



Treetops

If you see a sick, injured or dead koala, call the rescue hotline:
6622 1233

The Newsletter of Friends of the Koala Inc.

September 2011

Patron: Margot Sweeney (CEO, Summerland Credit Union)

Resilient Roxy

Roxy was delivered to the Koala Care Centre at 2.30am on 6 November 2010. She was in a sorry state, as was her deliverer. Roxy had been severely savaged by the young man's Bull Arab Mastiff. Her right hind-quarter was a bloody mess.

Pat Barnidge, who had taken the call and dragged herself out of bed to drive to and open up the Care Centre, did what she could to stabilise the distressed youngster. The window for minimising infection from dog attack is a maximum of twelve hours; an emergency visit to Keen Street Vets was arranged within minutes of them opening for business.



Roxy at the Koala Care Centre before her transfer to AWH

Roxy returned to the Care Centre dosed up with antibiotics and pain killers. Her wounds were substantial but she stoically acquiesced to their bathing twice daily. She returned to the Vet a week later for a check-up but through the following week complications set in. Roxy looked fine; she was eating and pooing okay, but her wounds remained inflamed. She returned to the Vet and this time necrotic tissue was found in her right shoulder.

The decision was made to transfer Roxy to the Australian Wildlife Hospital where she underwent surgery involving the removal of some muscle tissue. She remained in intensive care for several days and we in Lismore as well as the staff and volunteers at AWH were all concerned that she wouldn't pull through.

Roxy was young (2 years old) and she had been healthy. Bit by bit she perked up. Seeing her come good like that, struck at the heartstrings. With all her shaved patches she looked like a chequer board; her feisty spirit just added to the pathos. It became clear her healing leg and shoulder required exercise. She couldn't be put outside so she was given the privilege of roaming around the Hospital. This was fine as long as an eye was kept on her. From time to time though Roxy would go missing and pandemonium would ensue. She was never far away; usually curled up exhausted behind towels in the linen cupboard.

Roxy was always in our thoughts and anyone who made the trip to the Hospital would make a point of checking on her and reporting progress.

Eventually, towards the end of March she returned to us. Her dreadful wound had reduced to a scab the size of a five cent coin. But Roxy's ordeal was not yet over. Perhaps she knocked the scab because over the next few days the wound started weeping again and her balance was completely out of whack. She wasn't climbing particularly well and she was falling off the frame. Within a fortnight Roxy was back at AWH under 24 hour veterinary care. We were devastated.

Roxy wasn't down long. A week later she was outside in the Hospital's spacious rainforest enclosure with the gang of half a dozen or so other koalas in recuperation. Her climbing skills improved and she gained weight. On 17 August we were instructed to collect

Roxy, hold her for 48 hours and then release.



Roxy at release in mid August 2011

In the meantime the owners of the property from which Roxy came had returned. Bounded by the Richmond, the locality is rich in wildlife. Their tenant and his dog had moved on but not before telling them about the attack and Roxy's admittance. Contact was made and transport arranged. Still more than a bit concerned about Roxy's climbing ability, Pat and Marg Russell loaded her into the van and away they drove to East Coraki and a dog-less wel

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President's Message



Lorraine Vass

Spring has arrived. The days are getting longer; the weather a little warmer; the grunting and bellows much louder and prolonged, but no squeals as yet, around us.

The year seems to have been great for breeding. Mums and bubs are being reported from all over. I see three on my walks, depending on the route I take and whether they happen to be visible from the road when I pass.

Where I live, south-east of Lismore, the habitat is so fragmented that it's relatively easy to spot koalas. How they hang on under such conditions really beats me.



Mum and bub in Robson Road, Wyrallah

This time of year also sees Friends of the Koala gearing up for our AGM in mid-October. The books are with the auditor, the Annual Report is in preparation; it is time for reflection. On balance I think it has been a good year for the group and for koala conservation on the Northern Rivers.

As you all know Friends of the Koala's mission is *Conserving koalas, particularly in the Northern Rivers Region of New South Wales, in recognition of the contribution the species makes to Australia's biodiversity.*

The focus on the Northern Rivers Region makes sense because the vast majority of our members are local and our own backyard is what is of most importance to most of us. There's a bit more to it than that however. Native wildlife rescue and rehabilitation is a licensed activity under the NSW *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*.

Only persons authorised under a wildlife licence issued by the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) may take native animals into care. As a general rule,

licences are issued to groups. The groups are responsible for training and authorising their members who wish to rescue, rehabilitate and release injured, sick or orphaned animals. They must also ensure the activities of those authorised members comply with the *Code of Practice for Injured, Sick and Orphaned Protected Fauna* and in our case, the *Code of Practice for Injured, Sick and Orphaned Koalas*, both of which have been finalised over the past twelve months or so.

Licences are generally tied to geographic areas which in turn are aligned with regions within OEH. The geographic area in which Friends of the Koala is permitted to operate its koala rescue, rehabilitation and release program replicates OEH's Northern Rivers Region.

NSW's network of volunteer wildlife rescue and rehabilitation groups has an important role in:

- *Relieving the suffering of individual animals by providing appropriate medical treatment and care;*
- *Fostering an understanding of native animals and the natural environment within the wider community;*
- *Broadening our knowledge of wildlife biology and the threats facing particular species;*
- *Conserving wildlife populations by successfully returning healthy animals to their natural habitat.*

Friends of the Koala is a single species, specialist group and our role extends way beyond to include habitat protection and enhancement, advocacy, policy reform and involvement in research. Our constitution enables us to actively support koala conservation wherever there are koala populations in need of protection.

Day to day Friends of the Koala doesn't have a lot to do with the agency which issues our licence and to which we are accountable. We barely interact with our regional office although we gratefully receive the annual amount of around \$3,000 to which we are invited to apply. Our direct link with OEH is through the Wildlife Licensing and Management Unit (WLMU), which in more recent years is making a concerted effort to

reach out and support the voluntary wildlife rehabilitation sector.

The Codes already mentioned have been a very welcome output of that support, as has the payment of public liability and volunteer risk insurance coverage. The move from annual licensing to triennial licensing introduced in July has been a significant indicator of increased trust in the sector. Progressing develop-



Policies and codes which govern Koala rehabilitation

ment of a state-wide online database by first negotiating as we are at present, standard fields and descriptors is very much a work in progress. While tensions inevitably arise between some licence-holders and the licence provider, particularly when change is being communicated, we are very

pleased to see that OEH has become more appreciative of the potentially valuable contribution that wildlife rehabilitation groups have to make to conservation science across NSW.

Part of the WLMU's support service is to provide advice on applying the Codes in difficult or irregular situations. We have had a few instances, particularly in regard to release in areas of severely degraded habitat, where we have consulted and received assistance. The Unit has also granted us permission to retain in permanent care at the Koala Care Centre three un-releasable females – Hera, Rosalie and Joanna. These koalas will be companion animals to others in care and will be an important component of our education program for volunteers and members of the public.

Whilst there is undoubtedly widespread support for and appreciation of the work of the State's c4,500 voluntary wildlife rehabilitators within OEH, we remain somewhat distanced from the volunteers that OEH acknowledges in its *Volunteer Policy and Procedures* (2009) which are limited to those involved in Parks and Wildlife management, the Botanic Gardens and its Friends association.

