



# Treetops

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

The Newsletter of Friends of the Koala Inc.

December 2012

Patron: Margot Sweeney (CEO, Summerland Credit Union)

## Jude's Return

Eatonsville *Jude* went home again on 30 October, after being in care for 83 days.

*Jude* was first found on 8 August sitting on a pot plant on a verandah at Eatonsville, south-west of Grafton. My first impression on meeting him was that he was big, and had one very sore left eye.

Vicki of the Grafton Pound Street Vet Clinic helped to weigh and assess him, and while his eye was enough to keep him in care for a good while his other outward signs were good. His size was an illusion because he weighed just under 7kg, but his head was large, and round, so when he rolled into a ball to sleep he was quite a lot bigger than a soccer ball.



*Jude before treatment*

Friends of Koala were busy and Pat was comfortable with supervising his care from a distance, so under her guidance Vicki prescribed the drugs and his treatment began. We had no idea how old he was. Grafton vets have little experience with koalas and aren't confident in doing more than administering drugs under advice, so we could well have been wasting time and money on an old koala.

But *Jude* didn't look old. In fact he was gorgeous, with good fur and one bright little eye, when he bothered to open it, which wasn't often, and his scats were copious and finely-ground. He was also the calmest, most laid back little koala I'd ever met. From the time of his capture

and caging, through all his first 4 weeks of daily injections and eye creams he never made a sound; just sat gazing wisely around, munching leaves, or mostly slept through it all.

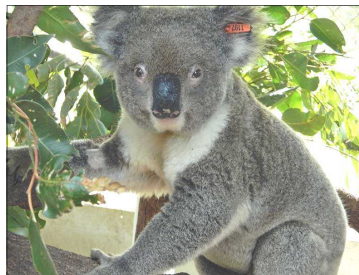
Towards the end of his first month his treatment clearly hadn't had much effect, so when he was finally delivered to FOK to be assessed and aged (6 yr) it was no surprise to find chlamydia still present. Rather than take him back to Grafton, then have to return him again for a final check-up, he was left in Lismore in the best of hands, close to those wonderful vets.

Because of his relaxed attitude to people he featured in a Northern Star promotional story for Friends of Koalas. On completion of his second course of treatment he was transferred to the Australian Wildlife Hospital to have his bone marrow checked, to make sure he didn't

have leukaemia. Finally, after receiving the all clear on all counts, he was back at the vets to have a third eyelid trimmed away. By the time he came through all that, he was a very handsome young fellow indeed.

Following Pat's advice, back in Grafton he remained in care for a further week, reuniting himself with his preferred local leaves and regaining some of the weight he had lost by being picky about Lismore's leaves. Then he was loaded into the cage for a final time for his last car trip, back home, to Eatonsville.

We had already picked out a good red gum for his release, but being a koala he ignored that one and promptly shinnied up a skimpy wattle tree, sat his full 7kgs on a dead twig that seemed like a thread from where we stood, and looked



*Handsome Jude ready to go home*

around. We watched as he tested the air, flicking his ears. Then in quick decision he reversed down again and set off through the bush. Now his head was up, his ears were pricked, and he set up an excited growling as he ran down the slope.

For a few seconds he stopped and sniffed at a big red gum tree. Then he was racing up its trunk, settling himself on a sturdy limb, and his fearful donkey-lion-piglike bellows rang through the forest and echoed down the gully.

*Jude* knew exactly where he was. He was home, and all koalas in the vicinity were being told he was back to claim his territory.

—Pat Edwards, Clarence Valley  
**WIRES**

(with *Jude's* and my endless thanks and deepest gratitude for the wonderful work of Friends of the Koala.)

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## President's Message

A few hot days and we know that Summer is not far off. Summer signals Christmas which signals year's end - time for another report card on Friends of the Koala and our conservation work.

This year has seen so many positive milestones and projects clocked up, it's hard to know where to start. Here's a sample:

- Merinda Williams' spotlight survey of SCU's Lismore campus identified 25 koalas including four with young. The findings of her study will feed into preparation of a Koala Plan of Management.
- Lismore City Council's Draft Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management for South-east Lismore attracted over 900 submissions, 64% of which supported the Plan. Following Council's approval in May, the Plan was forwarded to the Director General of the Department of Planning & Infrastructure.
- Federal Minister Tony Burke listed a Northern Designatable Unit of the Koala, comprising combined populations in Queensland, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, *vulnerable to extinction* under the national *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, effective 2 May 2012.
- Tweed and Byron Shire Councils won a \$2.17m Biodiversity Fund grant from the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, over four years to implement the *Linking Koala Habitat and Endangered Ecological Commu-*



Lorraine Vass

nities project (re-branded Koala Connections).

- Friends of the Koala released seventeen joeys back into the wild, fourteen of them hand-raised. In all 65 animals were released back to the wild in the 2011-12 reporting year.
- The Lismore output from Kristen Lee's PhD thesis, *Conservation genetics of the koala (Phascolarctos cinereus) in Queensland and Northeast New South Wales* has been published as *Anthropogenic changes to the landscape resulted in colonization of koalas in north-east New South Wales, Australia* (doi:10.1111/j.1442-9993.2012.02414.x)
- QUT's *Development of a safe and immunogenic anti-chlamydia vaccine for the koala* project was funded for a further three years under the Australian Research Council's *Linkage Projects* scheme.
- The local government elections in September returned a reasonably pro-koala conservation balance in most Northern Rivers' councils.
- The Memorandum of Understanding between Friends of the Koala and Rous Water was signed.
- Ballina Shire Council has committed to preparing a shire-wide Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management, bringing the number of Northern Rivers' plans under development or waiting State approval to four.
- Friends of the Koala won the Nature Conservation Council of NSW's prestigious Outstanding Environment Group Award.
- We received a grant of \$12,000 from

the NSW Environment Trust under the Lead Environmental Community Groups program.

- The Lismore Urban Koalas tracking study was concluded and Ross Goldingay has written up the paper. As far as we are aware, amazing Ashley is still crossing the Bruxner Highway!
- Friends of the Koala's Facebook page is nudging 400 "likes".



Kyme Lavelle (CEO Rous Water) and I shake hands under the eye-catching koala food tree signage on Bangalow Road outside Lismore

Disappointments and frustrations abound of course. Environmental protection and the protectors themselves seem to be fair game for assault - we've all lost track of the numerous campaigns requesting petitions to be signed and submissions written. Our home-carers as well are having a very tough time with this year's joeys.

Through *Treetops* you can pick up glimpses of the great contribution we make to koala conservation across the Northern Rivers and elsewhere. Feel good about our achievements and try to take a bit of a break over the Holiday Season.

—Lorraine Vass



## Vale Jean Starr – Koala Carer Pioneer

Jean Starr and her husband Max founded the Koala Preservation Society of New South Wales in 1973. During that first year they cared for three koalas from their home.

Some 24 koalas were tended to the following year and in 1975, the Port Macquarie Apex Club established the first building of the Port Macquarie Koala Hospital. Jean encouraged a range of local community organisations and businesses to provide financial support for the Hospital. In 1986, a second building was developed.

Jean alerted researchers to chlamydia spreading through the koalas coming into care and worked with a veterinarian in Armidale and later the University of Sydney to investigate the outbreak and develop treatment.

Country Western singer John Williamson met Jean in the 1980s and was inspired to write his popular ballad, *Goodbye Blinky Bill*, warning of the koalas' plight. Williamson, who kept in regular contact with Jean, raised \$300,000 in royalties to build an intensive care unit at the Hospital.

Jean died peacefully in Port Macquarie on 29 October 2012 aged 80. Coincidentally, the Jean Starr Walk at the Hospital was officially opened on 1 November as planned, in commemoration of her long years as the Society's president and her tireless work for Port's koalas.

