



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

Treetops

The Newsletter of Friends of the Koala Inc.

December 2014

Patron: Margot Sweeney (CEO, Summerland Credit Union)



Save Ballina's Koalas

Ballina's koalas and the Pacific Highway Upgrade are back on the agenda. The hiatus following the Federal Minister's approval of the Woolgoolga to Ballina project back in August has given campaigners time to regroup, and to test the political water.

Over recent weeks the compelling issue of Section 10's disastrous impact on the vulnerable Long-nosed Potoroo has been promoted by two Nature Conservation Council ecologists, Dave Milledge and Mark Graham. Further south, concerns are being expressed about koalas in Sections 9 (Broadwater National Park to the Richmond River) and 8 (Trustums Hill to Broadwater National Park).

The onus being back on Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) to demonstrate that impacts on the long-term viability of the nationally significant Blackwall Range koala population will be acceptable and the approaching NSW elections, means the Campaign's focus is back in NSW.

We are advised that the successful tenderer for updating the Koala Management Plan to meet the state and federal conditions of approval, including the population viability analysis (PVA) which is to underpin the Ballina Koala Plan is Parramatta-based Niche Environment & Heritage.

A proposal put forward by local researchers, Drs Steve Phillips, Ross Goldingay and Les Christidis to provide the baseline data required for the modelling has been accepted. A few weeks ago Dr Phillips told FOK's Management Committee that the team's looking to capture and obtain samples from 70 animals in both the east and west cohorts to establish age, DNA profile, female reproductive status and disease status. FOK's role will be to pass on cadavers reported from the study area.

On the political front, Save Ballina's Koalas campaign co-ordinator Cr Jeff Johnson and I recently travelled to Sydney to meet with Labor Leader John Robertson, Shadow Environment Minister, Luke Foley, and Shadow Minister for the North Coast, Walt Secord. We presented about 600 signatures of the printed petition to Mr Robertson which he tabled in the Legislative Assembly.

At the media event held at the close of the morning session, John Robertson told the ABC:

"The NSW Labor position is that we want to see this road re-routed. At the very least the minister has got to go out and do a costing of using the existing corridor.

We are watching koala populations

across the nation ever decline and to allow this road to take this route would be irresponsible.



L-r Shadow Minister for the Environment, Luke Foley, Cr Jeff Johnson, Campaign Coordinator, Leader of the Opposition, John Robertson, FOK President, Lorraine Vass, Shadow Minister for the North Coast, Walt Secord

This is a matter that the Shadow Minister of Environment has raised a number of occasions in Question Time and Duncan Gay continues to say he has no intentions whatsoever of even contemplating an alternative route, which means that if this road takes the path that is laid before us we are going to see, eventually, a complete destruction of the koala population in this region.

There is nothing stopping the Minister now going back to RMS and have costed using the existing corridor to bring that section of road up to the standard of other parts of Pacific Highway.

It is just absolute stubbornness and ignorance on the part of the minister and his arrogance in refusing to listen to the concerns of the community."

Jeff and I felt this was a significant moment for the campaign given it was the last sitting day of the Parliament. We're encouraged that Labor has adopted the campaign objectives of reconsideration of the RMS preferred route for Stage 10. We're even

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President's Message

The Spring quarter is always crazy but this year's has been completely out of control. An example was our AGM in September. The Annual Report was late enough but receiving the audited statements from the accountant at 3pm on the afternoon of the meeting was cutting it a bit too fine. Still, we managed. The turn-out was good and guest speaker, Steve Phillips provided a lively, thought-provoking round-up presentation.



Lorraine Vass

We surprised Steve by inducting him into FOK's Tree of Fame. Well-earned Honorary Life Membership was conferred on Care Co-ordinator, Lola Whitney and the Keen Street Veterinary Clinic was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation. Unfortunately none of us had the presence of mind to capture the presentations on camera.

October was a blur of advocacy-related activities such as addressing (unsuccessfully) Byron Council on the need to expedite approval of the draft Byron Coast Koala Plan of Management, presenting the electronic petition collected by the Byron Residents' Group calling for protection of West Byron's koalas to Member for Ballina, Don Page and preparing evidence for the Lismore hearing of the Inquiry into the Performance of the Environment Protection Authority. Regrettably I had to drop out of the hearing when the Committee changed its arrangements at the eleventh hour.

The announcement by the University of the Sunshine Coast's Professor Peter Timms and Dr (now Associate Professor) Adam Polkinghorne, of the success of the Chlamydia vaccine field trial in the Moreton Bay

region north of Brisbane attracted welcome media attention. Sixty koalas were included in the trial, 30 animals receiving the vaccine and 30 remaining unvaccinated as a control group. The vaccinated animals showed good immune responses to the vaccine and decreased chlamydia infection levels compared with the unvaccinated controls. All 60 animals have been fitted with radio collars to enable monitoring for a

further twelve months. You can read about our Northern Rivers field trial in the Care Co-ordinator's report on p. 3.

November was a real doozie with three trips to Sydney. I always enjoy the Nature Conservation Council of NSW's Annual Conference - a couple of days away in the company of like-minded folk from all over the State. FOK hadn't put up a motion this year but I had registered one on behalf of the NSW Wildlife Council. The very quick nomination thrown together for the environment awards paid off. Lo and behold FOK's role in the Save Ballina's Koalas Campaign won us the Marie Byles Award for most outstanding new environment campaign. That certainly made up for missing out on the march for a Gasfield Free Northern Rivers back in Lismore!

This issue's lead story covers the visit to Parliament House. It was a pleasure to be so well received and I thank Dan Maloney, Luke Foley's Secretary and Researcher for his solicitous arrangements. As an aside, I was very pleasantly surprised by the feedback from three or four Upper House members, that they actually read *Treetops*.

Following Caroline Marschner's stay with us I was back in Sydney for the last NSW Wildlife Council meeting for the year and the following day drove to the University of the Sunshine Coast for the

Count suffered because we simply couldn't commit to the degree of promotion we had given last year. In the Northern Rivers fewer recorders took part and fewer koalas were recorded (286 compared to 539 in 2013). Nevertheless the Count collected more than 1,300 koala records from 1,100 recorders, an increase over last year's inaugural event.

You will notice some new contributors in this issue of *Treetops*, but first a few acknowledgements. Membership Officer, Loretta Younger has called it a day. Loretta, who was profiled in September's *Treetops*, did most of her work from home and we communicated by email. Keeping tabs on the membership, distributing *Treetops*, and administering the Support-a-Koala program was a big job. I'm very appreciative of Loretta's unflappable

commitment and of the quiet humour we shared over these past four years.

Loretta's successors are Andrea Riedel who's taking over the Membership and distributions aspects (see p. 5) and long-time Hot-liner, Carolyn Latham who'll be looking after the koala sponsorships. We warmly thank both of you for stepping up to the plate.

Committee member, Julie Reid has taken on the position of Training Officer and you can read her first report on p.9

There being no contenders for the Leaf - Coordinator's job, Vice-President Ros Irwin is filling the breach for the time being. Again, thank you to Julie and Ros.

Despite the chaos I enjoy this time of the year because it triggers reflection. While in progress a year slips by quickly. Looking back, it seems to have taken an age during which an enormous amount has been achieved. 2014 has been an outstanding year for FOK on all fronts. We proudly remain a grass-roots organisation and our vision, *To make a key contribution to Australia's biodiversity by ensuring the conservation of the iconic koala and the preservation and enhancement of koala habitat, particularly in the Northern Rivers region* guides the diverse services we continue to provide.

I sincerely thank all of you who have invested so much of your lives to FOK's work through the year and trust that this Holiday Season is safe, joyful and restoring.

—Lorraine Vass



Receiving the Marie Byles award from Greens Leader Sen. Christine Milne



Friends of the Koala at the Gasfield Free Northern Rivers March, Lismore

koala segment of the 2014 Australian Chlamydia Conference. Trying to make sense of ten presentations in the course of a morning was hard work; brilliant networking though because a couple of koala carers from Victoria and South Australia joined the usual Queensland mob and we did our best to make good use of our time together. More about the Conference on p 8.