Since its formation at the end of 2005, the NSW Wildlife Council is becoming a stronger voice for wildlife rehabilitation groups with stakeholders and with government in particular. In my view though it still has some way to go to being recognised as a significant partner organisation.

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Care Coordinator's Report



Barb Dobner

This is the last report that I will be writing as Care Coordinator as I am stepping down from the position at our upcoming AGM.

There are a few reasons. Firstly I am lacking time due to work commitments to give the job what it needs. Secondly a time has come in my life where I need to cut back on a few things and concentrate on my family before my children leave home. I will still be caring for the odd animal and helping out on the sidelines but not be as involved as I have been. I have been handing over several jobs over the last year and feel there are lots of people around who are more than competent so feel confident the job will be in good hands with someone else.

I am going to be a bit boring but need to say a few thankyou's. There are too many individuals to mention names but I think you will know who you are.

Thankyou to the vets at the Australian Wildlife Hospital, Currumbin Wildlife Hospital and locally at Keen St and Uralba St for putting up with all my questions, being patient and willing to teach both me and us as a group what we have needed to know in order to achieve the quality of care and assessment we

now have. My particular thanks to Gail Gipp who really helped me out when I started. If she was not available, Karen Scott always stepped up, so thanks Karen.

Thanks to all the home carers who have made my job easier with regular updates automatically sent through and for always being willing to take just that one more animal, spend their own time and money on fantastic set-ups and being such dedicated carers in general. Cutting your own leaf no matter the weather, every single day for many months at a time is a big ask.

Thanks to all those who are regularly rescuers. It never ceases to amaze me how willing all our rescuers are no matter how much travel is involved. When there is a koala in need they go. We are very blessed as a group in this regard.

Thanks to everyone in the Care Centre for looking after our charges so diligently. Lola has to be the most patient lady I know and does a wonderful job of keeping everything organised and as consistent as possible using a quiet, calm and persistent manner.

Not sure to thank Lorraine as she got me into this but she has been thoughtful in providing support and has helped me not to lose my temper or do something real-

ly stupid at times when I have gotten tired, overloaded and frustrated. She is a wealth of knowledge in all areas of koala matters.

Before this gets too long, thanks to all the koalas. As it starts to get busy again this year I encourage all people who are able to lend a helping hand, wherever their interests may be, to speak to a committee member or a shift supervisor. If we don't get back to you straight away it is not because we are not interested but it is just busy. Keep asking and things will happen. Thanks and happy caring.



Barb and Lorraine at the 2007 National Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference in Perth where they presented their paper: "Conserving a Regional Koala Population—Friends of the Koala's Journey of Holistic Engagement"

PS – Following on from the last issue's Zeus story : OEH has given us permission to release him at one of our soft release sites. We are just waiting for a site to be freed up to be able to release a single male. This should happen in the next few weeks. After an adjustment period he will be back in the wild, but in a much safer place.

PPS – We have also been very pleased to received permission from OEH to keep three un-releasable females – Hera, Rosalie and Joanna in permanent care in the Care Centre. These animals will help educate volunteers and members of the public about koalas as well as being companion animals.

—Barb Dobner

Koala Care Statistics 31 May – 11 August 2011 Friends of the Koala attended to or provided advice on a total of 132 koalas

	In Care	Released	Died	Dead on Arrival	Eu-thanased	Unable to find/capture	Advice
HBC – Road Strike (12)	2	1	4	4			1
Dog attack (7)	3		1		2		1
Diseased/Sick (49)	7	2	2	5	20		13
Injury (3)	1				2		
Health unknown /unrecorded (15)	2	1		6	1		5
Healthy/Assumed Healthy (37)		7					30
Orphans/joey's (9)	4	5					
Totals (132)	19	16	7	15	25	0	50

From page 2 Good-will and patience on both sides will ensure the strengthening of stakeholder support which will in turn see the voluntary wildlife rehabilitation sector enduring.

You will read above that Care Coordinator, Barb Dobner is resigning

from committee duties. Barb has held the position for six years. During that time her exacting standards have been our benchmark. She has worked relentlessly to improve training opportunities; to build sound working relationships between veterinarians and 'rehabbers'; to document the care and rescue meth-

ods in place; and to improve and extend our record-keeping. She's also contributed to Friends of the Koala's governance and organisational strength. For years we have been a sounding-board for each other's ideas and aspirations for FOK.

Well done Barb and thankyou.

—Lorraine Vass

To Rescue or not to Rescue

One of the many joys of living in the Northern Rivers is the closeness of nature. For many residents sighting or encountering a koala is an everyday experience. For others it can be new, strange and even confronting.

Over the past twelve months or so there seems to have been an increase in the number of reports of koalas in odd places, especially in urbanised areas. For the first time we have sought permission from the Office of Environment & Heritage to relocate a couple of male koalas because they were not coping in the habitat available to them.

The *Code of Practice for Injured, Sick and Orphaned Koalas* (2011) states: *Rescuers must not move a healthy, independent koala unless it is at immediate risk of injury (e.g. on a road). Such relocations will involve moving the koala a safe distance from the hazard and placing it in a climbable tree* (4.1.7, p.2).



Koala traversing a building site

Some koalas cope quite well with living in urban areas. To move them would be a disaster for the individual and the impact that relocation may have on the koalas living in the area receiving the additional koala. Moving a koala to the other side of the road from where it came from may result in injury as it works its way back to its home range. Capturing any koala causes a degree of stress that may result in the onset of disease. So what to do?



Koala on a shed post—leave it alone

Back to basics – the initial phone report from the member of the public (MOP). It is extremely important to get the maximum amount of information from a phoned report. Astute and tenacious questioning (and listening) are essential.

What are the caller's concerns? Is there a sound basis for those concerns? Is the koala showing symptoms of disease? Have they actually seen the koala being attacked by a dog or hit by a car? Is the koala injured in any way? What exactly

is the koala doing? How long has it been going on? Why has the caller phoned?

If the koala is showing no signs of disease, has only been in the proximity of dogs, i.e. is in a tree in a yard with dogs but the dogs have not been near it as far as the caller can tell, and the caller is prepared to become engaged, then it is best to ask that any possible dangers i.e. dogs and people are removed, until the koala has moved on.

If the koala has not moved on after a few hours (this implies of course that the caller has been prepared to keep an eye on the koala and to phone again) then it is advisable to send a rescuer out to assess the situation. In these cases the koala is usually fine; they are just moving through their usual urban territory. Urban koalas take their chances with the risks around them. While we may think it is an inappropriate place for a koala to be in, it is where they live. If the koala is an adult with a good body score, which most of them are, it is and has been doing fine and should be left alone. This is recorded as an advice call.

If there is concern regarding the koala's health or the member of the public is particularly distressed then a rescuer should be immediately despatched to assess the situation. This does not necessarily mean the koala must be brought into care. If the rescuer arrives to find a healthy looking koala with no evidence of injury, then the koala should be left alone even if it is sitting on a fence or beside a road. The koala is better to find its own way to where it is going.