## Care Coordinator's Report

Going over my last two reports and being reminded of those quiet winter months, the stats table (see page 4) for this Spring period tells its own story.

As the koalas start moving around and romance is in the air, we have been kept on our toes in all areas. The Hotline is buzzing with lots of sightings of healthy animals, some with back-young. The one statistic that stands out is sadly, the high incidence of car strikes, particularly of males. On two occasions we took calls from



Pat Barnidge

members of the public where the injured animal was put back up the tree. It took until the next day before FOK rescuers were able to catch and contain them. It is vitally important in these situations for the animal to be covered with a blanket or even an article of clothing until a FOK member can arrive. Koalas can fool us humans by appearing as if they are okay, but in both cases these animals had fractures and other serious injuries. The joeys are also coming in, although not in the number that occurred last year. We can only hope that there are still lots of babies being born; just not getting into trouble.

The animals that have been admitted into care have not had good outcomes. Four or five mothers with back-young have presented with the mother being very ill and the hard decision being made to euthanase. These tiny back-young, who because of their mothers' illness and poor condition are themselves compromised, make a tough ride for the home-carers taking them on.

This has been borne out by Barbara Dobner's recent experience in which three such joeys required euthanasia after some weeks. One had leukaemia which was not obvious during her first few weeks in care. The other two little females were not thriving; both suffered sudden downturns. Their immune sys-

tems had shut down and they were too frail to fight off their infections. Barbara has one other female that is battling on although her prognosis is guarded.

Even when these little ones successfully come through home-care and soft-release there is still no guarantee of their survival. In early October I took a call from home-carer Jenny Graham, telling me that she found *Olivia*, a joey released only one month earlier, deceased not far from her soft release site. These are the realities of wildlife rehabilitation.

In late July a boy we all knew well called *Mitch* came into care in very poor condition. This was *Mitch's* third admittance. In 2010 he had been involved in two "dog encounters". Sadly this admittance was his last as he was diagnosed with koala retrovirus (KoRV). However he did have two years in the wild with our help. Another tagged koala was reported deceased after a dog attack. This animal was a girl named *Gloria*. She had been released four years earlier and would have been 13 years old at the time of her demise.

Closer to home, a big boofy boy called *Westie* whose home range is around the Care Centre was brought in because he was missing an eye. He had lost his eye in 2004 due to a car strike. On this occasion he was found to be slightly anaemic, probably due to a heavy tick infestation. He soon became a favourite with all the carers and loved his daily dose of iron supplement. After one week in care he was released weighing a whopping 10.2kg and in fine health – not bad for an old boy of approximately 10 years. He was last seen sitting in his favourite tree with three females in trees nearby. His charm clearly transcends only having one eye!!

A tagged koala in the Tweed area was identified as a girl called *Oprah* who had come in three years earlier with minor burns. Estimated to be around 11 years, on this occasion she was reported looking fit and well.

Local vet Ray Austin, who along with his colleague Rebecca Knee do so much work with our koalas recently performed his first koala eye trim on *Jude* (see p.1).

Koalas often have some tissue partly covering the eye at the end of their treatment for conjunctivitis and these trims have always been done at the Australian Wildlife Hospital. As *Jude* had only minor trimming to be done Ray offered to perform the surgery. He did a fantastic job and *Jude* looked oh so handsome when he was transferred back to Grafton. Watch out Ray some of us girls think you may be able to perform some cosmetic work on us!!!

Friends of the Koala now has two new soft release sites at Reserve Creek (Tweed) and Cawongla (Kyogle). Both were built by the owners of these beautiful properties, Debbie Moore and her partner Laurie, and Joy and Rick Wagner who are long-time members. No effort has been spared in building these structures. Debbie has already soft released two females *Lily* and *Lacy* who were hand raised by Sue Johnson and Jo Cabale. I was told that for the first few days Debbie sat near the soft release watching them climbing the large tree like a nervous mum. Much to her disappointment she has not seen them since but all her neighbours are on alert for any sightings. A juvenile male called *Kevin* was also released at this site due to some concerns about his "big bloated belly". Debbie reported that after a few days of climbing and yummy leaf, his belly looked good and he was released.

Joy and Rick Wagner released their first little girl *Inez*, who had been hand-raised by Deidre de Villiers, at the end of August. Happily for Joy and Rick *Inez* has been sighted on several occasions along with an unknown male in close proximity. Her place has been taken by *Thomas* and *Cheddar* who at the time of writing are making themselves very much at home in their big tree.



Inez

In closing I want to thank all the people who give of their time in helping to rehabilitate so many of our much loved koalas back to the wild. Please remember during the hot summer days to come, if possible, leave a container of water at the base of the tree as koalas do get thirsty when their food trees are not getting much in the way of rain.

Wishing everyone a very Merry Christmas and happy koala spotting.

—Pat Barnidge



Keen Street Veterinary Clinic's Ray Austin works on *Jude*

## Koala Care Statistics 21 July 2012 – 10 November 2012

Friends of the Koala attended to or provided advice on a total of 338 koalas

	In Care	Released	Died	Dead on Arrival	Euthanased	Transferred	Unable to find/capture	Advice
HBC –Road Strike (36)	3	1	7	15	5		5	
Dog attack (6)	1		1	2	2			
Diseased/Sick (82)	6	4	3	1	40	1	13	14
Injury (9)		2		4	3			
Health status unknown /unrecorded (51)			1	11			14	25
Healthy/Assumed Healthy (138)		4						134
Orphans/joey (13)	10				3			
Permanent Care (3)	3							
<b>Totals (338)</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>173</b>

## South Australia's Great Koala Count

South Australia's koalas have a chequered history. Their historic distribution is not accurately known but they are believed to have occupied the forests of the south-eastern corner. In the early 1900s they were just about wiped out and insurance colonies were established on Kangaroo Island.

Translocation of small groups of koalas within Kangaroo Island commenced in the 1950s. More occurred in the 1960s with a few animals being returned to the mainland in areas including Mt Lofty.

We hear a lot about the over-abundance of Kangaroo Island's koalas but what's happening on the mainland? As in Victoria, South Australian numbers are now thought to be high. Around Adelaide they've become an increasingly suburban animal.

Lacking reasonable population estimates or much other information about the State's wild koalas, the idea of a Great Koala Count involving citizen reporting was mooted. The project team includes the University of South Australia's Barbara Hardy Institute, ABC Local Radio,

the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, the Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges NRM Board and CSIRO. The Great Koala Count website for recording koala sightings and a smart-phone app giving GPS location were developed. A date was selected and promotion commenced.



The big day was Wednesday 28 November 2012. Observations were recorded between 6am and 8pm. About 30 to 40 schools took part with more than 1,000 citizens participating. Over 1,300 submissions and 950 koala photos were submitted. One participant sighted 35 different koalas and several others sighted between 15 to 20 animals.

Publication of the census results is expected next year. Director of the Barbara Hardy Institute, Prof. Chris Daniels is confident that the count and other data contributed will provide a detailed picture of South Australia's koala hotspots.

We're keeping tabs on developments with a view to a similar Northern Rivers Koala Count being devised some time down the track.

## New Year Party

All members are welcome to kick off 2013 at the Friends of the Koala's New Year Party

**Saturday 12th January 2013**

5 ish at Lakeside behind the Koala Care Centre, Rifle Range Road, East Lismore (if wet, the splendid Z Block Deck)

BYO food and drink

Phone 6629 8388 for details



*Friends of the Koala is being assisted by the New South Wales Government through its Environmental Trust's Lead Environmental Community Grants Program.*



## Care Centre Co-ordinator's Report

We recently received our Certificate of Participation from the Office of Environment and Heritage's Energy Efficiency for Small Business Program. While we don't think of ourselves as a small business, we are an environmental group with some awareness of doing the right thing. Reducing pollution by promoting energy efficiencies also saves money, something that is close to our hearts at Friends of the Koala.

