand general manager Queensland Richard Fulcher said the listing would add another layer of ambiguity to land-use rights.