An important part of our job is to explain to the MOP that this is the koala's home range and to provide suggestions of how that person can help make it a bit of a better environment for koalas and watch out if anything does go wrong. Putting a healthy koala through the stress of capture for tagging is not appropriate. These calls are also recorded as advice calls as there has been no attempt made to rescue the koala. In most cases we are simply educating the public that many koalas live in urban areas.

Another common problem with rescues

is diseased koalas that are still quite active and mobile. We have a poor success rate in trying to capture such koalas. A common scenario is for us to receive a call that an animal is down low but by the time we arrive ten minutes later, the animal has climbed to the top of a very tall tree, interconnected with others so capture becomes 'mission impossible'.

For a koala that can still climb well but is showing signs of disease the best advice to give the caller is to keep a laundry basket handy. If a koala is observed on the ground as it is moving from tree to tree and the caller can quietly sneak up on it and place the basket over the top...fantastic! Once the koala has been contained and is reported to us, a rescue can be organised.

This scenario is different to one where a koala has been observed hanging low in a tree for several days in the same place, although even then the koala could have been moving through the night to return to the same place. As a rule of thumb though, a koala that remains low to the ground for days on end is a very sick koala and needs to be rescued ASAP. In cases of trauma where it is known that the koala is injured or there is the definite possibility of injury i.e., the dog was seen biting the koala even though there is no blood or obvious wounds, a rescuer must be immediately despatched.

So to sum up, if a koala is healthy and there appears to be no reason for bringing it into care apart from the fact it is sitting on a fence or in a tree close to a road, then leave it alone to go on its way.

If a koala is showing signs of disease but is still very active, don't send out a rescuer unless the koala has already been contained or further assessment of the situation proves that rescue is warranted.

Just because a rescuer has been sent out to assess the situation does not mean capture should be attempted.

Koalas that have been sitting low in a tree for several days, are on the ground unable to climb or display injuries, must be attended to ASAP.

—Barb Dobner

Care Centre Coordinator's Report



Lola Whitney

The headline news at the Koala Care Centre is that our application to keep Rosalie, Hera and our other special girl, Joanna, in permanent care has been successful. They will be a great asset for us in our education and training programs. Thank-you to all in the licensing unit who found merit in our submission.

The Kids, Alika, Zeus(2), Myra, Clarissa and Lizzie, I mentioned in my last report have all been released. No sooner had they gone than the place filled up again. I sometimes wonder where all the koalas come from. We see a lot of sadness each week so when we do release a koala back into the wild healthy and strong, it's a great joy to us. We are in no doubt that what we do is very important.

The second shed is now operational thanks to Essential Energy who funded it and to Roy Johnston, Rick Stewart, Ray Mezieres and Russell Ford who erected it as well as looking after the landscaping. They have also had to re-configure the drains as the heavy rain of a few weeks ago caused a few problems in the enclosures. Roy has put extra-tall poles in the enclosure housing our permanent girls. They enjoy climbing up high and I'm sure they are as appreciative of Roy's work as we are.

We have new reserved parking signs for six car spaces on Rifle Range Road above the Care Centre. We are very grateful to SCU for agreeing to our request for a reserved allocation as many people come to work or visit the Centre every day and parking was getting very tricky.

Speaking of visitors, it was lovely to see Helen Hargreaves and the 1st Clunes Guides so soon after the girls helped us by joining the FOK contingent at the Lantern Parade. In July we were pleased to welcome Board members of the Northern



Lorraine and Judy Henderson, Chair, NR Catchment Authority in front of Essential Energy's new shed

Rivers Catchment Management Authority; the first time they had visited.

I'd like to share with you a good news story. Karen McBurney was driving home to Coraki from Lismore on Wednesday 31 August. She was near Ruthven when she saw what she thought was a cat or a fox on the side of the road. She stopped to take a closer look and saw it was a koala. There were no food trees around – just miles of sugar cane and a few pines. The paddocks were covered in water and the drainage ditches along the road were full of muddy water.

Karen feared that the koala would be hit by a car so rang her husband to find our number and ring us for help. By this time the koala was down in a ditch, battling with the mud and water – she appeared tired.

Receiving Graham's call, Sam Kendal and I left the Care Centre to meet Karen who had stayed with the koala to keep an eye on her. She was still walking along the drain, up to her hips in mud and water. Both Karen and the koala had walked quite a distance. The koala was so tired she didn't put up much resistance to being handled and caged.

Karen (the koala) couldn't believe her good fortune with the smogasbord of leaf that awaited her at the Care Centre. She attacked it enthusiastically while we made an appointment with the Keen Street Vet Clinic to have her checked out.

Karen proved to be a fit and healthy 5/6 year old. She was ear-tagged and spent another night at the Care Centre before being released on a property at Ruthven with good habitat. It was lovely to see her bolt up the tree we had selected for her. When we left she was looking very content.

With Karen the koala safe and well; Karen the caring lady who watched over her, has our gratitude.

A big thankyou to our wonderful volunteers and caring members of the public for all they do.

—Lola Whitney

Our Awesome Care Volunteers



Sam Kendal

I hear stories of our volunteers being bitten by Zeus and being slightly punctured by koalas using them as climbing poles, but they keep coming back! Over recent months there has been a small turnover of volunteers at the Care Centre but a very strong core group of committed members remains.

I undertook a little stocktake of attendance and happily found that the majority of vollies make nearly every shift, which is a superb effort, and most are really great at communicating when they cannot make it. A special thanks goes out to Craig, John, Eddie, and Steve who have been super-available to fill in for shifts and to Megan and Katherine who have stepped up to supervise shifts when needed.

It is great to see vollies up-skilling with Jesabe, John and Craig learning to give the morning medications and injections. We currently have four regulars per afternoon shift. As we move into the busy season it would be even better to have another for each day (2-4pm). If you know of anyone who is calm and caring, really enjoys the satisfaction of a good cleanout and is just a little bit awesome, get them to call the Care Centre and sign up.

—Sam Kendal

From page 1 coming party.

The release cage was opened and Roxy bolted up the 10metre tree without a worry in the world. She got to the top, yawned, scratched, had a nibble and then proceeded to leap from branch to branch as if to demonstrate to all that she was definitely home.

The next day she was sighted with four other regulars along the river. We wish her well.

—Lorraine Vass

Treetops is printed on recycled paper.



Advocacy & Policy Reform Report

Happily there has been some respite from the frenetic number of meetings and submission deadlines that characterised the first half of the year. Work on the three comprehensive koala plans of management continued, taking over as the major focus through the quarter.

Unfortunately I missed the meeting of the Tweed Coast Koala Advisory Group Committee (TCKAGC) held at the end of July. However I attended the excellent workshop led by Steve Phillips on Habitat Recovery and Connectivity which followed in mid-August.

This was the first of a series of planned workshops which will address a particular theme and intended to tease out and develop meaningful, achievable measures and actions to support the Tweed Coast plan. Participants were invited, representing a broader range of stakeholders than the Advisory Committee, all working in and with a close on-ground knowledge of the study area.

To kick off discussion various propositions had been prepared and forwarded for consideration. Discussion focussed on their application - how they might or might not work and in some cases, proposal of alternatives.



SRG members (l-r) Sandra Heuston, Lorraine Vass and Julie Reid doing their homework.