Our participation in this year's Koala

Care Coordinator's Report

In recent weeks the excessive temperatures have been uncomfortable. Imagine how it must be for our wildlife to endure, especially koalas. Wearing a fur coat on these extreme days of heat must be unBEARable (sooorry).



Pat Barnidge

At present we have fourteen koalas in care, most in the outdoor enclosures which have required constant spraying with fine water mist to keep them as comfortable as possible.

Installation of a misting irrigation system along the rooves of the enclosures is almost complete. Keeping the leaf moist and keeping our sick koalas cooler will be a huge improvement. The volunteers who share spraying duties aren't displeased either.

The small Northern Rivers Chlamydia Vaccine Trial is well underway. Four koalas presenting with chlamydial conjunctivitis have been vaccinated and monthly testing carried out by our local vet Ray Austin. Early results are showing that the Chlamydial load is diminishing, however it is becoming apparent that koalas presenting with clinical symptoms may also need to have a course of the antibiotic Chloramphenicol to work in conjunction with the vaccine to resolve the disease.



Cato—the first of our koalas admitted to the vaccine trial and soon to be released

Four koalas in the control group are being treated with the normal daily injections. Two lovely females in care for observation have also been administered with the vaccine. We have to keep them in care for a while longer so the associated sampling is taken for the next couple of months. In the meantime Sweetie (our permanent girl), who returned from the Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital (AZWH) as cheeky as ever, is happy to have their company.

There have been a few calls through the Hotline of koalas fighting, whether it has been two males disputing territory or a male endeavouring to mate with a female is not always clear. In both scenarios the action can be quite physical and vocal. One big male was brought into care due to a scuffle with another male. He was found on the ground, drooling

and stressed and he died overnight. He was quite old (around 11 years) and it appears he suffered a heart attack.

The increase in car strikes is alarming. Motorists continue to not stop where it is possible to check the animal. One such koala was found by a motorist lying in the middle of the Coraki-Lismore road. It was a 40° day and this poor animal was not only injured but experiencing extreme heat stroke. He was in such a distressed state that after administering pain relief and a small amount of oral fluid, we did not expect that he would survive the trip to Currumbin. He is still alive and at present is in intensive care with a fractured forearm.

Our release numbers have increased for this reporting period due to the resumption of a good supply of Chloramphenicol.

Some of the releases have been hilarious, Duncan, a not so co-operative patient while

in care, couldn't quite get his act together at release. The tree he had been rescued from was not to his liking, so he decided to perch on a rock. After a bit of nudging he finally found a tree he could call home.



Duncan

Another very funny release was a Mum and bub – Coconut and Ice. Ice was still in Mum's pouch when they went to AZWH for treatment of Coconut's severe conjunctivitis. At release the little joey was a healthy 750gr. and on Mum's back. After refusing to climb her chosen release tree, Coconut decided to make a run across the property with little Ice grimly clinging to her stomach. Sadly five weeks later Ice was found deceased at the base of a tree; Mum sitting in a fork above. These misadventures happen when the little ones are testing their tree climbing skills.

Hand-raised joeys Dixie and Scooter are now back in the wild after their time in soft-release. Home-carer Jenny has spotted

Scooter on several occasions looking very healthy. Jenny now has a mate for Tinkerbell a gorgeous boy called Juno. (See p. 7 for story)

A beautiful female was transferred back to the Clarence Valley for release after surviving a car strike. A healthy female called Goldie was rescued from the Gold Coast airport and also successfully released (see p. 7 for story)

Two tagged koalas were identified recently. One was Toby found deceased due to a dog attack. He had been released in 2008 and would have been quite old at around 11 years. Even so it was a sad end. Another lovely boy Spartacus was brought in after being hit by a car, near the Lismore Waste Facility. Sadly he suffered a compound fracture of his hind-limb and was euthanased. He had been released 12 months earlier

after treatment for cystitis. He was around six years old.

At present our Care Centre is at full capacity. The three new enclosures are close to completion and very soon we will be able to house more animals. Currumbin Wildlife Hospital and AZWH have been taking on extra cases for us while we've

been so strapped for space. We extend our heartfelt thanks for their cooperation. All up we have 27 animals in care.

Hotliners are advising members of the public reporting koala sightings to leave containers of fresh water around trees as we have had reports of koalas drinking from cattle troughs. Dehydration is a very real threat for our wildlife in this dry, hot weather.

I wish all our members a very Merry Xmas. Stay cool and happy koala spotting.

—Pat Barnidge



Coconut & Ice

Koala Care Statistics 24 August 2014 – 24 November 2014
 Friends of the Koala attended to or provided advice on a total of 289 koalas

	In Care	Released	Died	Dead on Arrival	Euth.	Unable to find/capt.	Transfer	Advice
Injured (6)	1	1	1	1	1	1		
HBC- Road strike (40)	3	4	5	21	4	2	1	
Dog attack (5)	1	1		1	2			
Diseased/Sick (75)	12	8	4	1	26	17		7
Health status un- known / unrecorded (20)			1	10				9
Healthy/Assumed Healthy (133)	1	1						131
Orphans/joey (9)	4	4		1				
Permanent Care (1)	1							
Totals (289)	23	19	11	35	33	20	1	147

More Koalas in care



Knox



Rosie



Donna

Cup Day in Byron

Australia stops during the running of the Melbourne Cup on the first Tuesday in November although Byron Bay's international tourists don't take much notice.

It took a **sleepy koala** nestled in a tree outside Woolworths in Johnson Street to stop The Bay.

The koala had been spotted crossing Johnson Street the previous night. By Cup Day morning she was curled up in a Flooded Gum at the entrance to Woollies.

FOK's hardest working rescuer Wendy was called out just after 8am and she was joined after lunch by another hard-working member of the rescue team, Treasurer Susannah.

Tourists, locals and

intoxicated patrons of Melbourne Cup lunches were full of questions and thousands of photos were taken.

By 5pm, Care Co-ordinator Pat and **expert-tree-climber Simon** were on hand to get her down so she could be safely relocated. It was a perfect rescue (phew!); she came straight down. Wendy and Susannah found her a lovely tree far away from the streets and people.

Huge thanks to Wendy (who at one point had to stop people from climbing the tree to get a good photo); Simon, who's skills are awe inspiring; Woolworths staffers, who were helpful, patient and kind and the Byron Police who assigned an officer to control the crowds during the rescue.

—Susannah Keogh



One happily relocated koala

Care Centre Co-ordinator's Report

Close to the end of another busy year of koala care. Each year seems to be busier than the one before, but perhaps some of that is due to us slowing down as well. It's an indisputable fact that the vast majority of people with the most time for active membership of Friends of the Koala are retirees from the paid workforce. And none of us are getting any younger!



Lola Whitney

Whether members take on a weekly three-hour shift or spend most of their waking hours working for the koalas, all our volunteers are great people. They are committed to what they do and are all keen to make a difference.

At the Koala Care Centre we're always looking for more volunteers, especially over the long summer holidays when the uni students have gone and so many of our regulars take a break.

Spring is always a chaotic time with animals coming in to care day and night and it's also when we receive quite a few visitors (tourists as well as the "official" category). We also participate in a lot of events.

In September for example Lyn Olive and I represented FOK in the Byron Bay Volunteer Expo, setting up our stall near the front door of the Community Centre – an excellent location for talking to people about FOK's work and the plight of our koalas.

Takings at this year's Lismore Car Boot Market Charity of the Day were over \$2,000 (well done everyone) and the stall at the Big Scrub Rainforest Day attracted a healthy amount of interest.

Over recent months visitors have included a return visit by Shadow Minister for the Environment, Luke Foley, accompanied by Paul Spooner, the Labor candidate for Ballina and Cr. Jeff Johnson. Caroline Marschner from Sydney University's School of Veterinary Science also revisited us spending time with Allen Pearson and presenting a progress report to the November Committee meeting on her PhD project, *Koala's adaption to plant toxins*.

Trees Officer, Mark Wilson led a tour for staff from the Lismore City Council involved in implementing the Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management for South-east Lismore as part of a broader staff training program.