The Care Centre's utility bills chew up quite a bit of our precious income so about 12 months ago we got ourselves audited. With a bit of help from the government we've made a good start in implementing the Energy Efficiency Action Plan that was prepared.

True, some of us still need reminding to turn off the lights and to keep the door closed when the air-conditioner is on. We're also looking at other programs and practices that should assist our water consumption (we do a lot of washing at the Care Centre).

Improvements have been very much on our minds of late – better screening for a couple of the smaller enclosures, utilisation of the largest enclosure, signage on Industry Drive – all are under consideration. The much-needed security light over the Care Centre's front door has finally been installed.

We have a great bunch of volunteers at the Care Centre who work very hard to maintain our facility and more importantly to give our sick and injured koalas the best possible care.



Lola Whitney

People come to us in different ways. Some hear or read about us, some are directed from Centrelink or the various employment and training agencies, some from Southern Cross University, and others from the Northern Rivers Volunteer Referral Service. We also receive enquiries from overseas either directly or through other organisations such as the Byron Bay English Language School.

Even though we are all volunteers, selection is based on interview and our assessment of commitment. Most Care Centre work is in teams working on shifts so fitting in and reliability are important. Once duties are explained and demonstrated, some realise the work is not for them, and that's okay.

Coming up to Christmas, our new range of merchandise is selling well. (see selection below)

This year's monthly stalls at the Lismore Car Boot Market have been a great point of sale for which we thank Trees Officer Mark, and his wife Wendy. FOK fundraising and information stalls such as the two held recently at the Lismore Shopping Square, draw heavily on Care Centre volunteers, as does the annual Charity of the Day at the Car Boot Market.

So many of our volunteers put up their hand for just about anything that will help the koalas; that's why you're such a great bunch. My heartfelt thanks and a very Happy Christmas to you all.

—Lola Whitney.

## Chlamydia vaccine trials set to go

Chlamydial disease is debilitating in the koala. A chlamydial vaccine has recently been developed at QUT and is safe, while eliciting an immune response, in both healthy and diseased koalas under captive conditions.

Evaluation of the protection of the vaccine in wild koalas is a critical step towards the implementation of the end point vaccine. One such trial is set to occur at Lismore's Friends of the Koala Care Centre. Initially koalas coming into care will be screened to assess the disease status and prominent strains of *Chlamydia* in the population. The most effective vaccine for the population will then be administered to 10 *Chlamydia* positive female koalas coming under care.

Assessment of the therapeutic value of the vaccine will be determined by quantifying the decrease in disease load over time. If possible (depending on funding) each koala will then be radio-collared and tracked across 12 months, providing longitudinal data and information on the ability of the vaccine to protect once animals are exposed to a natural *Chlamydia* challenge in the wild.

If successful an effective chlamydial vaccine will provide a significant and viable intervention to help koala care groups to combat this disease and facilitate the recovery of this iconic native species.

—Courtney Waugh  
Cells & Tissues Domain  
Koala Chlamydia Vaccine Project  
QUT



Ever popular Koala ears headband



Koala purse



Koala backpack



FOK cap



FOK mugs



Courtney Waugh (bottom left) meets with members of FOK's management committee to discuss implementation of the trial in 2013. (l-r) Donna Graham, Lola Whitney, Pat Barnidge, Rick Stewart, Lorraine Vass, Fiona Dawson, Sam Kendal and Sue Keogh (kneeling)

## Musings of a home-carer

My bad news is I have had a rough couple of weeks having to euthanase three joeys because of illnesses such as leukaemia which is untreatable and so difficult to diagnose in a little one when it first comes in.

A huge thankyou to Ray at Keen St Veterinary Clinic for going over and above what could be expected of any vet to help find out what was wrong with these little ones. Sorry that you end up having to euthanase so many of them. Dealing with these diseases is extremely frustrating.

My happy news is *Bruce*, who was released at our place around five years ago is still hanging about.



*Bruce*

Interestingly a sighting was lodged for a koala quite a ways from my place (approximately 3km). The animal was tagged so I asked the person to take a photo and send it through which they did. Yep, it was *Bruce*. At least now I know one of his haunts when he disappears for months on end; then turning up like he owns the place as usual and stealing my hard-found cut leaf from the pot I put it in by the back door.

More good news is that one of the girls released here last year, *Myra*, has just weaned off her first back young. She certainly bred quickly. I am suspecting she now has another little one in her pouch. The photo is of her a few weeks ago before she started to wean him.



*Myra*

Watching the fantastic growth weight of this joey over the last few weeks has been a good experience for me as a carer because it shows me what I am aiming to achieve as a foster mum.

Other happy news is that the two boys that have been here, *Cheddar* and *Thomas* have now gone on to their release site at Kawongla.

*Cheddar* came into care last July as a 1kg back-young. His mother was still alive but needed to be euthanased because she had leukaemia. This boy was a dream to care for: great growth rates; ate any type of leaf and had no problems during his time in care.

*Thomas* came in a few weeks earlier as a very sick juvenile. He was cared for originally at Australian Wildlife Hospital before coming back to the Care Cen-

tre for a while.

When *Cheddar* was around 2.5kg and *Thomas* 3.4kg



*Cheddar*

there was no other koala in care to pair *Cheddar* up with so we decided to put them together and it worked well.

Thank you very much to Joy and Rick Wagner for taking on these two for release and thank goodness for the happy news, which on balance definitely outweighs the bad.



*Thomas*

—*Barb Dobner*

### ... an update from Joy

Just to let you know *Thomas* and *Cheddar* are coping with the heat as koalas do, sleeping amongst the leaf. Our lovely friend Kath has been getting us leaf on the weekends which we all appreciate and gives the boys variety (see story, page 12).

*Thomas* still is the most frequent climber and *Cheddar* (aka *Gutsface*) although at times climbs high up, is mostly in amongst the leaf, eating at any time of the day. We change leaf and spray and he doesn't budge. Leaves brushing past his face and misting water everywhere leaves him quite undisturbed.

*Inez* was in a tree on the road nearby most of last week and came back into the paddock occasionally but I couldn't see her today. The older boy, *Billy Bluegum*, is still hanging around near the youngsters, making noises at times. We also have a tawny frogmouth sitting on a nest in a nearby tree, in full sun!!!

Hope you are all coping with this summer heat.

—*Joy Wagner*



*Inez*

## Wrecker Risley's Story

As anyone dealing with koalas can tell you, each animal is as different as every rescue.

*Risley* (named after the street on which he was found) came to me in the boot of a car. Two gentlemen had found him sitting on the side of the road and scooped him up with sheets and towels. *Risley* had very sore eyes and a quiet demeanour. He was happy to be transferred into my made shift cage (two laundry baskets held together with occy straps) and had a bit of a munch on the Tallowood I picked for him. As it was 9pm and he wouldn't be seeing the vet until the morning, I brought him home with me.

After checking in with Pat on the Hotline, I tucked *Risley* in (put him in my kitchen and covered the cage with a sheet) and said goodnight.



The picture is a small part of what I found in the morning. *Risley* had escaped from his cage and had quite the busy evening checking out my kitchen and bathroom. He was even kind enough to do his wee on my bathroom floor! He rearranged food stuffs, unplugged my TV and sat on my sofa. He was halfway to getting my mah jong set off the shelves when I discovered his little adventure. He looked at me like, "it was like this when I got here". He was quite okay to get back in his cage and it wasn't long before I met Pat to hand him over in Clunes. If I'd known about his intentions when I was considering names for him, I would have gone with Houdini!