The cycle of meetings of Lismore's Stakeholder Reference Group (SRG) has also slowed with only two workshops held, in mid-July and early August, dealing with the regulatory provisions and habitat compensation policy respectively. A briefing on progress was presented to the Council in mid-August by staff and two members of the SRG, Sandra Heuston and Kel Graham.

The thrust of Sandra's presentation was our collective analysis of what had worked well and not so well with the process adopted by Council. The final workshop, which was to be held at the end of August was postponed in order to

give staff time to better articulate some of the complexities of the regulatory provisions.

I am enjoying my involvement with both the TCKAGC and the SRG as they are enabling me to work more closely with some well informed and delightful people. The opportunity for collaboration is greater in Lismore because several of us on the SRG know each other quite well as we have worked together previously. Staff, of course, is that much more accessible.

Before moving on I need to mention that the first meeting of the Byron Shire Koala Plan of Management Project Reference Group was on 4 August. To my dismay, Scott Hetherington, Team Leader, Natural Resources with Byron Council has since resigned.

The present surge of interest in the development of comprehensive koala plans of management by North Coast councils prompted the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) to host a Council Koala Forum in early June. Representatives from Tweed, Lismore, Byron, Ballina, Clarence Valley, Coffs Harbour, and Hastings councils attended, as did staff from the Department of Planning & Infrastructure and OEH and consulting ecologist, Dr Steve Phillips who has had some involvement in all the drafts in preparation, apart from that of Clarence Valley.

The forum identified three priority issues for further, co-ordinated action: resolution of Private Native Forestry issues to ensure koala habitat is adequately managed and protected; review of SEPP 44 to update and resolve definition issues, trees species list and methodologies for surveys and plans of management; and urgent provision of a resource package from state government to support councils to undertake and complete and implement CKPoMs.

Other issues that have arisen in the quarter to which we have responded are, concerns about the impact of under-line pruning operations by Essential Energy and of alleged windbreak clearance on macadamia farms on koalas in the north-east of Lismore; the possible impact of

wild dogs on koalas, particularly in the western parts of Byron Shire; and the impact on remnant koala habitat in the south-east forests in the light of Bega Valley Shire Council's approval of a wood pellet plant for the Eden Chip Mill.

We have responded to the Draft Lismore City Council Sport and Recreation Plan 2011-2021 and provided referral advice to callers on development applications at Nimbin and Ewingsdale.

I represented Friends of the Koala at the Fourth Border Ranges Alliance Forum in June. The Border Ranges is a priority region of the Great Eastern Ranges Initiative. Part of this year's forum explored the potential to collate monitoring information across Alliance members and projects utilising the Atlas of Living Australia's capacity for providing 'citizen science' data capture and analysis tools.

I also participated in a stakeholder and community consultation workshop held in early September to inform the preparation of a new NPWS Regional Pest Management Strategy. I made the point that disease in native wildlife species, in particular koalas, is a significant gap in the existing Strategy, given the inclusion of disease in native vegetation. I doubt that it will go anywhere, but we keep trying.

—Lorraine Vass



Lismore City Council's s.356 donations presentations in early August: (l-r) Lorraine Vass, General Manager, Gary Murphy, Mayor Jenny Dowell and Pat Barnidge

Subscription Reminder

Membership fees were due on 1 July 2011 and should be paid by 30 September to maintain continuity of financial membership and enable participation in the Annual General Meeting.

See renewal form on page 15.

Friends of the Koala's Sponsors

Friends of the Koala's income is derived from numerous sources: membership subscriptions, competitive grants, nursery and merchandise sales, donations, the Support-a-Koala program, fund-raising initiatives, occasional one-off sponsorships and of course our on-going partners and sponsors.

We could not do what we do without the generosity of so many partners, sponsors, and members of the public. The veterinarians who treat the koalas which are brought into our care are our primary partners. We believe the veterinary treatments, surgery, tests, etc. which these animals receive, would, if they were costed, run into hundreds of thousands of dollars.

We and the Australian community owe a great debt to the Australian Wildlife Hospital and the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital which both rely heavily on public donations to continue their brilliant work. The private practices which provide so much *pro bono* service, in particular Keen Street Veterinary Clinic and Lismore Veterinary Clinic are also deserving of our sincerest gratitude.

So who are these other partners and sponsors who help cover our operating costs?

In 2006 **The Tony & Lisette Lewis Foundation** through its WildlifeLink program donated our rescue van and leaf-trailer. Each year since, WildlifeLink has continued to pay for on-costs such

as registration and insurances. It funded a replacement set of tyres for the van in 2009.

Essential Energy, previously Country Energy came on board as a sponsor back in 2007. It has funded *Treetops'* printing and distribution as well as work in the plant nursery and purchase of equipment, including the new shed for which the Koala Care Centre volunteers are particularly grateful.

The **Northern Rivers Regional Office of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service** offers an annual un-tied grant which has increased over the past couple of years to \$3,000.

Lismore City Council has funded Friends of the Koala with an annual s356 donation of \$2,000 since 1996. The Council also waives tip fees, slashes the Koala Food Tree Plantation on Wyrallah Road and leases us the Koala Care Centre site for a peppercorn rent.

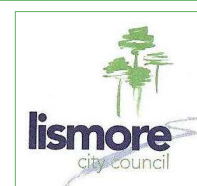
This year we have been approached by a new sponsor, the **WebManage Charity and Conservation Foundation** which has undertaken to cover the costs of our 24/7 Rescue Hotline. This is a particularly generous sponsorship because the phone-bill is one of our largest expenses. We thank David Wolfinger, WebManage Pty Ltd's CEO for stopping and talking to us about our work at Bluesfest.

This year as well, **Tweed Shire Council**

has for the first time granted us a s356 donation of \$1,500.

Thank you to all our sponsors from everyone at Friends of the Koala.

—Lorraine Vass



NSW Wildlife Council Report

The Council's 21st General Meeting and 6th AGM were held over the weekend of 27-28 August. 15 groups attended on Saturday and 13 on Sunday. A meeting of three members of the outgoing executive met on the evening of Friday 27 August.

At the General Meeting Ron Haering, Manager of the Wildlife Licensing and Management Unit (WLMU) distributed printed copies of the *Code of Practice for Injured, Sick and Orphaned Protected Fauna* and photocopies of the finalized *Code of Practice for Injured, Sick and Orphaned Koalas*, which is at the printers and will be distributed soon. The flying fox code is expected to be released by the end of the year. The objectives of the new Code's s.14: *Rec-*

ord Keeping is : To maintain a database of fauna that has entered rehabilitation. Records of fauna admissions represent a vital resource for fauna rehabilitation groups, OEH and research institutions. They can be used to develop better treatments, educate rehabilitators, identify state-wide trends in fauna incidents and identify threatening process (p.23).

WLMU intends to achieve full electronic reporting in the approved format within 2-3 years. Hard copies were distributed of the previously circulated mandatory fields and a later version of the preferred standardised terms.

Ron reiterated that rehabilitation group licences are now being issued every three years and that the deadline for reporting (which is still an annual requirement), will be 30 September.