Maintenance of the Care Centre is a big part of my job. There is always something to repair, install or build and finding the right people for the job can keep me busy.

Adding a few outdoor enclosures has been on the drawing for a couple of years, but for one reason or another we had not got on with the job. The Chlamydia vaccine trials have forced the issue because of the length of time the vaccinated animals must be kept in care to undergo the testing required for the trial.

Getting tradespeople to respond to requests for quotes is a business in itself these days. But finally we got three quotes and we chose Jason White's Jazz Constructions. The four-man team (Jason, Shane, Nigel and Lucas) did a wonderful job. They commenced the work promptly and were meticulous in their approach. Our Care Centre volunteers were very impressed.



The Jazz Constructions Team

The work was completed a week or so ago and the perches installed by volunteer Steve Wood. An EnviTE team has laid sand and as soon as the shade cloth is in place, we will have three extra enclosures at our disposal.

Friends of the Koala's AGM was well attended in September. Our guest speaker was koala ecologist Dr Stephen Phillips who was also inducted into our Tree of Fame. Our wonderful Vet, Ray Austin accepted a Certificate of Appreciation for the Keen Street Veterinary Clinic that does just about all our local work. On a personal note, I was very privileged to receive my Honorary Life Membership in recognition of my ten years' service to FOK.

As the Festive Season approaches you might be expecting visitors. If they're looking for something to do over the holidays, why not visit the Koala Care

Centre and show them at firsthand what we do. We welcome visitors at 10am and 2pm from Monday to Friday and at 10am on Saturdays, although we will be taking the day off on Christmas Day. Please remember to phone to book beforehand.

So, here's hoping for a quiet Christmas this year; a Christmas where nobody is dragged away from their Christmas table to attend to a distressed koala or other critter.

Finally, I thank all our fabulous volunteers for their hard work, especially our President Lorraine Vass and Care Co-ordinator Pat Barnidge, both of whom have huge jobs and they do them well. Thankyou from all of us.

A Merry Christmas to everyone.

—Lola Whitney



Lola's Honorary Life Membership

Introducing Andrea Riedel – Membership Officer



I'm Andrea and I've been living in Australia for two years. I moved into this beautiful area because my husband is living here and Australia has always been a country/continent I wanted to discover. The experience itself has been more than I had hoped.

My country of origin is Austria and interestingly many people confuse Austria and Australia although the two countries are very different. Apart from size, Australia has a much larger variety of animals and many of them are so unique – like the Koalas.

I am fascinated by those little grey fellows which sleep most of the day but can move very quickly as soon as they smell fresh juicy leaves.

I was a volunteer at the Care Centre for several months this year and enjoyed it very much but I am now happy to take over the tasks as Membership Officer from Loretta and hope to continue her excellent work.

My main tasks will be to keep the records of each member updated, distribute *Treetops* and to send emails from the President and other Committee Members to all members. It's a pleasure for me to contribute something to support the Koalas in this region

—Andrea Riedel

KIDREG News

Our research student Caroline Marschner travelled up the East Coast this month and visited several koala care groups, including Friends of the Koala. On the trip she collected the precious samples, which have been collected by the groups for her research and gave an update on her project.



Allen and Caroline at the necropsy sink

Since August Caroline has been working at the veterinary pathology service on a casual basis and while in Lismore was able to provide her expertise in koala necropsies to Allen Pearson. As a “retired” Veterinarian and full time histopathologist, Allen will now be able to provide specimens from deceased koalas that hide valuable information about in-

fectious diseases prevalent in this area. He will also be able to detect obvious causes of death of koalas.

Caroline is supported in this work by a supplementary scholarship from the Koala Health Hub (KHH), as part of its commitment to contribute to training of postgraduate students and koala care groups.



Caroline presenting to the Committee Meeting

Our student Ben Kimble is reaching the end of his long research investigations in pharmacokinetics of koalas. He published a series of papers on the use of drugs on koalas over the last years, which is not only substantial for treatment in koala hospitals and care facilities, but he also provided our more re-

cent PhD candidates Christy, Soraya and Caroline the fundamental methods for many future investigations into the koala’s metabolism of xenobiotics.

Ben’s papers are:

1. Kimble, B., Li, K., Valtchev, P., Higgins, D., Krockenberger, M., Govendir, M. (2014). In vitro hepatic microsomal metabolism of meloxicam in koalas (*Phascolarctos cinereus*), brushtail possums (*Trichosurus vulpecula*), ringtail possums (*Pseudocheirus peregrinus*), rats (*Rattus norvegicus*) and dogs (*Canis lupus familiaris*). *Comparative Biochemistry and Physiology. Part C: Toxicology and Pharmacology*, 161(1), 7-14.
2. Black, L., Krockenberger, M., Kimble, B., Govendir, M. (2014). Pharmacokinetics of fluconazole following intravenous and oral administration to koalas (*Phascolarctos cinereus*). *Journal of Veterinary Pharmacology and Therapeutics*, 37(1), 90-98.
3. Kimble, B., Black, L., Li, K., Valtchev, P., Gilchrist, S., Gillett, A., Higgins, D., Krockenberger, M., Govendir, M. (2013). Pharmacokinetics of meloxicam in koalas (*Phascolarctos cinereus*) after intravenous, subcutaneous and oral administration. *Journal of Veterinary Pharmacology and Therapeutics*, 36(5), 486-493.

Koala Health Hub

The KHH engages with many carer groups in NSW and provides high quality diagnostics of sample materials from diseased or injured wild koalas admitted into care all across NSW, including at the Koala Care Centre in Lismore.

Tests provided include Chlamydia detection by real-time PCR – to test eye and urogenital swabs of patients on the date of admission and prior to release, Cryptococcal detection on nasal swabs and Cryptococcal antigen testing in serum samples. Also general haematology and biochemistry

are offered to assist diagnosis and case management. In addition, select necropsy services are provided at no cost by VPDS at the faculty of Veterinary Science at the University of Sydney. All these tests, including professional advice



about sampling and transport of test materials, are free of charge.

Andrea Casteriano (left) is responsible for laboratory testing, as well as for general requests and administration for the KHH. Over the last month Andrea did a proper clean up in an old lab, which is now the new KHH lab including her office space.



Stuffie faces retirement

Having had pride of place at many FOK educational events and markets, Stuffie has been well-loved with its ears in particular now almost in tatters. On top of that, it’s ‘of an age’, which means the fur is discoloured and certainly not the lovely grey and white of a healthy animal.

Replacing Stuffie has been no straightforward task. Whilst FOK does have a licence that enables us to have dead koalas mounted for scientific or educational purposes, finding a taxidermist licensed by OEH has been a bit of a

minefield. The only current taxidermist who has mounted a koala has left for the USA.

After identifying a suitably qualified taxidermist who would do the job and who lives near Wollongong, the next hurdle was how to have the animal (which has been in a freezer for 4 weeks) transported. No refrigerated trucks would ‘transport a dead animal’ and it became clear that the alternatives would be very expensive.

Fortunately, two of our members took it down by car in a suitably cold container on 5 December, accompanied by Stuffie in pride of place on the back seat so that

the taxidermist could take appropriate photos of it. We look forward somewhat nervously to seeing Stuffie’s replacement in the not-too-distant future!



Tinkerbell and Juno

We welcome home-carer Jenny Graham as a new contributor to Treetops and hope you enjoy sharing her trials and tribulations with two of her current charges, Tinkerbell and Juno.

Tinkerbell was found on the ground in mid-August at Wyrallah, south of Lismore. She weighed a mere 437gms. Her mother was in a tree nearby but quite disinterested in being reunited with her joey.

Tinkerbell was going to need hand-raising. Pat delivered her to my place the following morning. She was the smallest koala joey I have taken into my care so I knew I was in for some challenges. Over the next 24 hours Tinkerbell was showing signs of needing to be fed fresh pap which we obtained from Currumbin Wildlife Hospital with the help of veterinary nurse Natasha.