Unfortunately, *Risley* struggled with a neurological disorder and didn't last the week. I'm happy though, knowing his last few days included lots of loving care, prime leaf and a make-over of my house. He was a gorgeous boy and I'll always remember him.

—*Sue Keogh*

Treetops is printed on recycled paper.



## Working with farmers who really care for Koalas

Fiona here, a FOK member for almost six years now and bearer of good habitat news.

We hear of the negative reactions by farmers to the koala plans of management being developed by Councils and to the LEP environmental zonings, so it is inspiring to be working on a project with farmers on working properties who have the generosity and vision to share their land with the wildlife they love.

Chris Moran is Project Coordinator for the Restoring Koala Habitat in the Richmond



Lucy Kinsley with mulched and drip-irrigated eucalypt

Catchment Project for Lismore City and Richmond Valley Councils. The grant was obtained a couple of years ago by Lismore City Council. Following a period of contacting landholders and planning, the Project is now halfway through the planting and weed control stage at approximately 50 sites in areas including Tuckurimba, Lismore, Rileys Hill, Woodburn, Broadwater, Tucki Tucki, Coraki etc.

In a happy coincidence for me, my career change four years ago out of the office and into the fresh air as a professional bush regenerator has led me to being involved in the field-work along with fellow contractors David de Nardi and Stephen Wood.



Sleepy koala on Riverbank Road

The enjoyable aspect of this work has been the opportunity to meet working property landholders in many off the beaten track areas and spot the koalas which have been present at just

about every visit. At one property near Woodburn, the owner had even seen koalas swimming across the Richmond River to get to eucalypts on the other side.

One of the landholders we're working with is Lucy Kinsley and Scott McKinnon who own a 300 acre cattle property at Riverbank Road, adjacent to the Wilson River, a few kilometres south of Lismore, at Gundurimba.

Rick Stewart had already established a harvest plantation for FOK on their property some 18 months ago but they jumped at the chance of improving habitat in response to the letter sent by Nick Stephens of LCC in March 2011.

The grant has paid for planting 400 trees with another 800 trees to be planted after additional fencing is completed. Weed control along the riverbank has freed a number of native species including Whalebone, Rough-leaved Elm, River-oak, and Fig from the usual suspects Morning Glory, Coral Tree (a particularly rampant weed in this area), Lantana and Camphor.

In addition to land, Lucy and Scott have contributed towards the fencing cost and mulched the trees, using the mulch created by slashing the grass. They have even installed drip irrigation in the dryer areas. The trees are flourishing under this "only the best" treatment. Wallaby guards were not required in this particular area.

Lucy told us that since they moved to this property five years ago, they have been observing the koalas in the trees that line a 100m stretch of road near their house. Numbers of koalas

have increased in this small stretch from around 12 to 17 over that time. Currently they are aware of six joeys.

Scott's opinion on the riverbank planting is "it's a win win situation - the trees will stabilize the riverbank while providing habitat for koalas and many other species will also benefit. The riverbank will visually improve by replacing weed trees with eucalypts and other native species".

Lucy and Scott have plans for another corridor to connect to neighbouring properties in future. They really are inspiring "friends of the koala"...



Lucy and Julie (NR Wildlife Carers) release a python near the planting

**PS** Chris Moran is looking for additional private properties for either tree planting or weed eradication work in degraded koala habitat (or both).

The geographic focus of this **funded work** is the south-east part of the Lismore LGA (i.e. roughly the area bounded by the Wilson River in the north and west, the border with Ballina Shire in the east and to the border with Richmond Valley and just about anywhere in the Richmond Valley LGA). The potential of riverbank sites is of particular interest.

**If you are a landowner and interested please contact Chris on 0413 732 616 for further details.**

—Fiona Dawson

### Koala Ecology Workshop

Friends of the Koala will be hosting a workshop: *Update on Aspects of Koala Ecology, Conservation and Management*, presented by Steve Phillips and Ross Goldingay (see photos right)

Steve will report on some of the koala projects he is presently engaged in and Ross will report his findings from the Urban Tracking Study in which many FOK members took part as voluntary trackers.

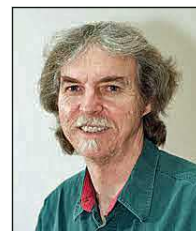
The workshop will be held on Saturday

16 February at Southern Cross University's Lismore Campus. Registration from 9.30am for a 10am start, until 4pm.

Cost will be \$5 for Friends of the Koala members, other licensed rehabilitators and concession registrations and \$15 for others.

Morning tea will be provided but participants will need to self-cater for lunch.

Bookings are essential – phone 6622 1233, email [info@friendsofthekoala.org](mailto:info@friendsofthekoala.org) or add your name to the list at the Koala Care Centre.



Ross Goldingay, Ass. Pro, School of Environment Science and Engineering, SCU



Steve Phillips, Research Scientist/Consultant Ecologist, Biolink

## Sweetie and Me

When I moved from Darwin to Lismore in 2005 I wondered what life had in store for me. Not long after arriving I saw a koala in Goonellabah and was instantly fascinated by this beautiful animal calmly staring at me. After nearly a year of settling into the Lismore lifestyle I decided I wanted to find out more about these enigmatic animals.

I joined Friends of the Koala in 2006 and so began my experiences with the wonderful Koala. Since then I have carried out countless rescues and occasionally stabilised koalas overnight in my flat. Sadly the outcome in these cases has not always been good as these animals had been so sick or injured that they could not be left unattended in the Care Centre.

My time with koala joeys has been short as they are quickly vet-checked and dispatched to our home-carers for hand-raising. To be honest, I always felt a sense of relief to pass them on as I knew that they required a lot of care and attention. I have never had children and am happily single living in my Lismore flat with my very overweight marmalade cat who thrives on minimal attention.

All that changed in early October when a call came through the Hotline about a koala found on a verandah in Tyagarah (Byron Shire) with bi-lateral conjunctivitis.

Caroline Sutherland attended and as I now had the role of Care Co-ordinator she phoned me to say she had a sweet little girl who was quite sick with very sore eyes. The next morning I met Caro-

line and took this little brown/grey furred joey to the Care Centre for assessment. Because of her size and weight (1.1kg) I knew she could not be treated at the Care Centre. She still required milk feeds a couple of times a day as well as the antibiotic injections to treat her eyes.



Pat holding Sweetie

I started phoning around the FOK home-carers hoping that one would be able to isolate her from their healthy ones, but I was not having much luck. My final call was to Barb Dobner who I knew would have an answer to my dilemma. After talking over the matter with Barb (who was also unable to take her on as she already had six bubs), it looked as if this little girl would have to go into a hospital environment for treatment.

I thought on this a bit more, finally wondering if I could treat her - after all how hard could it really be? I phoned Barb back thinking that she would warn me off this rash consideration, but to my surprise she said it was a great idea (with hindsight I think Barb was one step ahead of me, expecting I would phone her back to talk over my somewhat reckless reasoning).

I asked Barb to talk me through what I would need to look after a baby. The list of requirements got longer and longer and I soon began to have grave misgivings - what was I letting myself in for?

The next day Simon Dobner delivered a tree stand to me (laughing his head off) which I duly set up in my bathroom. My kitchen soon looked like a bomb had hit it with Milton soak buckets, syringes, koala joey food supplements and a bin for leaf on the verandah. Just working out the milk measurements was difficult. Have I mentioned that I never had a desire for

children or anything of the "ankle-biter" variety?

I decided to feed via a syringe which made me feel a little more comfortable - I can count on one hand the amount of times in my life I have ever fed anything with a bottle!!!! I had also come up with a name for this little fur-ball *Sweetie*, as she really was sweet - unlike her foster-carer!