A constitutional modification agreed to at the AGM has enabled expansion of the Council's Executive to include two general members. The incoming Executive for 2011-2012 is:

Lorraine Vass (FOK) – Chair
 Caroline Enfield (WIRES) – Vice Chair
 Rochelle Ferris (ASR) – Secretary
 Shirley Lack (NARG) – Treasurer
 James Fitzgerald (LAOKO) – Media Officer
 Audrey Koosemen (NATF) - General Member
 Ilona Roberts (TVWC) – General Member

If you wish to follow the Council's business more closely, please contact Lorraine or check the Council's website: www.nwc.org.au

Committee Positions up for Election

The 2011-2012 Committee will be elected at the Annual General Meeting on 13 October 2011. Now is the time to be thinking about putting yourself forward for nomination. Under the Constitution adopted in 2009, Friends of the Koala is required to have a Committee of not less than ten (the office-bearers and at least three ordinary members) and no more than thirteen members.

Being on the Committee requires a commitment of time to attend the six meetings held over the twelve month term and to assist in actioning the business resulting from Committee decisions. There are also advantages.

Committee members are the group's decision-makers. Participation really fast-tracks a member's understanding of the breadth of activities we are involved in and the way in which the organisation functions. It can be a learning experience, especially if a person has not previously served on a committee. You work closely with fellow Committee members and, yes, there can be a sense of real achievement. FOK does not expect people to stay on its Committee indefinitely but we would like a commitment for the full term.

The Committee is responsible for controlling and managing the group's affairs. It is accountable for compliance with the conditions of our rehabilitation and release licence and other legislative obligations. It develops the direction of policy for our activities including rescue and care, habitat, community education, advocacy, lobbying, and research. It also attends to administration including finance, correspondence, marketing and promotion.

Over the past year the Committee has met at Southern Cross University on a Saturday afternoon. The venue and timing of meetings can be altered to suit the majority.

The seven office-bearing positions are President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, Care Co-ordinator, Koala Care Centre Co-ordinator and Trees Officer. The number of general committee members depends on the number of nominations received. A few general committee members have occupied named positions which include Training Officer, Leaf Collection Co-ordinator, Publicity/Marketing Co-ordinator, Telephone Co-ordinator, Fundraising Officer, Events Co-ordinator; and Membership Officer.

There is a degree of flexibility in the duties of non-office-bearing positions, depending on the skills and interests of members who would like to stand.

Office-bearing positions and a brief outline of their duties:

President: Provide leadership to FOK; prepare agendas for and chair meetings of the Committee of Management; chair the Friends of the Koala Care Fund Management Committee; co-ordinate advocacy and policy reform activities, prepare media releases; spokesperson; network.

Vice President: Support and deputize for President as required; assist with co-ordinating activities.

Secretary: Record minutes of Committee of Management meetings; Prepare routine correspondence; Organise the Annual General Meeting.

Treasurer: Bank and manage finances; prepare financial reports; fulfill auditing obligations; receive and receipt fees for new membership nominations; prepare budget; member of the Friends of the Koala Care Fund Management Committee.

Care Co-ordinator: Overall responsibility for the treatment and rehabilitation of all koalas brought into care; work closely with Care Centre Co-ordinator, Phone Co-ordinator, Training Officer, Home Carers and Veterinarians; authorise diagnostic tests and referrals to the Australian Wildlife Hospital and Currumbin Wildlife Hospital (authorisation of trips to the Hospital made in consultation with President or delegate); maintain accurate records including the database; prepare reports as required by the Committee; spokesperson.

Koala Care Centre Co-ordinator: Manage the Koala Care Centre; ensure maintenance and tidiness; supplies; oversee the hands-on training of rostered volunteers; co-ordinate involvement in voluntary work/award schemes; co-ordinate Supervisors' meetings; prepare reports as required by the Committee.

Trees Officer: Co-ordinate Nursery and related activities; maintain associated records; target priority areas for habitat restoration; liaise with local government and other partners and stakeholders regarding habitat matters; prepare reports as required by the Committee.

All positions become vacant and require formal nomination for election. If you are interested in finding out more about the Committee's work or a particular position, please contact the President.



Koala Connections Project

A project funded by Tweed Shire Council and the NSW Environment Trust to connect koalas to their habitats and people to koala conservation.

Workshop on life traits of the koala

Date: Saturday 17 September 2011
Time: 2pm to 4pm
Venue: Pottsville Environment Centre
Tweed Bicentennial Environment Park
Centennial Drive
Pottsville

Afternoon tea provided.

Places are limited, so you must register with:
Sally Jacka
02 6670 2561
sjacka@tweed.nsw.gov.au

Presentations by:
Sally Jacka
Koala Connections coordinator
Tweed Shire Council
Sue Johnson
Experienced koala carer and rehabilitator
Lorraine Vass
President, Friends of Koala

After this workshop you will know:

- o how far koalas travel to feed and to mate;
- o how to recognise their calls
- o when they mate
- o what their gestation period is;
- o how many young they have;
- o how long young are dependent on their mother;
- o how to recognise if a koala is sick and needs help;
- o what to do if a koala does need help;
- o how to report koala sightings, and
- o the role of Friends of Koala Inc.

Photo: Kathryn Cairns

NSW ENVIRONMENT TRUST
TWEED SHIRE COUNCIL

Tweed Shire Council's *Koala Connections Project* aims to connect Koala habitat through engaging landholders to plant Koala food trees and people to Koala conservation through education. Three community workshops have been held: the first focussed on the results of the Tweed Coast Koala Habitat Study and Koala Ecology; the second on Koala food tree identification, seed collection and plant propagation and re-vegetation and rehabilitation techniques; and the third on the healthy and unhealthy koala and the work of the Friends of the Koala



Friends of the Koala Inc.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday 13 October, 2011 at 5.30 pm
for the AGM to start at 6.00pm.

Invercauld House,
161 Invercauld Road, Goonellabah

All members (and guests) are invited to attend and hear about Friends of the Koala's achievements over the past 12 months, celebrate presentations, and to elect the 2011-12 Committee.

The AGM will be followed at 7pm by a buffet dinner at a cost of \$23.50 per head. The Committee is keen for the evening to be a convivial social occasion for members and their friends.

For further information, including menu, please contact
Gwenda Lawther on 6624 6370

FRIENDS OF THE KOALA INC. – NOMINATION TO COMMITTEE

We:and.....

being financial members of the Friends of the Koala Inc., nominate:

for the position of:on the Friends of the Koala Inc. Committee

Signed:and

I accept nomination to the above position.