Tinkerbell and Juno

I have always found getting a koala to suck from a handmade teat needs persistence, so feeding Tinkerbell was not the easiest to begin with. My sigh of relief a few weeks later when she decided she was going to suck on the teat was heartfelt because feed times became so much easier. She slept in a basket with a teddy-bear beside my bed and now and again in bed with me for cuddles, which she appeared to love.

It wasn't long before Tinkerbell required a little tree/fork for playing and climbing. My bedroom (sorry Terry), our bedroom, was fast looking like an outdoor enclosure with a tree fork, eucalyptus leaves, a cute little koala and everything else that goes with it!! As she grew, so did her love of jumping and playing, but after a few nights of having a koala land on my face I realised she needed to be in her own room in another part of the house. This worked out well as Tinkerbell soon received a little friend to be her buddy, young Juno.

Juno was found at Monaltrie (only a few kilometres from Wyrallah) at the beginning of September. Whether orphaned or abandoned, he was sitting in the middle of a paddock, severely dehydrated and anaemic. He weighed 510gms. Vet Ray and Care coordinator, Pat gave him fluids and medication plus lots of TLC for his first week in care before handing him over to me. Feeling a lot better than when he was found, he's a pleasure to look after. Thankyou Ray and Pat!

There's only one little issue Juno and I

have - he will not suck on the teat so feed times can be a trial. A little gentle force has been necessary to ensure he gets his milk, with just a third of a ml at a time. If I stop feeding him for any reason (frustration springs to mind), he in turn shows his frustration, turning his head and looking at me as if to say, "Come on, why've you stopped making me have my milk?". Cheeky little bugger!

Juno has been a treasure and loves to hang on to me as his security with a little bunny rug over him while he is being transferred from the outdoor enclosure to inside the house. If there's something real scary, he just closes his eyes and hangs on.

Of course the two get up to all sorts of shenanigans. Tinkerbell's not adverse to gripping Juno in a headlock, holding onto him instead of her teddy. Understandably Juno can find this somewhat over-BEARING, although he follows her lead and keeps close to her in the outside enclosure. Terry and I keep a watchful eye on Tinkerbell's ascendancy, trying to prevent Juno from being too stressed from her cuddles. Separating them and giving Tinkerbell her teddy appears to work, most of the time.

I always felt sorry for Juno and worried for him until I observed him trying to get past Tinkerbell in their tree. Not wanting to go around, Juno solved the problem by biting Tinkerbell on the leg. I need not have worried at all. He can dish it out when it suits him. The two of them are great company for each other, giving companionship and security. So beautiful to watch!

I feel blessed as both Tinkerbell and Juno are excellent leaf-eaters. They make a great effort with their leaf that is cut for them daily. Thanks Mark for your expertise in growing excellent eucalyptus tube stock which have grown to different sized gum trees on our property, all ready to be cut for the little treasures.

Our little koalas are not so little now with Tinkerbell weighing approx. 2kgs and Juno following up at nearly 1.5kgs.

I would like to extend a *huge thank you* to the **Friends of the Koala** team and **my Family** for all their help and support. Without them I would not be able to hand-raise these beautiful creatures.

Koalas are truly magic!!

—Jennifer Graham

Goldie's visit to the Airport

It's the time of year when koalas turn up in some unusual places. In my neck of the woods in Tweed Shire a healthy male koala was in the rafters of the temple of the Hara Krishna farming community, New Govardhana, and needed to be coaxed down and released into the bush not far from where he was found.

Another koala we named "Goldie" was spotted running along on the inside of the Gold Coast Airport security fence by the Australian Federal Police. A six year old female, she was captured and transported to Currumbin Wildlife Hospital where she was examined thoroughly. Goldie was found to be in good health apart from the stress she suffered from her ordeal with meeting up with humans.

NPWS Ranger Lance Turvey and my husband Terry both checked for the best location as close as possible for her release and survival. Lance had an excellent contact at the airport, Environment Manager, Norbert Beuton. Norbert was only too pleased to assist with finding the best spot for Goldie's release. She was picked up from CWH and taken to a secluded location adjacent to the airport on the other side of the fence-line where there is good habitat for the remaining wildlife in that area.



Goldie anxiously awaiting release

Goldie was not waiting around for any human to grab her again, once the cover came off her cage she was out of there. Straight up the tree and no looking back!

My thoughts on Goldie's predicament were that she wanted to protest against the koalas having to be subjected to cuddles from humans at the G20 Meeting. Alas she was captured by the Australian Federal Police and put into solitary confinement at CWH. No charges laid and allowed to leave.

—Jennifer Graham



A foray into Crowdfunding for the koalas

Crowdfunding is the new 'in' method of trying to raise money for the cause you care about the most. From our recent foray into the world of 'crowdfunding' I would like to share some tips on what to do, and what not to do, for a successful campaign.

We were trying to raise money on a crowdfunding platform called 'Pozible' for satellite collars to enable us to follow the boys [koalas] currently in the vaccine program at Friends of the Koala. While we raised over \$5,000 and had over 50 supporters we still fell significantly short of our (ambitious) target of \$30,000 which was needed to track, follow and recapture the koalas once they were released back into the wild.



The way Pozible works is that you post a video and a blurb online explaining what you want money for. You also need to offer rewards for donating, for example if you are doing some field-work you can offer a 'day in the field'. You could also offer project updates, early access to the results, original artwork, and the right to 'name a koala' in the trial, which are just a few other examples we used. The catch is, if you do not reach your target you do not receive any of the pledges. A few tips and tricks follow:

1) Tell a great story and ask for the sale, people invest in the 'filmmaker' as much as they do the project. Be honest and open and passionate about your project. If you are not passionate about it then you cannot expect anyone else to be either.

2) A strong start is key to a successful crowdfunding campaign. Having a strong network of friends, family and supporters before you launch is critical. It is useful to spend some time collecting supporters through a social media outlet such as facebook or twitter before launching.

3) Make sure you have the time to continue the momentum after the launch for the length of the entire project (60 days). A crowdfunding campaign has been said to be akin to a full time job, and I would have to agree. You need to be constantly reminding people on social media about your project, and getting out there in the community to promote yourself and your project. It is a lot of work, almost too much, for one person, try and

have a team of people willing to take part and help with this throughout the project.

For an example of an amazing crowdfunding success story check out this project 'Victorias Great National Park' on Pozible (<http://www.pozible.com/project/186590>). As a team they raised over \$70,000 in two months, with almost 1,000 supporters, including the likes of David Attenborough and Jane Goodall. The aim was to create a 500,000-hectare park to protect and maintain important ecosystems functions critical for the health and wellbeing of Victoria's environment, native species, and people. This really shows what community spirit can do for our environment and is a great example of how these platforms can be used to really make a difference to our natural world.

—Courtney Waugh
Postdoctoral Research Fellow
University of the Sunshine Coast

The 2014 Australian Chlamydia Conference

The ACC was held this year on the 26th and 27th November hosted by Prof Peter Timms and Dr. Adam Polkinghorne and their research group at the University of the Sunshine Coast.

The first day consisted of updates on the molecular biology, cell biology and immunology of *Chlamydia*. Some exciting international guests included Prof. Patrok Bavoil from the University of Maryland in the United States, and Dr Mario D'Elis from the University of Florence, Italy who are at the forefront of chlamydial research. There was also a focus on diagnostics of *Chlamydia* in humans, which can cause blinding trachoma and infertility. Indeed one of our local guests Dr. Willa Huston from the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) is involved in helping to develop novel assays for chlamydial infertility in women

who need IVF to conceive.

The second day had a key focus on one of our favourites, the koala, where we heard about a large-scale koala tagging and health check program currently underway in south-east Queensland. Here, an entire population of koalas that may be impacted by an impending train line, are being caught, assessed and tracked as part of a koala monitoring and offset program. Part of this project also included a vaccine trial, and as we heard the vaccine trial has been successful in reducing the amount of infections and disease in vaccinated animals, as well as reducing the chlamydial load in animals already infected.