After just one morning feed I fell asleep with *Sweetie* in my arms and awoke to a very wet feeling on my night attire and my bed. Needless to say that situation did not happen twice!! I was fortunate to be able to source leaf daily from the Care Centre, however sometimes Little Miss Fussy didn't like what I gave her so off I went to find leaf more to her liking. Scales soon took pride of place in my flat as a steady weight increase is vital to their growth. I can say with some relief that *Sweetie* has steadily gained weight as she loves to eat. I was under the naïve idea that because *Sweetie* was small she would only require a shorter course of injections but Barb laughed and said, "Of course not, she will more than likely require 45 days of injections". And she did.

So, to end this story here I am nearly at the end of my journey with *Sweetie*. While my appreciation of our home-carers has grown, I will think very carefully before doing this again. Not only is it a huge commitment, I've been deprived of one of my joys - sleeping-in! I have been through more hand cream, dishwashing liquid and washing powder than I would normally use in a year and I expect that long after *Sweetie* has gone I will still be finding those little pellets rolling around the floor. I know my fat cat will be happy to see her go!

Having said all that though I would not have foregone the wonderful opportunity and privilege of having played a part in assisting *Sweetie* return to the wild.

—Pat Barnidge

## From the mailbox...

Long-time member Jan Boyd sent this photo a few months ago. Brought up in Bentley, the Lowrey kids were no strangers to koalas but during a childhood visit to Brisbane's Lone Pine Sanctuary in 1947 they got to hold them (back row, Peter, Robert, and Jan with Nancy).

Jan taught at Goonellabah Public School during the 1990s when there were more koalas around than there are today and the state environmental planning policy for koala habitat protection (SEPP 44) was introduced. Her class 4B were forever writing poems and drawing posters - anything to encourage support for protecting their koalas in Goonellabah.

Jan and husband Ken are going through a very rough patch at present - Ken's been hospitalised at Lismore Base for over a month. All the best Jan and Ken, your FOK friends are thinking of you.





# Support a Koala this Christmas

Choose from Joanna, Rosalie, or Hera



## Basic Support-a-Koala Pack = \$50

Includes: A certificate/folder including a photo of the koala of choice, letter with information about the koala and a Koala Facts sheet

## Premium Support-a-Koala Pack = \$100 (or more)

Includes: A certificate/folder including a photo of the koala of choice, letter with information about the koala, Koala Facts sheet, a koala toy, 12 months membership of Friends of the Koala including subscription to *Treetops*

Order by phone (6622 1233), post (PO Box 5034, East Lismore), online ([www.friendsofthekoala.org](http://www.friendsofthekoala.org)) or from the Koala Care Centre

***All funds go towards the care and rehabilitation of koalas in the Northern Rivers of NSW***

## Advocacy and Policy Reform Report

While it's a long time since the local government elections in early September, it needs to be said that our Koala Friendly Candidate campaign was very worthwhile. Generally speaking, environmentally-sensitive councillors across the Northern Rivers held ground which augurs well for the term ahead.

The same cannot be said for the NSW government which, eighteen months-in is showing its true colours, winding-back environmental protection at an alarming rate. No wonder unease is increasingly widespread. In recent months we have seen important planning decisions being considered or approved even before the NSW Planning Review is complete and without any community engagement. Together with slashing jobs in the Office of Environment and Heritage, pushing for logging and grazing in National Parks and refusing to guarantee ongoing funding for the NSW Environmental Defender's Office, there can be little doubt that the community's mistrust is well placed.

Friends of the Koala has joined with 124 other community organisations across NSW which are affiliated with the recently formed Sydney-based *Better Planning Network (BPN)*, the phenomenal growth of which is its own story.

Here on the North Coast the excision of environmental zones from Ballina, Byron, Lismore, Kyogle and Tweed councils' Local Environment Plans (LEPs) prior to gazettal and the removal of environment overlays affecting rural lands have confused and generally outraged local government and prompted the Save North Coast Nature Campaign with which FOK is also affiliated.

A major focus of interest for Friends of the Koala is the future of State Environment Planning Policy No. 44 – Koala Habitat Protection (SEPP 44). The Green Paper makes it clear that the existing SEPPs are going, to be replaced by new, plain-English and *easy to use* NSW Planning Policies. We understand that one of these policies will address koala habitat protection.

We have told the Government (and Opposition) that Comprehensive Koala Plans of Management (CKPoMs) are a key component of both SEPP 44 and the NSW Koala Recovery Plan in providing for koala management and recovery at the local level, helping NSW to meet its obligations for koala recovery under the Federal Government's *National Koala Conservation and Management Strategy 2009-2014*.

There are nine councils on the State's North Coast that are either preparing, or committed to preparing, CKPoMs under SEPP 44. Friends of the Koala is presently involved in four of them, Lismore, Tweed, Byron and most recently, Ballina.

Lismore's Plan was adopted by the Council in May, and is still awaiting approval by the Director-General, Department of Planning and Infrastructure. As was the case with the 'standard template' LEPs, a considerable investment of time and resources is being made in preparing CKPoMs.

Little wonder our members are asking, to what end? Is the Director-General's delay in announcing his decision on Lismore's CKPoM, which meets all the statutory requirements of the Government's own policies for koalas and their management and recovery, somehow caught up with those other decisions which are signalling less interest in protecting the public's right to fair planning?

Progressing Tweed's draft Plan has suffered a disturbing delay. The Koala Advisory Group's last meeting at the end of August heard of a change in the Council's approach to proceeding with the draft LEP. It turns out that recently identified environmental protection zones have been dumped. The draft on public exhibition until 18 January 2013 reflects the zonings of LEP 2000! There are substantial implications for the koala plan which the KAG will attempt to clarify at a meeting in mid-December. The Kings Forest Preferred Project Report is also expected to be on exhibition over the holidays.

Byron's Plan on the other hand appears to be progressing nicely, with a draft

expected by the end of the year.

Since September we have lodged submissions regarding DAs in Lismore (Airforce Road), Byron (Bayshore Drive) and Iluka (Anchorage Holiday Park).

We wrote to Minister Burke on our concerns about handing over environmental protection powers to the States and requested him to intervene to save the koalas of Leards Forest; we notified the EPBC Compliance Section of windbreak removals in Eureka; wrote to the NSW Minister for the Environment requesting her urgent investigation of the destruction of koala habitat at Croppa Creek; advised the Premier and others on the value we place on the EDO; commented on the draft NR Catchment Action Plan; re-affirmed our view on "no dogs" at Kings Forest to Tweed Councillors; notified the RMS of our interest in the Devil Pulpit to Ballina Pacific Highway Upgrade; provided Ballina koala records to Biolink, commented on the North Lismore Plateau re-zoning proposal.

Several petitions and campaigning newsletters have been distributed to members on email.

### Stop Press

#### Lismore's Koala Plan of Management a Winner

The Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management for South-East Lismore might still be buried in the Director-General, Planning & Infrastructure's office, but it has won a Local Government Excellence in the Environment Award.

Friends of the Koala congratulates Steve Denize, Nick Stephens and Damian Licari for a job well done.

—Lorraine Vass



(l-r) NSW Minister for the Environment, Robyn Parker, Lismore City Council's Ecologist, Damian Licari, Manager Integrated Strategic Planning, Steve Denize, Environmental Strategies Coordinator, Nick Stephens and Bernie Bugden, Hawksbury Nepean CMA

## Member Profile – Donna Graham

Donna picked up a FOK brochure from the Car Boot Market and after three attempts finally found the Koala Care Centre. She is rostered on care duty on Monday afternoons. She's recently joined the Committee and built the FOK mobile website – keep your eyes out for the QR codes.

**What's the best thing about where you live?** Jury is out on this one. I'm in the process of packing boxes to move this week for the 7<sup>th</sup> time in as many years – from Bex Hill to Clunes this time. Have enjoyed being perched on 130 acres for the last 8 months in a lovely spot. Will see how being close to the traffic goes over the next little while.

