

Friends of the Koala Annual Report 2022/2023



A close-up photograph of a koala lying on its back on a white surface. The koala's eyes are closed, and it appears to be resting or recovering. Its left and right limbs are wrapped in white medical bandages. The background is slightly blurred, showing some medical equipment and a person's hand in an orange glove near the koala's head.

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We have one goal: to save koalas from extinction

For over 35 years, Friends of the Koala has been on the frontline of the battle to save the species.

We are a grassroots organisation with close to four decades of experience working on critical, on-the-ground activities to conserve habitat and protect koalas individually and as a species. We have a deep understanding of the unique challenges faced by koalas in our region.

We are the people that do the work, every single day. We rescue, rehabilitate and release koalas, protect and enhance habitat, assist with and initiate relevant research, educate the community and advocate on behalf of koalas at a local, state, and national level.

With 527 members, 239 active volunteers, and 7 staff members, we operate the largest Koala Hospital on the East Coast of Australia. We tend to hundreds of sick, injured, and orphaned koalas each year. This is the only specialised Koala Hospital in the Northern Rivers, a region that is home to a significant, genetically diverse koala population.

Our holistic approach makes us especially effective. With our volunteers contributing 75,500 volunteer hours per year, Friends of the Koala keep operational costs extremely low, so your support goes further.

Friends of the Koala are a not for profit organisation. Revenue earned through membership, donations, nursery, partnerships and merchandise sales, goes directly back into the support, care and conservation of koalas in the Northern Rivers and beyond.

Friends of the Koala acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Bundjalung Country. We recognise their enduring connection to this land, water and communities. We pay our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; and to Elders past and present.

Our work is guided by their wisdom in sustainable stewardship and respect for all creatures particularly the koala. We are humbled to contribute to this legacy, recognising that this land always was, and always will be, Aboriginal land.



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Friends of the Koala's holistic approach to koala conservation is something IFAW champions because we share the belief that koalas are ambassadors for Australian wildlife. When we protect them and their habitat, we give countless other animals a chance to thrive.

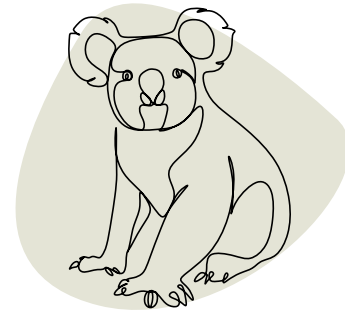
International Fund for Animal Welfare



Our impact in 2022/2023

Koala Rescue, Rehabilitation and Release

- 326** Koalas rescued **27%** Release rate
- 88** Koalas released **5855** Hotline calls answered
- 43** Healthy koalas admitted, vaccinated and released
- Only** Koala Hospital in the region



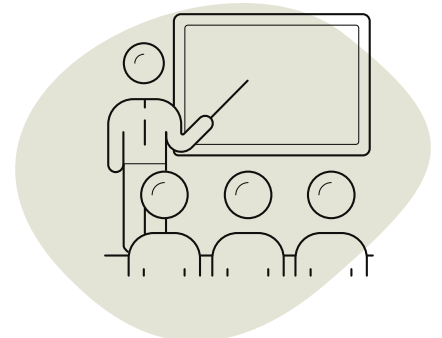
Habitat Protection and Enhancement



- 133,100** Trees distributed free of charge
- 12,608** Trees sold
- 1,175** Trees planted
- 30ha** Koala habitat restored
- \$299,980** Habitat restoration project funding secured

Community Engagement and Education

- 800+** People educated through tours at Friends of the Koala
- 21** Local schools, markets and events attended
- 1** Friends of the Koala documentary premiere at Byron Bay International Film Festival
- 9,359** Subscribers to monthly e-newsletter





Our impact in 2022/2023

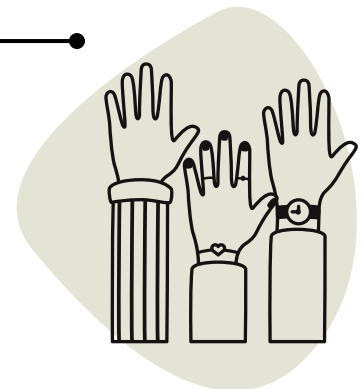
Advocacy



- 13** Submissions to development applications
- 6** Council meetings attendance and presentations
- 5** Conferences attended
- 10+** Letters to and meetings with politicians at local, state and national level
- 6** Regional Koala Group meetings hosted

Our People

- 239** Active volunteers
- 75,500+** Volunteer hours
- \$3,245,240** Value of volunteer hours
- 527** Members
- 7** Staff



Financial Sustainability



- 791** Individual donations from over 39 countries
- 555** Adopt a Koala packages purchased
- 1** Bequest received, 11 gifts in Wills confirmed



Patron's message

Continuation of a regional partnership, a funded regional Koala Officer based at Friends of the Koala, preparation of a regional strategy, the first regional survey of koala activity report, and more are indications of real progress.

Advances in koala recovery are slow to materialise and when they do, the hard work that's gone before is easily lost in the excitement.

A welcome development this year has been the number of landscape-scale projects in our region brought about by the increased investment in koalas by the NSW Government, local government and NGOs. Continuation of a regional partnership, a funded regional Koala Officer, based at Friends of the Koala, preparation of a regional strategy, the first regional survey of koala activity report, and more are indications of real progress. But we shouldn't lose sight of the years of collaboration between Friends of the Koala and partners which have underpinned these initiatives.

