

Koala lobby queries Bligh over consultants

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The Australian Koala Foundation (AKF) has embroiled the Queensland Government in yet another allegation of impropriety concerning the use of consultants.

The AKF's chief executive, Deborah Tabart, wrote to Premier Anna Bligh last week asking why the Government did not put the recent Koala Mapping Project for South-East Queensland out to tender.

The Department of Environment and Resource Management this year contracted the engineering consultancy firm GDH to undertake the mapping and the project was finished in May.

The department's website says a key recommendation of the Koala Crisis Response Strategy was to undertake extensive mapping of koala habitat in South-East Queensland. The AKF and the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland said a State Government report released in May proved koalas in the region were already "critically endangered".

Ms Tabart asked why the Government had paid \$900,000 for new maps to be made when the AKF had offered their maps free.

She said new government maps deliberately did not fully identify and protect habitats with koalas. "The more inept the mapping, the easier it is for developers to get through the loopholes," she said.

Premier Anna Bligh last week asked the Crime and Misconduct Commission to investigate every change to the South-East Queensland regional plan since it was introduced in 2005 following allegations that developers with links to ALP lobbyists received favourable decisions.

Source: [The Sun-Herald](#)