

ARE EIA REPORTS ADDRESSING ALL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS?

THE Institution of Engineers, Malaysia (IEM) shares the concerns of the Malaysian Nature Society (“No more roadkill, please” in *The Star*, 24 February, 2012) about the many infrastructure projects that are cutting through natural forest reserves without consideration for the wildlife that the projects are encroaching on. The much touted “Sustainable Green Transportation Policy” and the mandatory Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) reports that are designed to protect the long term survival of the environment have often failed to address these very concerns, including those related to the protection of wildlife in general and of endangered species in particular.

In the Klang Valley where three new highways have been proposed, two of them are known to be cutting through forest reserves that will encroach into and affect the natural environment in these reserves. These highway projects should seriously consider the welfare of the wildlife, as well as how their movement, safety and survival are affected. The IEM calls on the authorities to avoid having highways that cut through forest reserves in order to ensure the long term sustainability of these natural environments. Granted that in some specific instances when it may be unavoidable and even justifiable to infringe upon forest reserves, the impact should be minimised with the implementation of a proper environmental and engineering design that would, for example, provide for underpasses for the movement of wild animals crossing the highways.

EIA reports must address ALL environmental concerns and such reports should be taken seriously and implemented by all parties involved in a project. Perhaps some endangered species may then be spared the onslaught of possible extinction in our country! ■