Following this we heard about how a chlamydial vaccination program could reverse disease-related koala population declines. This is work completed by Andrew Craig at the University of New South Wales. He has used mathematical modelling to provide evidence that current population declines could be reversed in about 5-6 years if a successful vaccination programme could be rolled out. It was great to finally hear some positive news for the koalas, and to have such great interest, from domestic and international guests alike, in their plight against the devastating effect of chlamydial disease.

The final session of the last day of the conference brought to light chlamydial infections in other animals. In Australia chlamydial infections are also important in livestock and are thought to cause sporadic bovine encephalomyelitis, arthritis and conjunctivitis...to name a few. The strain infecting livestock here is similar to the strain infecting koalas, and we heard about some interesting work going on that suggests that there has been cross-host transmission occurring between the species. This work will ultimately help determine if *Chlamydia* was indeed given to the koalas by the introduction of livestock to Australia, or if it was endemic in the populations before European settlement.

—Courtney Waugh



Co-host Adam Polkinghorne with some of the Koala Carers attending the conference. (l-r) Meghan Halverson (Old Koala Crusaders), Anne Bigham (Fauna Rescue SA), Anika Lehmann (Morton Bay Koala Rescue), Colleen Wood (Southern Ash Wildlife Shelter), Merridy Montarello (Fauna Rescue SA), Rae Campbell (Adelaide Koala and Wildlife Hospital), Lorraine Vass (FOK), Shirley McRae & Wanda Grabowski (Koala Action Inc.)

Training Officer's Report

Having accepted the position of Training Officer at the Management Committee's September meeting and knowing that the position had not been filled for some time, preparing a training policy to address our obligations as a fauna care group, seemed the obvious place to start.

The draft policy covers all training relating to the activities undertaken by volunteers associated with FOK's scope of licensed work, i.e. koala rescue, rehabilitation and release, and can be added to at any time as our role evolves.

Key training areas are: standards and best practice approach for licensed koala rehabilitation, rescuing and releasing koalas, duties of the phone roster volunteers, leaf collection and koala food tree plantation maintenance.

Section 13 (Training) of *The Code of Practice for Injured, Sick and Orphaned Protected Fauna* specifies that we have an obligation to ensure "fauna rehabilitators are in possession of appropriate knowledge and skills to ensure the welfare of fauna in their care", and that new fauna rehabilitators must undertake an introductory training course and all fauna rehabilitators must attend an advanced training course every three years and keep up-to-date with changes to the code"

The policy and procedure has identified the need to undertake a training needs analysis (TNA) to identify and fill any training gaps

I'm in the process of preparing a TNA that will be circulated amongst FOK's members authorised under our licence and others participating in phone and leafing duties. The results from the TNA will provide the group with information that can be used to design training plans to ensure our needs and obligations are met. Training questions such as what is needed and why, who needs specific training and how will it be provided, need to be answered.

The training goal should correspond to the core FOK business of rescue and rehabilitation of koalas in line with our licensing requirements. Other legislative considerations include Work Health and Safety.

An efficient and effective organisation needs to have volunteers trained in all aspects of its operations and a succession plan that includes trained volunteers who are able to assist or relieve current coordinators.

The TNA will be circulated to members over the holiday period.

—Julie Reid

Critical Incident Fire Training

Twelve FOK members completed their fire training in early November. This training, organised by WIRE



Julie Reid

those who have completed this training would be able to look for injured animals after a fire has passed.

In the event of a major fire, the unfortunate reality is that the majority of wildlife in the immediate area of the fire, those which are unable to escape, will perish. Where fires are less intense, however, there is likely to be animals which are burnt and need to be rescued for humane euthanasing or immediate critical care.

The accredited training gives attendees a certificate VBP226 in *Basic Wildlife Awareness*. The training brought together wildlife carers from a number of North Coast groups including Tweed.

Helen Carlos's wealth of experience in fire management and survival tactics was evident and the lesson was delivered with humor making the session pleasant as well as informative. What was learnt will be useful for anyone who needs to plan for bush fires.

Attendees learned how bush fires be-

From pl more encouraged that they have committed to delving into the historical record.

Campaigners are amazed that during the past decade the NSW Government (of either persuasion) has not required the RMS to properly investigate the existing highway corridor option. That this hasn't occurred is even more astounding, given that a number of crucial land acquisitions remain unresolved, a nationally significant koala population (now protected by Federal legislation) has been identified and the Ngunya-Jargoon Indigenous Protection Area has been gazetted.

While in Sydney we also met with Greens spokesperson for the Environ-

ment and Transport Dr Mehreen Faruqi and International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) campaigners, Josey Sharrad and Matthew Collis. I was Luke Foley's guest in the Legislative Council's President's Gallery during the Council's Question Time.

have, what influences their behaviour, the structure and types of bush fire, how wildfires are suppressed as well as risks and hazards on the fire-ground. A closed book exam was completed at the end of the session. They will be issued with an identity card and their details logged for contact if needed in the event of a bush fire.

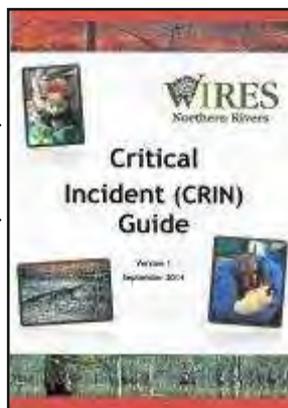
Under the *State Agriculture and Animal Services Functional Area Supporting Plan* of the NSW Disaster Plan WNR is the primary point of contact in an emergency impacting on native wildlife in the Northern Rivers. This is because WIREs state-wide has entered into a MoU that qualifies it as a supporting organisation in the Plan.

Several licensed wildlife groups have signed similar MoUs including Australian Seabird Rescue. Until such time as Friends of the Koala chooses to go down that path, in the event of a fire or other emergency, WNR will coordinate the response.

The fire training is a component of WNR's newly enacted Critical Incident Planning (CRIN) designed to deal with a range of incidents or disasters both natural and man made.

Examples include; storm/cyclone event, flying fox heat stress, shearwater standings, disease outbreak, oil spill and fire. The Critical Incident Guide has been circulated to other rehab groups including Friends of the Koala. We have invited Renata Phelps from WNR to attend our January Committee meeting to discuss it in more depth and how we can work cooperatively in the event of a major critical incident.

—Julie Reid & Ross Irwin



ment and Transport Dr Mehreen Faruqi and International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) campaigners, Josey Sharrad and Matthew Collis. I was Luke Foley's guest in the Legislative Council's President's Gallery during the Council's Question Time.

The campaign committee is planning to hold a public meeting in January. We realise that some supporters believe the game is over. Far from it! We will be briefing local candidates of all political persuasions. A priority will be to crank up the collection of more signatures on the hard copy petition so we reach the 10,000 minimum necessary for the matter to be debated in the new Parliament next year.

—Lorraine Vass

Lismore Council's Biodiversity Management Strategy and Koalas

FOK was most disappointed that in determining its budget for 2014-2015 Lismore Council did not seek funding for implementation of its Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management (CKPoM). Whilst the Council staff assured us all the actions identified in the plan would be implemented within the four years identified, nevertheless nearly two years after the plan was approved by the State Government very few actions have been implemented due almost entirely to the lack of staff resources. Time passes, habitat disappears, and more koalas die!

However, the Council's Biodiversity Management Strategy (BMS), which is on public display now until February ([Biodiversity Management Strategy](#)), does include funding for several actions in the CKPoM. Even without that, the BMS has FOK's full support, and we've been represented on the Stakeholder Reference Group for the BMS by first Donna Graham and then I took over when Donna gained employment at Douglas Shire in Queensland.



The draft BMS is on exhibition until 24th Feb. 2015

Those of you who recall the drawn-out, emotional and misinformed discussion in regard to both Lismore Council's Local Environment Plan (LEP) and CKPoM would not be surprised to learn that the same conservative activists are on the attack yet again. Whilst having also been on the Stakeholder Reference Group they believe they were not taken seriously and that their concerns weren't addressed. Any member of the group could say that some of their concerns weren't reflected in the BMS. However, it seems that unless these activists have everything they want they'll lobby against the strategy using the same emotive, uninformed or deliberately misleading tactics they've used in the past.