Name::Signed:

Dates for your Diary

17 September: Tweed Shire Council Koala Connections Project Workshop: The Life Traits of the Koala, 2pm, Pottsville Environment Centre

17 September: NPWS World Parks Day, 10am, Cape Byron Reserve (Lighthouse)

24 September: Friends of the Koala Committee Meeting, 2pm, P160 SCU Health Clinic.

30 September: Deadline for 2011-2012 Friends of the Koala Membership Renewal (see Renewal Form: p.15)

1-3 October (Labour Day Weekend): **Vintage Retro & Recycled Clothing Fair**, Brunswick Heads

8 October: North Coast Environment Council AGM, 11am, Coffs Harbour Yacht Club

NR Animal Services 10th Anniversary Birthday Bash, 10am—2pm, APEX Pavilion, Alstonville Show Grounds

13 October: Friends of the Koala Annual General Meeting & Dinner, 5.30pm for 6pm, Invercauld House, Goonellebah

20-22 October: Lismore Show, Lismore Showgrounds

22 October: Regional Forest Conference, Cavanbah Hall, Coffs Harbour 10:30am to 5:30 pm

Unity Festival, The Branding Rail, Murwillumbah Showground, noon

29 October: Friends of the Koala Tree Identification and Leafing Workshop (details to be advised)

29-30 October : Nature Conservation Council of NSW 2011 Annual Conference, Law Foyer, University of Sydney

4-5 November: Murwillumbah-Tweed River Agricultural Show, Murwillumbah Showground

6 November: Friends of the Koala Charity of the Day, Lismore Carboot Market

21 November: NSW Wildlife Council Inc. 22nd General Meeting, OEH, Hurstville

26 November: Friends of the Koala Committee Meeting, 2pm, P160 SCU Health Clinic.

29 November 2011: Contributions due for Treetops (December issue)

Update on Boatharbour from Leaffer Dot

Spring has definitely sprung!

The weeds are loving the conditions here. A third of my little trees have died, thanks to the couple of light frosts we had this winter. Still, the mower will reap revenge on the weeds and Greenfleet (carbon credit company) has already replaced the trees we lost last week. Fingers crossed, the rain settles down and we get a nice dry September. Dry Septembers used to be the norm around here, but lately, unstable conditions are the rule.

3,500 trees have been planted on my property at Boatharbour since April. The target is 6,000, weather permitting. The floodplain is very wet and we are unable to complete planting until it dries out.

The bigger picture is also developing nicely. Heather Dunn, from Camerons Road was wondering how close my property was to hers. She was aware that I was planting habitat. Heather has about 25 acres of conserved bushland on her property. I searched Google maps and was delighted to see a corridor of greenery extending from Heather's place, parallel with Camerons Rd, and

petering out a few 100 metres from my property fence-line.

A nice dinner with the neighbours and owners of the all important paddock ensued. Negotiations have begun. We have lots to discuss - cattle continuing to



Dot's plantings: Work in Progress

use the paddock in question; planting area to be decided; choices of plants; and the willing workers to do the planting and maintaining. Will we go for a linear corridor of just a single line of trees or more? An autumn planting would be the best option.

The koala food tree planting on my hill has survived our mild winter nicely. There'll be lots more pickings for our hungry koalas at the Centre this summer.

—Dot Cockburn

Eddie Krebs - a New Leafie

When he started leafing this year, Eddie reckons he's pretty sure he could tell the difference between a pine tree and a camphor and that was about all.

Now he goes out in the crisp morning air several times a week, identifies koala food trees, cuts branches from these trees of just the right size, fills the van, and deposits the leaf back at the Koala Care Centre.

When he heard about our Care Centre, Eddie got in contact with Lola Whitney. He kindly offered his help

both at the Care Centre and with leafing.

Eddie was always interested in nature and as a child in Germany, he enjoyed the forests, and the great outdoors of that beautiful country. Eddie arrived in Australia in 1988 (The Bicentennial) and enjoys gardening, bushwalking, and a good work out at the gym.

Thanks Eddie for your valuable time and efforts on behalf of our koalas.

—Dot Cockburn



Eddie Krebs

Bluesfest Koala Monitoring with Uni of Qld

Thanks to Sean Fitzgibbon for keeping us updated on the current monitoring project on the Bluesfest site which started towards the end of August. In the June 2010 issue of Treetops we ran a small article on the previous monitoring which was undertaken by Biolink.

The Bluesfest organisers are continuing the monitoring of koalas at their Tyagrah site through a new partnership with The University of Queensland. The UQ Koala Ecology Group has fitted five GPS collars to koalas in the heart of the site.

The collars record the location of the koalas every 15min and also allow the UQ researchers to track the collared animals and monitor their health, reproduction, tree preferences and general behaviour.



Dr Bill Ellis from the UQ Koala Ecology Group examines Punta, a large male koala found in a vegetation corridor at the Bluesfest site.

“The collars will provide us with very detailed movement information and will allow us to monitor the well-being of the koalas throughout the year,” said UQ researcher Dr Sean FitzGibbon.

“The five collared koalas all appeared in

good condition and one of the females had a healthy late stage offspring (Scratchy) that will soon be independent. We’ve seen several additional koalas at the site so hopefully there are other young being recruited into the local population”.

Bluesfest Director, Mr Peter Noble, said “We are pleased to have the experience of the UQ researchers onside to help ensure the well-being of our much loved local koalas”



Bluesfest Director Mr Peter Noble with Scratchy, a large female back young found with her mother on the central creek corridor.

Koalas Galore at Southern Cross University

Friends of the Koala’s Care Centre is situated on land adjacent to the Lismore Campus of Southern Cross University (SCU). A couple of the many reasons why we like our location are that some of urban Lismore’s best remaining koala habitat surrounds the site, which means we often see wild koalas in the trees around the Centre; and that the University, a long-term partner and supporter of our work, is close by.

SCU’s Sustainability Policy Advisory Committee has recently prepared a sus-

tainability action plan for 2011-2012, a significant component of which is the development of a Koala Management Plan for the Lismore Campus.

Pushing the koala plan forward will rely heavily on projects being undertaken by students in the School of Environmental Science and Management. First cab off the rank is Merinda Williams’ 3rd year integrated project: *Preliminary survey of koalas (Phascolarctos cinereus) and vegetation within the Lismore campus of Southern Cross University for the devel-*

opment of a koala management plan.

At the end of August Merinda, Ross Goldingay, and seven students conducted their first survey of some of the koala habitat that Merinda had identified. They saw six koalas, one with a joey. Merinda went on to spotlight other parts of the campus, seeing 25 adults and four joeys in all.

What a great start to her project!

Tracking Update

Well, the koalas have been keeping us busy since the last update. With Pineapple still growing, it was time to check the tightness of his collar, so I went about tracking him along with Joy, Rick, Sophie and Katherine. This took a number of weeks until finally he was in an appropriate tree for trapping. I set the trap and waited... and waited...

After 10 days he jumped over the trap and seemed to look smugly down at me from the very next tree! I had to leave him and move on to trapping Pinocchio.

Weeks later Pat had the chance to catch Pineapple. He was sick again with wet bottom and a gummy eye, and had severe chaffing from the collar, but the good news is that he is now nearly fully recovered at the Care Centre.

Pinocchio has shown his adventurous side by crossing Ballina Rd to the northern side of the ridge for a few weeks before returning to his usual haunts. Like Pineapple, Pinocchio jumped the trap I set and then, with Phyllis and I following him, he lead us on a merry

chase. He completely avoided being caught by slipping out of his collar, leaving John and me to track an empty collar, while he disappeared.

Indigo is still roaming around her gully and keeping John and Tascha fit, and Ruby is still hanging around the Uni library with Donna forever trying to spy her new joey.