**What are you reading?** The never ending stream of emails that Lorraine keeps sending!

**What is your favourite movie?** Don't really have a favourite; can barely remember what I've watched half an hour later most of the time. Do have a ritual when catching up with girl friends in Melbourne of watching the Mama Mia musical dvd – pretty tragic really.

**What's your favourite hobby/pastime?** Most things outdoors: bushwalking, horse riding, mountain bike riding and outrigger canoeing (did this internationally until a few years ago). Recently had a go at stand up paddle boarding which was fun. Also a big yoga fan.

**Your idea of a perfect Sunday?** Roaming around the market of the day with a good coffee, followed by break-



Donna Graham

fast with the world's best Clunes bacon. Later a stroll along the beach – the dog beach at Lennox is the current favourite.

**Your most memorable travel experience?** A month on a Russian ice class ship travelling to Antarctica in 2007/08. Shipped out of Hobart, so had the full-on Southern Ocean crossing complete with Force 10 gales – scary. Went to Mawson's Hut on Australia Day which was particularly cool for me as one of my relatives was part of the Mawson Expedition and helped build the thing. Wound up in Bluff in NZ.

**What would you most like to be doing in five year's time?** Aah that is the 64 million dollar question which I'm currently trying to answer. Living in a beautiful part of the world (hopefully this one), collecting a decent passive income so I can spend my time doing things I like such as hanging out with the koalas and ticking some adventure travel items off my bucket list eg Patagonia, Machu Picchu.

**Who is the person you'd most like to meet?** I'll choose two. David Attenborough (legend!!) and Bruce Lipton. The latter I will be able to tick off come January when I'm off to a workshop he's holding in Melbourne.

**What has been your favourite koala moment?** Eden coming off the wire to grab hold of each of my boots and sniff my knee caps before retiring to the leaves. Bit of a relief that she didn't decide I was a tree. And of course Boyd 'flashed' me last week; those fluffy ears that Lola is selling are certainly having an effect!

## FOK goes mobile!

FOK has joined the technology revolution and now has a new 'made for mobile phones' website and QR code. The site options include direct dial to the Rescue Hotline, links to Facebook and our main site and most importantly the ability for people to make donations instantly online.

The QR code will be progressively displayed at the Care Centre, on business cards and other opportune locations and will enable people to access the site with a wave of their mobile phone. The cost of building and hosting the site has been sponsored by member, Donna Graham and her business partner through their business Mohotsi.

Check out the site by scanning the QR code below with your mobile. You will need to download QR reader software if you don't already have it on your phone. There are lots of free ones available for both Apple and Android, just search "QR code reader" and download the app of your choice.

For more information on Mohotsi and to see the great mobile solutions available, go to [mohotsi.com](http://mohotsi.com) or email [donna@mohotsi.com](mailto:donna@mohotsi.com).



## Bluesfest Hotspot

The Bluesfest koalas are under the spotlight again. Sean Fitzgibbon and Bill Ellis of the University of Queensland Koala Ecology Group have submitted their final report on the *Bluesfest Koala Monitoring Study* to Bluesfest Pty Ltd.

The study was conducted between August 2011 and June 2012. Seven koalas were tagged and tracked. A particular focus was observing koala behaviour around and during the festival event.

The report acknowledges 'mild' aversive behaviour in a couple of animals, but broadly speaking gives the thumbs up to festival activity, making the point that for most of the year the site is relatively safe for koalas. They identify disease as the most likely ongoing threat to the population.

An earlier monitoring program conducted in 2010 by Steve Phillips of Biolink reported aversive behaviour to the festival event in the majority of tracked koalas.

Friends of the Koala assisted both research teams in various ways and we have also dealt directly with management (although not recently), regarding animals requiring intervention.

What concerns us about the Bluesfest koalas is that over the two and a half years (January 2011 to June 2012) during which the two studies took place, twelve known mortalities have occurred at the site. Six animals died during the Biolink study and four during the KEG study (included in this number was an animal too sick to collar - she was eu-

thanased after being brought into care). Two untagged animals which were not part of either study, brought into care during the first half of 2011 also died.

Twelve mortalities from a site of approximately 100 ha over a two and a half year period is, we suggest, a matter for concern. For whatever reason: genetic weakness, festival activity, disease, wild dogs, the tracking programs themselves, Bluesfest is a koala hotspot.

The resident koala population's long-term persistence must be absolutely assured before any consideration is given to extending the festival or holding future additional events.

## Cheddar

My mission is to collect enough leaf for a pair of hungry Koalas. This would appear to be a simple task, after all my property is peppered with gum trees and compared to the daily task at Friends of the Koala where they may be collecting leaf for 10, 15 or more Koalas my job will be straightforward, or so I think. Feeding Koalas is actually a time consuming and expensive activity for anyone involved in the care of the animals, and Koalas are extremely fussy eaters.

At Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary the Koalas are their most expensive species to care for due to their specialized diet and the fact that the Sanctuary needs to maintain a plantation of 60,000 trees to provide enough fresh tip for their Koalas to browse on daily. At Tennoji Zoo in Osaka Japan the cost of keeping six Koalas is exaggerated to a staggering \$1.4 million dollars per year. Gum trees have been planted all over Japan to feed their captive Koala population.

Friends of the Koala also maintains various plantations and have a dedicated band of *leafers* who collect only the best and freshest leaves for the sick and injured animals in their care. The pair of young Koalas that I am collecting leaf for are in the final stages of their rehabilitation journey, they are in their soft release tree where they will stay while they become accustomed to the sounds and smells of their new home and the resident Koalas who have gathered in the nearby trees attracted by the scent of this pair of young males.

I am determined to find some of the best local gum leaves for them and so I head into the bush with my secateurs. As I look at the towering trunks of my gum trees I begin to realise that my task will

not be quite as simple as I had imagined. My trees are big, some of them are really big and their canopy of leaf, fit for any Koala is way up in the sky beyond my reach. On my first leafing trip I return with a small handful of second grade twigs that are not going to appeal to the fussy young Koalas.

Everywhere I go now I am looking at the gum trees to see if they are suitable for harvesting and I have spotted some beautiful young leafy trees so I boldly step off the path and sink into the waste high grass. I feel as though it has swallowed me but once I am into the grass there is no turning back. I fight off thoughts of snakes as I wade through it toward the trees desperately looking for a wallaby track to extract me from the now chest high grass. Surely no self respecting Death Adder would live in here? The leaf is perfect, fresh young tips and long straight lower branches make it ideal for picking and perfect for the pots where it will be placed to feed the young orphans. I hope they will like it.

The young Koalas don't disappoint me, one is behaving exactly as Koalas should during the heat of the afternoon, he is sleeping curled into a ball at the top of the tree. At a first glance the other little fella is nowhere to be seen so I scan the enclosure and find him attentively watching me from in amongst yesterday's leaf. This is Cheddar, a beautiful young male who lost his mother, Brie, to lymphoma. Cheddar is quite possibly the most beautiful Koala I have ever seen, he is irresistibly cute. With the help of my friends we set about filling the leaf pots with the fresh pick. Cheddar stays put on his perch as the leaves are changed around him; he sniffs and immediately reaches out to try our local gum leaves, this is my sweet reward for wading through the terrible grass.

—Kathryn Kermode



Cheddar

## Meet Your Committee

This year's AGM was held on 1 November at the Workers' Sports Club. There was a good turn-out for dinner and a few more (including the Tweed contingent) arrived for the meeting.

Advertised guest speaker, Currumbin Wildlife Hospital's Senior Veterinarian, Michael Pyne was a late cancellation due to him being the only vet on duty and a locum unavailable. Damian Licari, Lismore City Council's ecologist, obligingly stepped in and presented an interesting and entertaining sketch of his time with Council which he entitled *Lismore, the Great Garden*.

