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Rob Mellett

AN IPSWICH schoolgirl who wrote to King Charles III pleading for help to save Springfield's Woogaroo Forest has received a personal reply from Buckingham Palace.

Year 8 student Kalanya Mapuilesua penned the emotional letter earlier this year after learning about plans to destroy the forest for units.

“Dear King Charles III,” she wrote, “I am a student at an Ipswich school, and I would like to seek help for the Woogaroo Forest at Springfield.

“The forest is going through deforestation and pollution. The forest contains native plants, animals and koalas.

“There is a koala named Tanya who lives in the forest, and she is very cross because she does not want to ‘leave’ her favourite tree. Many people have started a protest to fight for the forest that is not doing any harm to anyone.

“Unfortunately, the government wants nothing to do with Woogaroo Forest and the native animals in the forest but, with your help, we would be able to save the forest and all the things there.”

The heartfelt letter struck a chord in London, where King Charles’s office recently responded with words of encouragement: “Dear Kalanya, the King has asked me to thank you for your most thoughtful message. It was so kind of you to take the trouble to write to His Majesty with your concerns for the environment.

“The King, who has been working on projects to protect and restore our natural world for over 50 years, was immensely touched to learn that you too care deeply about this important issue and was especially heartened by your enthusiasm for the conservation of Australia’s native flora and fauna.

“I hope you will be reassured to know that His Majesty continues to encourage us all to think about the many things we can do to help sustain and support the planet and has asked me to pass on his warmest good wishes for your endeavours.

“Yours sincerely, Head of Royal Correspondence.”

Students at Kalanya’s school studied Woogaroo Forest as part of lessons on urbanisation and the effects of habitat destruction.

Ipswich has the lowest coverage of remnant vegetation intact in Southeast Queensland, with less than 20 percent now remaining.