—Sam Kendal

Koala	Last date	Outcome	Length of tracking
Indigo Red 8178	September 2011	Currently tracked, healthy	Since Jan. 2011 (9 months)
Ruby Red 8091	September 2011	Currently tracked, healthy, with joey	Since Feb. 2010 (20 months)
Pinocchio Red 2640	September 2011	Slipped collar, last observed as healthy	Since Aug. 2009 (25 months)
Pineapple Red 2618	August 2011	Collar removed, in care at the Care Centre	Since Feb. 2010(20 months)

Taronga and Koalas

Recent media coverage of Taronga's koala collection increasing by seven joeys over recent months has inspired me to write about our visit to the Zoo and its Wildlife Hospital at the end of July.

Rick and I were celebrating the 45th anniversary of our marriage with a few days in Sydney, including the Zoo's overnighter *Roar and Snore*. The weather was pretty brisk so we were rugged up for the short ferry trip across from Circular Quay and the shorter bus-ride up to the Zoo entrance.

Night fell quickly and the windswept forecourt was cold and bare. Mostly in couples people emerged from the dark and we congregated, waiting for something; but not sure what. Finally doors opened and we, some 20 in all, were ushered into a spacious exhibition hall.

Graciously supervised by our hosts Vicki and Todd, we enjoyed a beaut night, eating and drinking, handling a few animals and observing many more by spotlight, all against the backdrop of the fairy-lit harbour and big-city skyline.

Dawn breakfast was followed by a walk (perhaps hike might be a better term in light of the steep terrain) which took as past the meercats still huddling under their heat lamps, the giraffes and zebras, on to the lions and tigers, the primates, the nocturnal house and finally to the education area to learn about a range of native fauna including, yes, you've guessed it, koalas!



Macauley, an important member of Taronga Zoo's education program

We met Macauley, a 13kg, boofy male who looked very much at home draped over the shoulder of Laurel, his keeper. He didn't seem to mind too much us having our photo taken with

him before he re-joined a few mates in a large, bushy, enclosure.

Our *Roar and Snore* visit ended with a seal performance extraordinaire, just as the gates opened to the public. Fortunately we had the elephants mostly to ourselves; the antics of the three youngsters a real treat, but as we re-traced our steps up the hill, the crowd thickened. Having arrived in the dark with the Zoo to ourselves, a few dedicated keepers and the animals, the sudden appearance of mobs of people was something of an unpleasant shock.

The rest of the morning was ours to enjoy. We were directed to the Wildlife Hospital which is somewhat removed from the public areas of the Zoo. Hospital Manager, Libby Hall, whom I've known for several years, greeted us and generously devoted an hour or so of her busy Friday morning delivering a deluxe guided tour of her domain.

Taronga's Wildlife Hospital is responsible for maintaining the health of the Zoo's animal collections, treatment and rehabilitation of wildlife brought to the hospital, and participation in conservation, research and education programs. It also offers internships to veterinary science students. While the main building could date back to the 1930s and there is a grown-like-Topsy feel, the facilities and equipment are modern. Six clinical veterinarians, a veterinary pathologist, a lab. technician and a team of vet. nurses and keepers are kept busy; indeed an operation on an echidna was in progress during our visit.

Over a thousand injured or orphaned native animals are treated and cared for annually. Some animals are brought to the Hospital by licensed wildlife rehabilitators but many more are delivered by members of the public. They don't do much koala work, and virtually no work on wild koalas. Koalas remaining in the Sydney Basin are more likely to be referred to the Wildlife Health and Conservation Centre on Sydney University's

Camden Campus, and those in the Hunter Valley, which is serviced by the Native Animal Trust Fund and the Hunter Valley Koala Preservation Society are referred north to the Port Macquarie Koala Hospital.

After leaving Libby, we made our way to the circular Koala Walkabout which winds up through shrubbery and remarkably close to one animal if people's eyes were quick enough to spot it, to the



viewing platform and interpretive signage. It had been close enough to 25 years since we had visited the Zoo and I remember my favourable impression of the enclosure, even though we weren't particularly interested in koalas in those days.

The Walkabout still feels good and may have benefited from recent refurbishment. I was disappointed that my pressing a button did not trigger the bellow I expected but I was impressed that signage included the impact of loss of habitat on the species including the consequences of inbreeding and disease.

Putting aside the challenges that zoos and their animal collections present to wildlife carers and environmentalists, we had a great time.

—Lorraine Vass

Koala Triptych Raffle



Tweed artist Lori Watson has donated this beautiful pastel study of a Koala. The work was inspired by the plight of the koalas in the Victorian bushfires of a couple of years ago. The framed work measures 89 x 66cms. Raffle tickets will be on sale soon and drawn close to Christmas.

Bulletin Board

New Members

A very big welcome to the following new members who have been formally accepted into Friends of the Koala over recent months.

Russell Ford of Dalwood, **Xing Yi Huang**, **Shannon O'Driscoll**, **Matt Crowley**, of Lismore, **Warren Lake** of Wollongbar, **Angela Maria Mirabella** of Byron Bay, **Holly North & Dianne Mackey** of Broken Head, **Garry Jones** of Goolmangar, **Kane Pettit** of Rosebank, **Diane Wotherspoon** and **Cassandra Wotherspoon** of Goonellabah, **Gail O'Driscoll** of Armidale, and overseas member, **David Bresser** of Montgomery, Alabama. Lapsed members **Heather Pestell** of Goonellabah and **Josephine Squire** of Hawthorn, Vic. both rejoined.

Farmer Charlies Raffle

FOK member Faye Sharpe won the produce tray donated by Farmer Charlies Lismore and raffled at the end of July, raising over \$370. Many thanks to those members who gave their time to sell tickets: Melanie Duncan, Sue Smallcombe, Faye Sharpe, Phyllis Matthews, Gwenda Lawther, Heather Simpson, Jane Konz, Jane Tsciarlas, Caroline Ladewig, Russell Ford, Lola Whitney, Natalie Wunsch, Bev Smith, Marg & Terry Russell and Pat Barnidge.

CMA Grant Success

Our application for a \$5,000 NR Catchment Management Authority Small Projects Incentive Grant has been successful. The project, *Repair and expand primary koala habitat in the Northern Ridges, Lismore*, will involve work on the 5 ha Hillcrest Reserve, Goonellabah, which has been the subject of some weed control by Council over past years and also planting by FOK. The grant will be matched dollar for dollar by Lismore Council and the work will extend over two years.

GVEHO 2010-11 / GVESHO 2011-12

The Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities again distributed grants under the Grants to Voluntary Environment and Heritage Organisations (GVEHO) program at the 11th hour of the last financial year. As in 2009-10 we received \$1,500 to assist with our administrative costs.

Within weeks the 2011-12 funding round opened with a new sustainability category. We are encouraged by the early advertising, hoping for a more orderly announcement of successful applications and acquittal process.

Koala Code signed off

The *Code of Practice for Injured Sick and Orphaned Koalas* has been finalized following feedback from the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee. Changes have centred on issues of clarity and enforceability. For instance, the list of equipment for catching koalas in various circumstances has been moved from the Standards section to the Notes section. The Code should soon be up on the OEH website.

