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Action needed to save koala

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Redlands' koalas face a very grim future because of inaction on the part of both the State Government and Redland Shire Council to protect their dwindling habitat.

That's the disturbing verdict of the Wildlife Preservation of Society of Queensland on Save the Koala Day today.

Wildlife Society Bayside Branch spokesman Simon Baltais said the State Government and Council (whose logo features the koala) were all talk on saving koalas while more and more houses and other developments were being allowed to be built encroaching on koala habitat.

"The State Government has the power to legislate to protect the koala and Redland Shire Council is responsible for planning that can achieve the same, yet both are failing to use their abilities to protect the koala population from further decline," he said.

"Save the Koala Day is about raising public awareness of the plight of the koala but it's clear those requiring the greatest education are the State Government and Redland Shire Council.

"Through their actions and inaction it appears government is promoting the demise of the koala.

"Redland Shire Council has made a decision to allow further urbanisation within the Koala Coast, the heart of major koala territory.

"Massive urban expansion is believed planned that will encourage an estimated 25,000 to 35,000 more people into the Koala Coast.

"Urbanisation will bring many more cars and more domestic dogs, both clearly identified as major causes of the demise of the koala.

"Accompanied by further habitat destruction the Redland Shire Council's planning appears set to push the koala population towards a dismal future."

Mr Baltais said Redland Shire Council had embarked on a program of urban expansion that may seal the fate of the koala.

"Redland Shire Council is committed to more roads, cars and houses, all those aspects that will kill off even more koalas in the koala capital of Australia, the Koala Coast," he said.

"The State government is no better. They have recently failed to use legislation to protect 150 hectares of core koala habitat, also listed as an Endangered Regional Ecosystem.

"Likewise, the State Government appears ready to permit hundreds of more hectares of koala habitat to be destroyed to allow for quarry expansion in the Koala Coast."

Mr Baltais said the State Government was very reluctant to implement legislation

that would provide genuine long-term protection for the koala.

"Quite the contrary, only recently the State Government used a loophole in their new Vegetation Management Act to avoid protecting 158 hectares of koala habitat at Mt Cotton; this is listed also as an Endangered Regional Ecosystem and a very significant regional wildlife corridor."

Mr Baltais said the recent listing of the koala as "vulnerable" had made no difference to the ongoing decline of the koala population or its habitat.