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Ben Klaassen
Deputy Director-General
Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships

Dear Ben

Your letter dated August 12, 2022, in reply to my letter of concerns sent to you on 22/07/22, fails to address those matters in any accurate or constructive fashion. Instead it serves to further compound my submitted concerns.

My letter documented debilitating public actions by stakeholders that are engaged directly within the project development to the exclusion of all other community interests deeply affected its evident impacts. These actions were:

a. Falsely asserting to evidently complicit media operatives that I have provided incorrect and unreliable site plan details to the public, despite my descriptions being in strict accordance with definitions and advice provided by your Department.
b. Asserting to their constituencies, and evidently continuing to assert, site plan details respective to Poona Lake that do not conform to any relevant site plan details provided by DES. This incorrect, effectively misleading information was provided to that constituency in the direct presence of CGWEP project officers without correction at the time of delivery nor thereafter, as evidenced by the situation described in point a).

In reply you have acted in essentially the same manner as outlined in a) above, and have obfuscated upon the matter outlined in b).

Respective to the latter, if, as you state, the Kabi ILUA is an independent process and solely a matter for that community, why do DES project officers attend the ILUA meetings? A sound reason would be to ensure clarity, accuracy and consistency of delivered information, yet my stated concerns deem those qualities to be missing.

My letter to you distinctly conveyed the following:

i. On June 15, 2022 DES officers provided detail on site plan variations under consideration.
ii. DES officers advised the parties attending the June 15 event that the new information could be shared on the basis that the variations be noted as 'unconfirmed' and subject to further assessment, including stakeholder approval.
iii. Subject to possible acceptance of any part(s) of these defined variations, the site details within the EPBC report remain the only available specification.
iv. The Cooroy forum, and subsequent publications, presented site information in exact accord with the above listed information and disclaimers.

Despite my explicitly clear provision to you of these actions and events you have somehow found it appropriate to write the following in response:

> *The department understands that information shared with these organisations was presented publicly by you at a community information session held in Cooroy on 2 July 2022, and has subsequently been published by you on social media.* ***It is unfortunate that you presented preliminary project information as reflecting finalised site locations without seeking to clarify the site selection process or to verify the accuracy and currency of information presented,*** *when in fact site selection is subject to ongoing consultation, investigation and agreement.*

Mindful of the numbered point list above, can you please specify the error or oversight within my public account of site information that supports your accusation emboldened in the above paragraph, as quoted directly from your letter of August 12?

Absent such sound example, your accusation stands as being patently baseless and false. It amounts to either a serious error of comprehension or a fabricated abusive slur upon my actions, my intent and my character.

Whether it is an error or an intentional device, your assertion serves to support your letter's general discursion away from the specific questions I put to you for your professional response. Accordingly I trust that you understand my need to receive your explanation of this personal abuse delivered upon me with its contingent effect of marginalising my reasoned enquiry.

Following your address of the significant matter of factual evidence for your claim of my mis-reporting can you please provide response to the questions initially submitted and re-presented below?

Beyond its denigration of my personal actions, and the integrity of our public effort in general, your false assertion serves to maintain undue opacity and vagary upon development details that are crucial to the public interest. These details have not in fact changed substantively from those documented within the EPBC referral, yet your Department and its active partners in this project are acting to immerse them in clouds of uncertainty. These questions seek reasonably to diminish this unnecessary public fog.

1. Does the outline provided to community groups (SCEC, WBBEC & CCAI) on June 15, in conjunction with the EPBC referral material, constitute the singular extent of Government position respective to CGWEP development site locations, or are variants to this outline being presented to other parties?

2. If only the one version of site definitions exists, as per the June 15 update upon the EBPC documentation:
    i. does your Department require its closely engaged Stakeholder groups to accurately convey those plan details in their public or constituent announcements, as it so advised the groups that participated in the June 15 meeting and as you have admonished me for allegedly failing to do?
    ii. what steps will be taken to ensure future compliance with this reporting standard by those closely engaged groups?

3. DES officers personally witnessed three consecutive events in March this year of the Kabi applicant misinforming the Kabi Claim group respective to Poona Lake development details.
    Is it appropriate that these officers failed to correct that conveyed error, both at that time and subsequently thereafter?

4. Our invitation for your attendance at the Cooroy public forum for the stated purpose of advancing common public knowledge on the CGWEP was declined in your letter dated 13/06/22, stating: *"Due to the sensitive nature of some of these milestones I am not in a position to discuss the project until they have been resolved."*
   Do you accept that:
   i. The general public holds a deep, abiding and legitimate interest in the essential premise of this plan (commercial development within National Parks in principle) and the details and progression of this specific plan?
   ii. a genuinely transparent public engagement upon the full extent this project would help avoid undue confusion and conflict arising from the suppression of that public interest?

5. Your letter of the 12th describes the current site definitions as 'preliminary'.
   i. If that is so, and explicit public consideration of available site definitions is now premature, why was the project referred for Commonwealth assessment in May 2021 with the estimate that works would begin on 3/12/21 and complete by 30/09/22?
   ii. Does your Department intend to submit finalised variations from the already assessed locations for further Federal assessment?
   iii. What evidence exists to refute public perception that the site details submitted for EPBC assessment were considered final at that time, and that current minor changes to those sites, and claim of their preliminary status, serve to shield the Department's inability to address serious public concerns held toward the specified sites?

Regards

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