One of the major issues confronting Council staff and Councillors is that the

Council cannot implement the actions in the BMS from existing funds, so they're proposing a Special Rate Variation of \$500,000 a year to fund them. Apart from some of the actions in the CKPoM, the Rural Landholder Initiative, Wilsons River regeneration, the Coastal Zone Management Plan, the operational plan for roadside vegetation management and components of the Sports and Recreation Plan are contained in the BMS. They are currently unfunded and would be funded by the Special Rate – sound biodiversity outcomes to my mind and for just a 1.9% increase in general rates. If the Special Rate isn't approved then none of these actions are likely to be implemented, certainly not in the short-term.

At its November meeting Council decided to put the BMS and the proposed Special Rate Variation out for public comment, which perhaps you might think is the democratic thing to do: find out what the community thinks and then make an informed decision. But no, it got through by 1 vote as Crs. Battista, Bennett, Marks, Meineke and Scheibel didn't even want to find out what the community wants.

I suggest you take the time to read it and make a submission to Council to ensure your voice – and the voice of koalas – is heard. You can submit online, and even a brief submission supporting the BMS in your own words will be important. The deadline for submissions is 24 February 2015.

—Ros Irwin

A New National Park for Koalas

In mid-November the North East Forest Alliance (NEFA) put a proposal to Rob Stokes, Minister for the Environment, for the permanent protection of core Koala habitat by creating a new national park near Casino.

The proposed 2,100ha Sandy Creek National Park seeks to protect and rehabilitate identified important koala habitat south-west of Casino in Carwong State Forest and part of Royal Camp State Forest.

The proposal had been foreshadowed by previous calls for the Minister to intervene in the protection of Royal Camp's koalas (see *Protection in perpetuity for Royal Camp's koalas*, *Treetops*, September 2014, p.12).

Building on information provided in the *Koala Habitat/Occupancy Assessment – Compartment 13, Royal Camp State Forest – Survey Report* undertaken by Biolink earlier in the year at the request of the former Minister, NEFA has broadened its proposal to encompass

more of the resident breeding populations of koalas that are of regional significance. The survey also found that the koala population in the surrounding Richmond Valley Local Government Area is in decline and threatened with local extinction.

The Forestry Corporation has proven time and again that it cannot be trusted to look after Royal Camp's koalas. Their preference for mature trees (with trunk diameters over 30cm diameter) means their available food trees have been significantly reduced by logging. For the recovery of koalas in this area it is essential that remaining mature feed trees be protected and more trees allowed to mature.

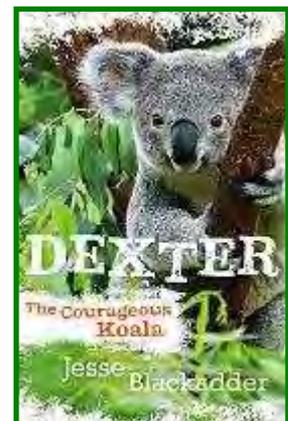
Adding to the need for permanent, in perpetuity protection is that Sandy Creek's koalas are unfortunate to live in forest growing over large CSG deposits. Their habitat needs to be protected in a national park to stop it being cleared for well pads, and the surviving koalas put at risk of being gassed.

Now is the time to exclude such destructive activities. There are no highway, housing estate or music festival proposals to justify not protecting it. The Minister must now intervene to guarantee the persistence of this potentially endangered koala population.

Representatives of NEFA, Friends of the Koala, the North Coast Environment Council and the National

Parks Association plan to meet with sitting members and candidates of all political parties to gather support for the proposal.

—Dailan Pugh



Available now—from the Koala Care Centre or local bookshops: \$15.

Clothiers Creek - 'Koala Road'

The Tweed Coast Koala Habitat Study (2011) and draft Tweed Coast Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management both identify incidental road strike as a critical threatening process to koalas on the Tweed Coast. Both the habitat study and draft plan also specify the requirement to address habitat protection, restoration and threats in an integrated manner.

The eastern section of Clothiers Creek Road is identified by the habitat study as one of two key east-west arterial roads on the Tweed Coast that currently present a significant threat to koalas. This road bisects the Cudgen Nature Reserve, significant koala habitat and mapped koala populations. There are numerous records of koalas occurring along the roadway including several incidences of injury or death each year.

Due to significant environmental and physical constraints, it is not possible to use engineering solutions that are commonly used to physically exclude koalas from the roadway whilst offering alternate connectivity. However, due to the significance of the impact of ongoing loss of koalas at

this location, the use of alternate strategies is required.

Through the Koala Connections project, it is proposed to implement a range of actions to reduce the impact of vehicles on the 3 km section of Clothiers Creek Road through Cudgen Nature Reserve. The project has been planned and funded through the Koala Connections project in consultation with Tweed Council's Traffic Unit



Example sign used in Redland Shire in SEQ. The variable message increases the effectiveness, especially when used to provide information about current events (eg recently observed koalas)

The project involves installation of variable message signs (see left) at two locations at either end of the section of Clothiers Creek Road. The signs will indicate the commencement of the koala zone and be installed in conjunction with pavement treatments (see right) and community engagement. The actions planned also need to acknowledge the limited potential of speed limit reduction due to the roads function as an arterial road.

The variable message sign will display messages that are programmed to change each two weeks and can also be

changed manually in response to incidents, sightings or other relevant occurrences.

Community engagement will aim to

address the common misconception that if koalas are not being seen by drivers that they are not there. We aim to present the alternate view that we know they are there based on recorded sightings and that not being seen by drivers is actually a good outcome. The opportunity to connect the benefits of safe driving for both humans and koalas will also be promoted by challenging drivers to *spare 30 seconds for a koala* (the extra time it will take to travel that section of road at the speed limit as opposed to the current average speed).



Pavement treatments reiterate the commencement of the koala road. The design is consistent with treatments used in other locations for wildlife zones.

Baseline monitoring of average traffic speeds, peak travel times and traffic volumes has been completed and will continue on a quarterly basis as one way to measure the effectiveness of the project. It is envisaged that if successful, the same approach could be applied in other locations where there is significant risk to koalas. The pavement treatments were installed in November. The variable message signs to follow in early 2015.

—**Scott Hetherington**
Senior Biodiversity Program Leader
Tweed Shire Council

Eco Schools Grants Announced

The Environmental Trust's Eco Schools Grant Program provides grants to schools to give them the opportunity to involve their students and community in developing and implementing environmental management projects.

Sixty-nine successful applications from across NSW were recently announced. Friends of the Koala is involved in two of Lismore's three funded projects. Each school will receive \$2,500.

Goolmangar School Koala Community Connections

Acknowledging that koalas are under threat from habitat loss, disease, predation from dogs and fatalities on roads,

Goolmangar school students will work in partnership with Friends of the Koala, Dorrroughby Environmental Education Centre and five other local schools (Coffee Camp, Larnook, Blakebrook, Wyrallah Road and Nimbin Central School) to learn about local koala populations, their significance and threats to them.

Students will participate in direct actions to help local koala populations including propagating koala habitat trees, planting and developing resource materials that will contribute to increasing community awareness about koalas and improving the extent of koala habitat in Lismore.

Enhancing Koala Habitat at Tregeagle Public School and Surrounds

Tregeagle Public School is located in

one of the core koala habitat areas in the Lismore LGA. The School has an active Junior Landcare Group which is committed to improving koala habitat in the School grounds and surrounding areas. Tregeagle Landcare Group mentors Tregeagle Public School Junior Landcare Group and plants will be used for ongoing prime koala habitat restoration in the Tregeagle community.

This project will provide the facilities to enable the propagation of koala food trees for planting in the School grounds and in neighbouring properties. The pupils will learn skills such as seed collection, seed sowing, seedling potting on, seedling maintenance and tree planting. Once the greenhouse is up and running the tree propagation activities will become an ongoing activity for the School for many years to come thereby greatly enhancing the local environment.

We're looking forward to working with both schools on these exciting projects in the coming year.