The Annual Report had been circulated and office-holders spoke briefly on their reports.

Patron, Margot Sweeny conferred Honorary Life Membership on Barb Dobner who was unable to attend the meeting. She inducted long-serving President, Lorraine Vass into the Tree of Fame and presented (in absentia) a Certificate of Appreciation to Currumbin Wildlife Hospital. Margot also served as returning officer although an election was not required.

Office-bearers for 2012-2013 are:

President: Lorraine Vass  
 Vice President: Rick Stewart  
 Treasurer: Susannah Keogh  
 Secretary: Louise Woods  
 Care Co-ordinator: Pat Barnidge  
 Care Centre Co-ordinator: Lola Whitney  
 Trees Officer: Mark Wilson

General Committee members are:

Fiona Dawson  
 Sam Kendal  
 Ros Irwin  
 Donna Graham



Barb Dobner (right), receiving her honorary life membership certificate

## Dates for your Diary

**12 January 2013: Friends of the Koala New Year Party**, Sish Lakeside, Koala Care Centre.

**19 January 2013: Friends of the Koala Committee Meeting**, 2pm. Venue to be advised.

**20 January 2013: Friends of the Koala Stall**, Lismore Car Boot Market, Lismore Square.

**16 February 2013: Koala Ecology Workshop**, Southern Cross University, Rifle Range Road, Lismore.

**17 February 2013: Friends of the Koala Stall**, Lismore Car Boot Market, Lismore Square.

**26 February 2013: Contributions due for Treetops (March issue\*)**

**\*Treetops will return to quarterly issues in 2013**



Michael Pyne receiving the certificate of appreciation on behalf of the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital

## National Koala Conference : Port Macquarie 17-19 May 2013



2013 is the NSW Koala Preservation Society's 40th Anniversary. To celebrate the Society is organising a 3-day Conference, **Their future is in our**

**hands**, covering all aspects of the latest research and conservation concerns of koalas in the wild.

The Conference will be held at the Westport Conference Centre, Buller Street, Port Macquarie. Optional tours of the Koala Hospital are available on the Thursday (16/5) and Monday (20/5).

Full details (draft program, registration form, accommodation etc.) are at: [www.koalahospital.org.au](http://www.koalahospital.org.au)

John Williamson, composer of "Goodbye Blinky Bill" and long-time patron of the Koala Hospital, will entertain at the Conference Dinner. Guest speaker will be Dr Jim Frazier – an inspirational wildlife filmmaker of some 40 years who has worked with David Attenborough on *Living Planet* and *Life on Earth*.

Friends of the Koala encourages active members to attend the National Koala Conference (one-day registrations are also being offered) by allocating a budget to assist with costs.

The Management Committee will accept additional written expressions of interest until Thursday 31 January 2013.

## Nursery News

It is a busy time in the Nursery at present with the recent rains prompting many landholders to start tree-planting and landscaping projects that had been put on hold over the prolonged dry period.

We have loads of plants available for all you budding gardeners out there as well as koala food trees for those wanting to enhance or create some koala habitat. Come in and have a browse and/or let your friends and neighbours know we are here.

A detailed stock list containing over 200 varieties of native plants can be downloaded from the FOK website for emailing or mailing to anyone who is interested. Just let Mark Wilson know at [friends\\_koala@hotmail.com](mailto:friends_koala@hotmail.com) or phone 0413339554 to get a copy sent out. We have plenty of native trees and shrubs available which would make great Christmas presents! Gift vouchers can also be prepared and mailed out.

Volunteers are always welcome to assist in the Nursery. We have lots of koala seedlings ready to pot up at the moment. If you have some spare time to contribute to this task we would be most grateful. Mark will provide training for anyone who hasn't potted up seedlings before. It's a great way to spend an hour or so and will result in many koala trees that will soon be ready for planting to feed our hungry local koalas.

Our regular stalls at the Lismore Car Boot Market on the third Sunday of the month continue to be successful, and customers are now liking the fact that we have a regular presence at the markets.

—Mark Wilson



Mark tending to happy customers at the Lismore Car Boot Market

## Friends of the Koala Wins State Environment Award

With a membership of more than 100 community environment groups, the NCC is NSW's peak environment group. Being awarded the NCC's annual award for an outstanding environment group, well, more accurately sharing the award is no mean feat.

Friends of the Koala and the Lane Cove Bushland and Conservation Society were both announced as winners of the 2012 NSW Environment Awards at the NCC Annual Conference on 27 October.

What the judges said about us:

*Friends of the Koala is an inclusive, grassroots organisation that provides a framework for people who want to do something to help koalas and the environment, whether its caring for individual animals, collecting seeds and planting trees, talking at schools, attending council meetings, monitoring DAs or writing submissions and letters.*

*With around 400 members it enjoys a strong regional profile and reputation for working with government, landholders and stakeholders to achieve outcomes promoting koala recovery.*

*Since its inception in 1986 Friends of the Koala has campaigned vigorously for better protection for the koala. Major campaigns this year were directed at Lismore City Council's Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management and ensuring Federal protection for the koala.*

*At its Koala Care and Rescue Centre in Lismore, Friends of the Koala continues to rehabilitate sick, injured and orphaned koalas for ultimate release back into the wild.*



Well done us – too bad we didn't attend this year's Conference so missed out on the presentation.

**... other koala news from the Conference:**

NCC is writing to the Federal Minister suggesting that he develops a *Viable Koala Population and Associated Habitat Act* or similar legislation to reinforce his listing in May of the koala under the EPBC Act.

The Council is concerned for the proper protection of prime remnant koala habitat which is supporting sustainable populations and which may be exempt from referral under the EPBC Act such as forestry operations that are undertaken in accordance with a Regional Forestry Agreement.

The example given to the Minister is the Coffs Harbour-Bellingen area where a 450-strong koala population in the Bongil Bongil National Park - Pine Creek State Forest is under threat from logging in what was a previous timber plantation now containing regrowth, which supports koalas and acts as a wildlife corridor between core koala habitats.

## Bulletin Board

### New members

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

**Cher Gregory** of Dunoon, **Quinn de Rosa Pontello** and **Arquimedes Key Bernet Plewe** of The Channon, **Karen Gail** of Crystal Creek, **John Candi** of Wardell, **Julia Sheehan** of Tintenbar, **Nathan Hopkins**, **Lyris Robyns** and **Henry Engein** of Lismore, **Kim Lewis** of Goolmangar, **Deb Moore** of Reserve Creek, **Kelly Taylor** of Knockrow, **Meg Cottee** and **Saori Fukuda** of Lismore Heights, **Catherine Cusack** of Lennox Head, **Ola** and **Cici Backstrom** of Bangalow, **Christine** and **Ken Fabian** of Drake, **Glen Campbell** of Byron Bay, **Risa Takahashi** and **Cedric Cavanough** of Goonellabah, **Christina Nicolaou** of Dorrroughby, and **Mrs M Wallace** of Murwillumbah.

### Australian Chlamydia Conference

The koala segment of the 2012 Conference was a lively affair chaired by Jon Hanger, Endeavour Veterinary Ecology. Papers were presented by QUT's Peter Timms and Pride Kanyoka, Andrew Craig, UNSW's Kirby Institute for Infection and Immunity in Society, and Clive McAlpine, School of Geography Planning & Environment Management, UQ. The concluding panel discussion from Peter, Jon and Clive was chaired by Adam Polkinghorne.

### Care Centre Visitors

Wendy Binks, author and illustrator of the hugely popular Stripey series of children's books visited the Koala Care Centre in November with Richmond Tweed Regional Library's Lismore City Librarian, Lucy Kinsley and Youth Librarian,

Nicole Eldridge. Since returning home to Fremantle Wendy has linked us to her Facebook page and sent us some of her koala magnets to sell.