Koala Senate Inquiry

The Inquiry Report is due to be handed down on 20 September (its third extension). While we hope for strong recommendations which will provide better protection for the nation's remaining koalas, there can be no certainty. The extraordinary amount of material on the website: www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/ec_cte/koalas/ is well worth trawling – testament to the tenacity of the Senators and to the complexity of issues surrounding koala conservation.

Currumbin Open Day

A few of us took a day off in early August for the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital's Open Day. Driving north without koalas; just chatting and enjoying each other's company was something of a novelty, as was wolfing down a sausage (or two) and checking out species other than koalas. Michael and his great staff do a fantastic job for us and we hope the Open Day raised a lot of money.

NSW Landcare Awards

The Northern Rivers did well in the 2011 Awards. Bob Jarman of Northern Landcare Support Services won the

Local Landcare Australian Government Facilitator/Co-ordinator Award and Byron and Tweed Shire Councils took out the Local Government Landcare Partners Award for their *Tweed-Byron Bush Futures Project*.

Nature Conservation Council

Friends of the Koala has taken out membership of the Nature Conservation Council of NSW. The Council was formed in 1947 and with nearly 100 members is respected by government as the primary umbrella organisation representing grass-roots, environmental groups across NSW. Check out <http://www.nccnsw.org.au/members> for our listing.

Copyright Windfall

Friends of the Koala has been contacted by the Copyright Agency Ltd.(CAL), the organisation which administers copyright licences in relation to copyright clearance and distribution of payments for the use of copyright works. CAL holds funds from educational users of four pamphlets produced by us. The amount is significant enough for us to join CAL and lodge a claim.

National Koala Conference -2013

Cheyne Flanagan, Supervisor of the Port Macquarie Koala Hospital, has flagged that **2013** will be the Hospital's and the Koala Preservation Society NSW's **40th** anniversary. Part of the celebrations of that milestone will be a *National Koala Conference*—"*Their future is in your hands*".

The conference will run for two days and will be held in Port Macquarie. The date is yet to be announced - but more than likely during Autumn, possibly after Easter. A broad program is planned with subjects ranging from the latest work from Sydney University on drug research, diseases, habitat issues, general rehab matters, plus the latest findings with some of the eucalypt disease issues.

Note this in your forward diary now! If you haven't checked out the Hospital's website for a while, the link is www.koalahospital.org.au



Currumbin Chief Vet, Dr. Michael Pine and Lola Whitney



Member Profile – Gwen Seznec

Gwen joined FOK in 2006 after she came across a koala hit by a car but still alive, in the middle of the road. She was already a member of Northern Rivers Wildlife Carers, but decided that she wanted to know more about how to rescue a koala in case she came across another injured one.

As she and her partner had some wild koalas (at least one old male) on their property, she also talked to FOK about the possibility of releasing koalas there.

Gwen met Barb at a training day. Barb visited their property and organised a release pen. Initially Gwen found it quite difficult because she wasn't familiar with eucalypts. Like most FOK members, she can now spot koala leaf a long way away, even at high speed on the highway.

What's the best thing about where you live? The koalas of course. I love the wildlife we have around our place, the bush, the sounds of the bush, the colours and the smells, the stars at night, etc. It is a magical place.

What are you reading? When I have time, usually on holiday, I tend to have

multiple books on the go at the same time. I am currently reading a British murder mystery by Elizabeth George "This body of death".

What is your favourite movie? At the moment it's a Spanish / Argentinian movie called 'The secrets in their eyes' (El secreto de sus ojos). I saw it through the NORPA Popcorn series.

What's your favourite hobby/pastime? I have been a bit too busy in the last few years to have much spare time. What I have is spent either on wildlife caring business or in looking after our property (mainly weeding).

Your idea of a perfect Sunday? Going away somewhere with the special person in my life and not having to do anything in particular; just enjoy being together.

Your most memorable travel experience? Two trips stand out, both of them with my parents when I was a teenager. The first one to the American Mid- and South-West, in particular the Grand Canyon, which was spectacular. The second one to the Yucatan peninsula (Mexico) to see the Mayan temples.



Gwen Seznec

What would you most like to be doing in five year's time? I would love to be working in the environmental sector so I can better contribute to the protection and management of our precious natural resources.

Who is the person you'd most like to meet? I would have liked to have met two of my great-grandfathers, of whom I have heard great things. One made sure my mother and her sisters were looked after, as their father had died in WWII and their mother was neglecting them. The other was a ship's pilot and was involved in the building of one of Brittany's most famous lighthouses.

What has been your favourite koala moment? To see both Japara and Zoe, released on our property in 2007, coming back with joeys for two years after their release. And at least one of them is still hanging around and currently has a tiny joey.

It makes it all worthwhile as they seem to be doing very well four years after their release and they have greatly contributed to our local koala population. We've seen a big koala population boom in the last few years.

Unsung Hero – Gwenda Lawther



Gwenda Lawther

the early morning evacuations, rising rivers, collapsed roads and general mayhem that was life in Lismore during the following day.

Gwenda is interested in broadening her horizons. She spent twelve months in East Timor with Australian Volunteers International, setting up the administration and financial systems for a new teachers' college in Dili. She travels when she can, preferring small groups and off-beat destinations than the glitz of big cities. Her favourite destinations so far are Guatemala, Belize, Oman, Sabah and Vietnam.

Gwenda arrived to settle in Lismore on 21 May 2009 just as the cyclonic winds and rain of the day cranked up a notch. She had had a devilish drive from Sydney but the roof she had over her head was in Goonellabah. She was spared

On returning to Oz from Dili Gwenda spent a few years in Sydney, before deciding on a Tree Change. She quit her job, loaded her camping gear into the car and drove around Victoria and New South Wales "...looking for inspiration of some sort." She found it here in the Northern Rivers. The number and variety of community groups surprised her, "...so many environmentally-minded people, plus so much natural beauty – it felt just right," she said.

It took Gwenda three months to find the job she still holds, Training Co-ordinator with TURSA. Although she had to let go her work at Lifeline and the Koala Care Centre, I asked her to remain involved in FOK's work by standing for committee membership as Secretary at the AGM. She agreed and moved into the Treasurer's position soon after.

Twenty months later Gwenda is far more than Treasurer. She can often be found on stall duty, writing a piece for *Treetops*, filling in on a weekend shift at the Care Centre or writing an award

nomination. She's also back caring for her beloved bats, having joined Northern Rivers Wildlife Carers about a year ago when she became aware that they were looking for bat carers.

While active committee membership is not always easy for those in full-time employment, Gwenda makes the effort. She is often heard to say how much she enjoys her voluntary work with FOK; how professional, compatible and welcoming a group of people we are. With her long volunteerism history, these are not idle observations. Nor are they made on the basis of occasional contact. Gwenda does her book-keeping at the Care Centre so she has plenty of opportunity to observe and be part of the special camaraderie of the volunteers who are FOK's backbone.

She says "At the Care Centre people are spontaneous and genuine. Despite the sadness and sometime hopelessness of our work with the koalas, the dedicated, often noisy volunteers remain upbeat and stoic...Thanks guys, I love working at FOK!"

—Lorraine Vass



81-83 Molesworth St, Lismore
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Deadline for next newsletter: Tuesday 29th November 2011
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