—**Mark Wilson**



School students extend koala habitat

Advocacy Report

Looking back over the year it's difficult to pull out anything worthy of celebration. Minister Hunt's approval conditions on the Pacific Highway Upgrade were encouraging but whether they'll really save Ballina's koalas is still to tell.

Exhibition of the Byron Coast Koala Plan of Management appeared to go well but Council's gob-smacking decision in October to seek legal advice on a number of its aspects is a disappointing setback.

Having served on the Project Reference Group for three years with officers of what's now the Department of Planning and Environment and experiencing their close scrutiny of the drafted Plan's compliance with State Environment Planning Policy No. 44 – Koala Habitat Protection (SEPP 44), the obvious question to ask is, why delay approving the Plan at this eleventh hour? After all, the same Council had approved the Draft's exhibition earlier in the year. Might there be a connection with the West Byron Bay Urban rezoning application recently approved by the State Government? The voting pattern certainly suggests there was.

As for the rest, it's business as usual. The North Coast E Zones are not yet resolved, nor are the state-wide planning

reforms. Environmentalists have walked away from the IFOA remake fiasco. There's been no sign of the finalised EPBC Act referral guidelines for koalas, nor the recovery plan which is due to replace the National Koala Conservation and Management Strategy 2009-2014.

In recent days the independent panel appointed to review the legislative and policy framework for the management of native vegetation, threatened species and other protected native animals and plants in NSW submitted its final report to the Government.

Not surprisingly it's recommending a comprehensive overhaul of the state's most important conservation laws, namely the *Native Vegetation Act*, the *Threatened Species Conservation Act*, and parts of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act*. Key recommendations include

- Repealing the Native Vegetation Act 2003
- Removing the "maintain or improve" standard in existing legislation
- Greater reliance on biodiversity off sets
- Shifting approval for vegetation clearing to the planning system

The Government says it will respond to the report before the March elections.

Over the past quarter we've responded

to the exhibition of the draft Tweed Coast Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management and the Iron Gates subdivision proposal at Evans Head. We provided a written statement to the committee enquiring into the performance of the Environment Protection Authority and we wrote to Minister Hunt flagging that the West Byron Bay Urban Release area,



Presenting with the Byron Residents' Group electronic petition of 50,000 signatures calling for the protection of West Byron's koalas to Don Page MP

recently approved by the NSW government warrants his scrutiny

Advocacy is as much about bringing matters to public attention and empowering people to voice their own concerns. We were delighted to work with residents in James Road,

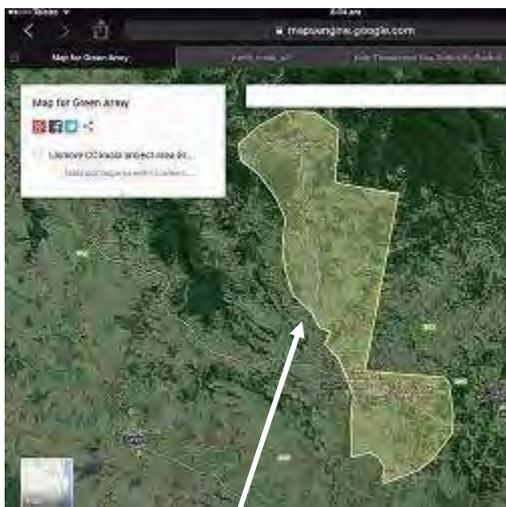
Lismore to take their consternation about the impact on their local koalas of the 10/50 Vegetation Code to Lismore Council. They did. Council listened and voted to make a submission on the Code - a small but very satisfying win.

—Lorraine Vass

Green Army

Friends of the Koala have been successful in gaining two Green Army teams for 12 months. Each team will be of 6 months duration with the first to start in mid-January 2015.

The Green Army programme provides opportunities for people aged 17-24 years to gain training and experience in environmental and heritage conservation fields and explore careers in conservation management, while participating in projects that generate real benefits for the environment.



The Green Army project area

we've had many successful collaborations in the past.

They will provide the supervisor and the equipment needed to implement the project.

The project is titled 'Assisting the recovery of koala populations on the NSW North Coast' and has targets for each team of 10,000 trees propagated and 3,500 trees planted. The teams will also work on weed eradication in koala habitat areas.

If any member is interested in being considered as a work site for the project, either as a tree planting site and/or for weed eradication activities, please contact our Trees Officer, Mark Wilson on 0413339554.

—Mark Wilson

The team will comprise of 10 participants and one supervisor. Our project provider will be EnviTE with whom

Dates for your Diary

3 January 2015: Bunnings (Lismore) Sausage Sizzle Fundraiser, 8.30am – 4pm

17 January 2015: Friends of the Koala Management Committee Meeting, 2pm. SCU.

18 January 2015: Friends of the Koala Stall, Lismore Car Boot Market, Lismore Square

30 January 2015: Deadline for submissions on the NSW Scientific Committee's Preliminary Determination that the Koala population in the Tweed Local Government area east of the Pacific Highway be listed an *Endangered Population* under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act*

February 2015: Friends of the Koala Basic Training Day Details to be advised

15 February 2015: Friends of the Koala Stall, Lismore Car Boot Market, Lismore Square

24 February 2015: NSW Wildlife Council 35th General Meeting, OEH Hurstville

Contributions due for Treetops (March issue)

Bulletin Board

New Members

A very warm welcome to the following members who have been formally accepted into Friends of the Koala over recent months:

Alice Braun of Meerschaum Vale, **Lucy Klaus, Elspeth Berger, Trevor Johnson, Jacqui Davies** and **Noel Daley** of Goonellabah, **Tracey Campbell** of North Lismore, **Kate Ridgway** of Horseshoe Creek, **Shannon Morris** of Corndale, **Nicole Flick** of Keerong, **Tavlin Rowan, James Sanderson, India Brown, Taryn McKenna** and **Carolyn Hunt** of Lennox Head, **Hannah Crawford** of East Ballina, **Jessica Delle-Vergini** of Girards Hill, **Cawdor Ross** of Jiggi, **Harry Fettell** of Ballina, **Morgan Perske** and **Annelise Bay** of Lismore, **Thomas Khan** of Richmond Hill, **Kerry Pealing** of Myocum, **John Lindsay** of Mullumbimby, **Katrina Jeffery** of Tuckurimba, **Aliison Kelly** of Tullera, **Tanya Rose Phillipot** of Tregear, **Kathy Grievson** of Kyogle, **Michael Cockerill** of Cawongla, **Susie Perry** of Aberdare, **Fiona Connolly** of Huntingfield, Tas., and re-joining members **Shae Salmon** of South Gundurimba, **Chris Clay** of Wyrallah, **Sharon McGrigor** of Rosebank, **Jan Baldwin** of Ballina and **Bradley Scott** of Lismore.

Albert Park Licence Signed

The licence agreement for the third of the three new food tree plantation sites in urban Lismore has been signed, enabling planting to get underway in the New Year.

Koala Connections a winner

Koala Connections was proclaimed joint winner in the Natural Environment Sustainability category of the Office of Environment & Heritage's prestigious 2014 Green Globe Awards at the end of October. We congratulate all the staff of both councils who are involved in the project but particularly Byron Project Officer, Dr Jo Greene, Tweed Project Officer, Tanya Fountain and Project Manager Scott Hetherington.



Scott Hetherington and Jo Green with Minister for the Environment, Rob Stokes (r)

USC Discovery Project Success

The University of the Sunshine Coast has won funding of \$458,600 over three years to investigate whether differences in the infecting *Chlamydia pecorum* strains or the koala immune system response are associated with the outcome of chlamydial ocular infection. The project will assist understanding and preventing blindness in koalas, expand knowledge of the koala immune system and generate an array of koala immunological assays that may benefit all koala conservation efforts.

Tweed Coast Endangered Nomination

The nomination recommended by the Tweed Coast Koala Advisory Group of the Tweed-Brunswick Coast population of the Koala for listing as an Endangered Population for the purposes of the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 (TSC Act)* has been well received by the NSW Scientific Committee.

