

1. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE:

QUESTION 01 -

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Can I just clarify that. The comment I was making was that you have identified the corridor and now you are doing the koala studies. My question related to why not do the koala studies and then identify the corridor. That was what I meant by retrospective.

LENDLEASE RESPONSE

Lendlease has commissioned a range of specialist ecological consultants who have undertaken over 1,200 hours of onsite surveys, these survey efforts were undertaken prior to and assisted in the identification of koala corridors and will guide future conservation efforts. To be clear this has been field assessment and research undertaken over several years and seasons. We have also allocated funding to longer term research relating to the local koala population.

The Woodhouse Creek corridor is within an area of the North Gilead Precinct that Lendlease has designated as Stage 2. The formal precinct planning for Stage 2 is yet to begin. When it does, the research that Lendlease has already undertaken will inform the planning process, which will include refining the details of the wildlife corridor in conjunction with the local community and relevant authorities.

QUESTION 02 -

Mr Wallace: I perhaps did not appreciate the significance of the Noorumba population to the north of our site in quite the same way. I am happy to take that on notice and give consideration to what we might be able to do to improve there.

LENDLEASE RESPONSE

To be clear, Noorumba Reserve is not physically part of the Mount Gilead site, but adjacent to the site. However, we can increase and improve Noorumba's linkage to Menangle Creek and that is exactly what we are doing. We have committed to delivering an overall 22.6 ha (as part of Stages 1 and 2) of high-quality vegetation that will be restored and protected in perpetuity, contributing to the Menangle Creek-Noorumba key habitat linkage area.

QUESTION 03 -

The CHAIR: The question is: Did Lendlease request that that money be reduced from \$100,000 to \$50,000? Why was that condition varied?

LENDLEASE RESPONSE

Firstly, it should be recognised under the EPBC's required Koala Management Plan (relating to construction) that Lendlease will actually contribute approximately \$241,660 annually to satisfy the same requirement under the EPBC approval.

The condition requiring monetary contributions was varied by the Federal Department of Environment and Energy, in conjunction with Lendlease's commitment to secure the conservation of an additional 21.13 ha of Koala Habitat from the Appin West biobank site.

Lendlease is of the view that our commitment for stage 1 to provide a total of 60.82 ha of protected habitat for the local Koala population and delivering outcomes with a minimum value of \$958,300 far exceeds expectations originally proposed in Clause 7.

QUESTION 04 -

The CHAIR: Secondly, the other variation, which I think is also important, is the koala management plan needed to be reviewed by the koala recovery team. Now that condition is no longer there, which means the independent oversight is no longer there. The koala management plan now is approved only by the Minister. I have had representations from organisations who are very concerned that there is no longer independent oversight of that. Would you commit to, or can we get some kind of independent review, of your koala management plan?

LENLELEASE RESPONSE

The Koala Management Plan (relating to construction) prepared by Ecological Australia on behalf of Lendlease is currently being assessed by the Federal Department of Environment and Energy

The plan has been prepared by Ecological Australia (ELA), an independent organisation. Their work on Gilead has been undertaken by a large team of over 20 environmental specialists representing multiple disciplines (botanists, fauna ecologists, aquatic ecologists, restoration ecologists, bushfire and GIS experts from within ELA as well as specialist sub-consultants as required) and over 1,200 hrs of on-ground field assessment and research.

The Plan was also developed in consultation with Dr Steven Ward (EMM Consulting), providing advice on koala ecology, and opportunities to improve outcomes for the local koala population. Dr Ward has a PhD in koala ecology where he researched the abundance, habitat and tree use, home range size, health and management of the southern Sydney koala population (Ward 2002).

The Koala Management Plan (relating to construction) estimates the cost to implement the management actions in both the proposed action area and conservation areas for 5 years is \$1,208,300, representing an average funding of \$241,660 each year and a total of \$958,300 above the minimum five-year funding requirement.

Lendlease will work with community organisations such as the National Parks Association and the Georges River Environmental Alliance to finalise the finer details for the plan's management actions including:

- Contractor awareness training;

- active management strategies for dense wood weed understory/Bell Miner dieback control;
- open space design; and
- community programs.

For clarity, the condition relating to the koala recovery team was varied by the Federal Department of Energy and Environment.