### Broadwater Koala Reserve Trust

Andrew Stoner, Minister for Regional Infrastructure and Services has renewed to 15 November 2017, the appointment of Lorraine Vass, Betty Archer, Jean McDonald and Francine Hitchens to the Broadwater Koala Reserve Trust. New appointees are Sonya and Brett Price.

### NSW Environmental Trust LECG Grant

The Lead Environmental Community Groups grant program assists with administration costs. This year we have been awarded \$12,000 which, apart from an amount of \$15,000 which was granted for building the Koala Care Centre back in the early 1990s, is the largest grant Friends of the Koala has received from any level of government.



1st Clunes Girl Guides help out at the Charity of the Day

### Lismore Car Boot Market Charity of the Day 18 November

Customers of Lismore's car Boot Market generously contributed more than \$2,000 to Friends of the Koala's coffers at the annual Charity of the Day. Susanah organised the "bucket brigade" and Mark the stall. Well done Helen Hargreaves and the 1st Clunes Girl Guides, Wendy, Donna, Ros & Bill, Denise, Liz & Terry, Fiona, Heather, Wendy Lageman, Lillie and Ben and John in the koala cossie.

### Ramornie Bob's Second Chance Raffle

Carole Bryant's water-soluble and colour pencil study of Ramornie Bob has been won by Regi Lippuner of East Lismore with ticket number 9489. Carole's generous donation raised about \$450 for Friends of the Koala.

Ramornie Bob was the first koala Carole had seen on her property but he had conjunctivitis and was brought into care by WIRES Clarence Valley and treated at the Care Centre. Carole said it was so exciting to see him recover and released back into his home territory that she just had to draw him.

### Mid North Coast Koala Mapping Project

The North Coast Environment Council, with the Bellingen Environment and Clarence Valley Environment Centres have commissioned the report: *Conserving koala populations in the Bellingen-Coffs Harbour-Clarence Valley region of north-east New South Wales: preliminary mapping of populations as a basis for further survey, research and planning*. The study has been undertaken by zoologist, Dave Scotts and may be extended to encompass the far North Coast subject to availability of additional funding.

### Gunnedah - Koala Capital

Gunnedah's claim to being the Koala Capital of the World has been vindicated. Population estimates carried out by Lismore-based Greenloaning Biostudies for the Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management in preparation for 75% of the Shire, have determined an expanding and healthy population of 12,500 koalas.

### Koala Connections

The Koala Connections steering committee has met for the first time. The three-year project aims to plant around 55,000 trees over two years, creating better corridors for koalas and other native species in Tweed and Byron shires. The steering committee includes representation from NPWS, Landcare, CMA Northern Rivers, Friends of the Koala, Ngulingah Local Aboriginal Land Council as well as Tweed and Bryon council staff. Manager of the \$3.5 million project is Sally Jacka.

### Christmas Shopping Ideas

- A Koala Support Pack is a wonderful present for anyone who is concerned for and wants to help a koala in care (see page 9).
- Nursery gift vouchers to any value provide a gift of trees and shrubs that keep on giving to both recipient and to the environment. (see page 13)
- FOK merchandise includes an increasing range of quality, locally made wildlife jewellery and Christmas cards.

Visit the Care Centre and Nursery, or check [www.friendsofthekoala.org](http://www.friendsofthekoala.org)



Nicole Eldridge (l) and Wendy Binks visit the Care Centre

<b>Application/renewal form — ‘Friends of the Koala, Inc.’ Membership runs from 1st July to 30th June.</b>		<b>I/We are interested in:</b> (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
Membership category (please tick)		<input type="checkbox"/> Committee / Administration
<input type="checkbox"/> Ordinary—Individual/Family (within Australia) ..... \$20		<input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising
<input type="checkbox"/> Concession—Full time Student/Pensioner (within Australia)..... \$10		<input type="checkbox"/> Publicity
<input type="checkbox"/> International—Individual/Family (outside Australia) ..... \$50		<input type="checkbox"/> Education
I/We would like to make an additional donation of : \$.....		<input type="checkbox"/> Surveys / Mapping
<b>Total payment is:</b> \$.....		<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

Credit card (**amounts over \$20**)    Cardholder Name.....

Card Type (e.g. Visa).....Number.....Expiry Date (mm/yy)...../.....

**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
- Please tick here if you would like to receive Treetops by email (~ 2 mb pdf colour file)

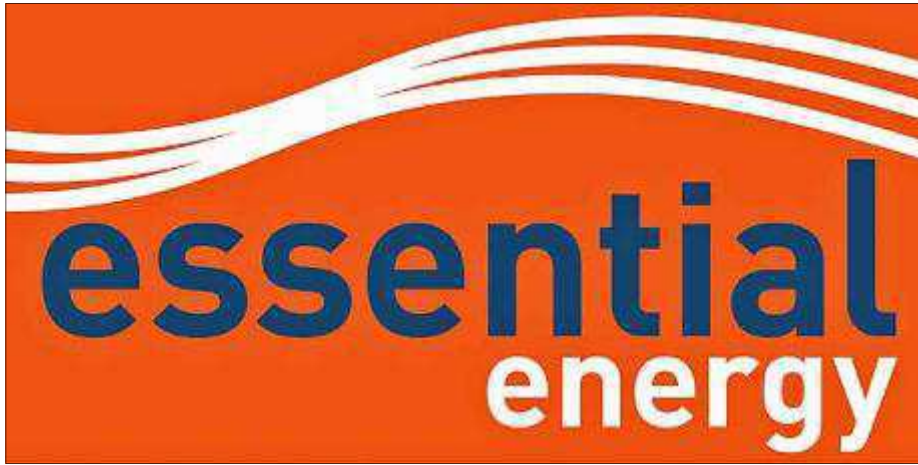
**Office Use Only**

Date Received.....Receipt #.....Donation Receipt #.....Date Passed by Committee.....

**Contact Information:** 24 hr Rescue Hotline: **6622 1233** Koala Care Centre: **6621 4664**  
 email: info@friendsofthekoala.org    web: www.friendsofthekoala.org

President	Lorraine Vass	6629 8388	president@friendsofthekoala.org
Vice President	Rick Stewart	6622 4258	rstewart8@bigpond.com
Secretary	Louise Woods	0410 570 672	wood_sie@live.com.au
Treasurer	Susannah Keogh	0431 707 883	sjkl@inet.net.au
Trees Officer	Mark Wilson	6624 5032	info@friendsofthekoala.org
Care Coordinator	Pat Barnidge	6622 3690	pat.fok@hotmail.com
Care Centre Coordinator	Lola Whitney	6621 3523	lola.fok@hotmail.com
Training Officer	Beverley Smith	6621 3671	bevsmith@isp.net.au
Leaf Harvesting Coordinator	Dot Cockburn	6628 4270	dotcockburn@bigpond.com
Phone Roster Coordinator	Pat Barnidge	6622 3690	pat.fok@hotmail.com

**Volunteers Working For: Koala Rescue and Rehabilitation . Advocacy . Education . Environmental Repair**



81 Molesworth St, Lismore  
Enquiries 13 23 91  
Interruptions 13 20 80  
[www.essentialenergy.com.au](http://www.essentialenergy.com.au)

IF UNDELIVERABLE RETURN TO:  
'FRIENDS OF THE KOALA' INC  
PO BOX 5034  
EAST LISMORE NSW 2480  
PRINT POST APPROVED  
PP216477/00031

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AUSTRALIA



Deadline for next newsletter: Tuesday 26th February 2013  
Contributions gratefully accepted – please post to FOK or email [info@friendsofthekoala.org](mailto:info@friendsofthekoala.org)