The Committee's preliminary determination is supporting that part of the population east of the Pacific Highway in Tweed Shire. It has not included the population to the west of the Highway north of the Tweed River or the population in Byron Shire north of the Brunswick River. These omissions are somewhat perplexing and feedback is being sought. The preliminary determination is on public exhibition until 30 January 2015.

See: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/committee/preliminarydeterminationsbydate.htm>

Private Native Forestry Threat

Private Native Forest is arguably the biggest threat to koala habitat across the rural landscape because local government and the State Environmental Planning Policy – Koala Habitat Protection (SEPP 44) have no influence. Every year property vegetation plans for between 20,000 and 30,000ha are approved in Northern NSW.

Ballina and Tweed shires are presently concerned about operations in the Blackwall Range locality and the west of the shire respectively.

Richmond Valley Koala Habitat & Population Assessment

Towards the end of last year Richmond Valley Council commissioned Biolink to undertake a study for the eastern parts of the local government area (LGA). So far formal surveys of the area bounded by the Evans River in the south and the Richmond Rivers in the west, south of Evans Head and the Manifold Road area north of Casino have been completed. The analysis of historical koala records (including FOK's) across the entire 305,000ha of the LGA has been com-

pleted but the news is not good. There's been a significant reduction in habitat occupancy over the past three koala generations.

SCU Library Donation

Throughout 'Save the Koala' month in September, Lismore and Gold Coast Library patrons stuffed themselves on chocolate Caramello Koalas and raised more than \$300. Thank you to Libby (my left) and other staffers who organised the event and to Alli from Coffee@Library in Lismore for selling them. The money will go towards medications and next year's schools' program.



Proposed Reserve System for Koalas on the North Coast

Our Environment, Our Future, NSW's lead environment groups' policies for the 2015 elections call for the establishment of a reserve system for koalas. China has protected a million hectares of bamboo forest habitat to ensure the future of its iconic Pandas. It shouldn't be too big an "ask" for us to do likewise for our koalas. This proposal has the potential to stretch from the Queensland border south to Hawks Nest - what a legacy for future generations.

Volunteers Required Fundraiser Bunnings BBQ Lismore Saturday 3rd January, 2015

We're expecting a busy day. Just a few hours commitment is all that is needed to help out with money taking, serving or cooking.

If you are able to assist, please contact Mark Wilson on 0413339554 or by email: friends_koala@hotmail.com

Shift times:

Shift A: 8.30am - 11.00am
Shift B: 11.00am - 1.30pm
Shift C: 1.30pm - 4.00pm

Canine Koala Detection

Lynn Baker and John Turbill from LOEH's Ecosystems and Threatened Species Unit, North East Region asked if Friends of the Koala would assist dog behaviourist and trainer, Steve Austin in training a couple of his detection Spaniels to sniff out koalas. One of the Spaniels was also being trained to locate Eastern Bristle Birds, another of the Unit's management priorities.



Lyn Baker training Penny to pick up Sweetie's scent

We agreed with some trepidation, not really understanding what we were exposing Sweetie to. We need never have worried. When the time came Sweetie sat in her carry cage looking slightly bemused in the dog's sight (forget her name; might have been Penny), while Penny "learned" Sweetie's scent.

Those of us who were at the Care Centre during the session were very impressed with the quiet, purposeful routines in which Steve engaged the two dogs.

The koala training continued "in situ" the next day. From the photos we saw Penny proved she was a fast and smart learner.



Penny spotting a koala in the field

Breaking News

Friends of the Koala's application for grant funding under the 25th Anniversary Landcare Grants 2014-15 has been successful.

The funded project, *Forming partnerships to keep Lismore's urban and rural koalas connected*, should commence in April 2015.

Restoring Koala Habitat - 1

This is the first of a series of short articles to assist landowners with restoring their bit of bush for the benefit of all wildlife and in particular our threatened koalas. Julie is a member of the Australian Association of Bush Regenerators (AABR), and a bush regenerator with more than 30 years' experience.

The process of creating or enhancing habitat by rehabilitating disturbed native vegetation is commonly referred to as 'assisted regeneration'. This is the recommended approach to ensure the resilience of the bush is restored, eventually reaching a state that requires minimal input from the landowner.

This method involves creating the right conditions for damaged communities of native plants and animals to bounce back. It usually includes managing threats such as weeds and grazing. This is true 'bush regeneration'.

Weeds are generally the greatest threat to remnant vegetation particularly on the North Coast, and so bush regeneration is closely linked with weed control. The management of other factors like fire can be just as important, depending on the vegetation community being restored. Weeds and fire will be covered in following issues.

The secondary restoration method is **planting or revegetation**. This method is required where the ecosystem is too damaged to regenerate naturally and appropriate plants to the area have to be reintroduced either by planting or direct seeding. In the case of koala habitat restoration planting of koala preferred seedling stock is the most effective. These trees can be sourced from the Friends of the Koala nursery in East Lismore.

Revegetation is also used to fill gaps between healthy stands of native vegetation or on edges to expand the existing habitat. Koalas need continuous vegetation cover to reduce the threats from predation by being forced to spend time on the ground.

—Julie Reid



Lantana control in koala habitat, Jiggi Valley

Member Profile – Allen Pearson



When Allen moved to Lismore three years ago he found a relatively safe bike-ride to do regularly which included Riverside Drive. He saw koalas every day along the road. Coming back to Lismore he noticed the koala

food tree plantation outside the Council Waste Station. The sign gave him the germ of an idea. Further along he came across leafers (Dot, he thinks). He rang the number and possibly spoke to Care Centre Co-ordinator, Lola — sold!!

What's the best thing about where you live?

My street is full of retirees. Go the Geezers.

What are you reading?

'The Bush' by Don Watson.

What is your favourite movie? 'Shawshank Redemption'. The hero outsmarts the bad guy with intelligence and humility.

What's your favourite hobby/pastime?

Cycling – off-road bike but I stick to the roads.

Your idea of a perfect Sunday?

When I can manage to get to Sydney to visit grandkids.

Your most memorable travel experience?

Travelling by steam train from Goulburn in the Southern Tablelands to Bogabilla on the Queensland border overnight for a 3month jackarooing job in about 1967. The train was called the Northwest Mail and went overnight to Moree, then changing to a one-car mail van powered by a WW2 blitz side-valve flathead Ford motor in the coach, stopping at every mailbox from Moree through North Star to Bogabilla for the driver to get out and deliver the mail and bread, I think.

What would you most like to be doing in five years' time?

I will be retired by then but I most want to be physically capable of cycling to Casino via Caniaba.

Who is the person you'd most like to meet?

Noel Pearson.

What has been your favourite koala moment?

A few Saturdays ago I passed three koalas fighting for the same branch. Must have been an Auction day!

Application/renewal form — ‘Friends of the Koala, Inc.’ Membership runs from 1st July to 30th June.		I/We are interested in: (please tick)
Name.....		<input type="checkbox"/> Tree Planting
Postal address.....		<input type="checkbox"/> Plant Nursery work
City/Suburb.....	Postcode.....Country.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Caring for sick & injured koalas
Phone.....	Mobile.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Leaf collection
Email.....		<input type="checkbox"/> Rescue
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<input type="checkbox"/> Ordinary—Individual/Family (within Australia) \$20		<input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising
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I/We would like to make an additional donation of : \$.....		<input type="checkbox"/> Surveys / Mapping
Total payment is: \$.....		<input type="checkbox"/> Information Technology
		<input type="checkbox"/> Phone Roster
		<input type="checkbox"/> I/We would like someone to phone and explain about volunteering with Friends of the Koala

Payment by:

Direct Debit (your name as reference) to: Friends of the Koala Inc., BSB 722-744
A/C 38533 Southern Cross Credit Union Ltd.

or Cash (**preferred**) Cheque Money order

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Post to: *The Treasurer, Friends of the Koala Inc., PO Box 5034, East Lismore, NSW 2480*

I agree to abide by the licensing requirements, the constitution and the policies of ‘Friends of the Koala’ Inc.

Signature.....Date...../...../.....

The Management Committee reserves the right to refuse any application for membership or renewal.

Please tick here if a receipt **is** required

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