Collaborations develop in numerous ways and invariably involve networking. We missed out on so many face-to-face events including conferences during COVID. Big or small, their return during the year has been welcomed. The inaugural Connecting People, Connecting Nature Conference, hosted by the Great Eastern Ranges, the Kyogle Koala Symposium, part of the Boodahbee Festival of the Koala, the NSW State Koala Conference: The Vanishing organised by a consortium of NSW environmental NGOs, and the 3rd National Koala Conference hosted by Koala Conservation Australia, to name a few. Conference-going is not always convenient and needs thought and effort for getting the most out of them but they can lead to or reinforce on-going collaboration.

Attending the National Conference enabled President Aliison, Vice President Rhonda and myself to meet NSW's new Environment Minister, The Hon. Penny Sharpe. We briefed her on recent developments within Friends of the Koala, the growth and success of the Northern Rivers Koala Network since 2016 and outlined the benefits that the NSW Koala Strategy is delivering within our region. We also reiterated our disappointment with its shortcomings, particularly the failure to tackle stronger legal protection of forests, woodlands and paddock trees across private and public land, i.e. koala habitat. The Minister gave us a good hearing. As Shadow Minister, she was a keen supporter of our work and we anticipate building on this relationship.

This year has not been without its challenges for Friends of the Koala's leadership team and staff, in particular the delay with progressing the development application for the hospital extension.

Heartfelt thanks to President Aliison, the management committee, staff, volunteers, members, partners, sponsors and other supporters for your passion and keeping Friends of the Koala at the forefront of koala recovery in the Northern Rivers.



Lorraine Vass AM
Patron



President's report

While our external image often revolves around rescuing and rehabilitating koalas, our work encompasses so much more.

For over 37 years, Friends of the Koala has stood as the leading voice in the Northern Rivers region, addressing a spectrum of koala conservation challenges. While our external image often revolves around rescuing and rehabilitating koalas, our work encompasses so much more. From habitat restoration to community engagement and advocacy, our multifaceted approach ensures the sustainability of koalas, our organisation, and our community across the Northern Rivers and beyond.

Within Friends of the Koala, passionate teams work tirelessly, often round the clock, to save koalas in diverse ways. Our dedicated vet team, leafing and plantation crews, care shift volunteers, hotline operators, tree growers, planters, weeders and rescuers form the backbone of Friends of the Koala. Behind the scenes, operational staff, the Management Committee, and numerous silent contributors facilitate and fund our operations. With over 250 individuals actively involved, our impact resonates far and wide.

Our success is amplified by invaluable partnerships with organisations like IFAW, WWF-Australia, Koala, Department of Planning and Environment, Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife and founding partners Southern Cross University and Lismore City Council. We appreciate the politicians who understand the value of Friends of the Koala and value the collaboration we have forged with the Northern Rivers Koala Network and its twenty member organisations further strengthening our conservation endeavours. This year work with the Northern Rivers Wildlife Network has really ramped up and we are eager to see how that work will grow.

Special recognition goes to our members, particularly Honorary Life Members, whose steadfast beliefs fuel our

mission. I express heartfelt gratitude to our Patron, Lorraine Vass AM, and past Presidents Dr. Ros Irwin and Susannah Keogh for their continued mentorship. Acknowledgment is due to Vice President Rhonda James and Treasurer Beth Wilson for their skills and experience. We bid outgoing Secretary Stacie Barry a fond farewell. I particularly have appreciated her focus and contribution at our committee meetings.

In closing, Friends of the Koala's achievements reflect the collective efforts of our 'Friends of the Koala family'. We are not perfect, we have issues and sometimes say the wrong thing to each other but ultimately I believe we understand we are all people trying our best to save an animal that saves so much more (including us humans).

Whether you report sightings, contribute as a member, support us financially or work behind the scenes, your role and efforts are integral. Together, we continue shaping a profound difference in the lives of koalas, not only in the Northern Rivers region but also across Australia. Your connection with Friends of the Koala strengthens our impact, and for that, we are incredibly grateful.



Alison Kelly
President



HABITAT PROTECTION



24/7 KOALA RESCUE



KOALA HOSPITAL & CARE CENTRE

General Manager's report

I am excited to share that we have achieved remarkable milestones, many of which have been years, even decades, in the making.

The financial year 2022-2023 has ended and I look back with pride on what we have achieved as a team. Although there are many challenges still ahead, step by step we are working towards a better future for koalas.

I am excited to share that we have achieved remarkable milestones, many of which have been years, even decades, in the making.

This year, we successfully released our 2000th koala into the wild and distributed the 800,000th tree through our Nursery. We're on the cusp of completing ten additional rehabilitation runs, which will double our capacity to care for koalas on-site.

We have completed the Ruthven Wild Koala Vaccination Project, specific thank you to Dr Jodie Wakeman and Rescue Coordinator Paul White, who have been instrumental in the initiation and completion of this project. In even more exciting vaccination news, we have now received our license to vaccinate koalas coming through the hospital in a ground breaking research partnership with the University of the Sunshine Coast.

I am also excited to let you know our Development Application for the Koala Hospital and Community Education Centre has been approved, a lot of work has been put in by Dr Jackie and the project team to make this happen. In addition, we have secured funding to open a state-of-the-art Research and Diagnostics Laboratory which will make a significant difference for the koalas treated in our hospital in the future.

Noteworthy progress has been made in habitat protection and restoration by our Regional Koala Officer Angie, Area Coordinators, Nursery Manager Mark Wilson and the project team for East Coraki Ina Egermann and Maria Matthes. I also want to thank Julie Reed for her incredible legacy in this field.

A personal focus has been marketing and fundraising, to ensure we create more visibility of the amazing work that has been done over the last four decades and is still being done every single day. We have gone live with a new website, including new donation options such as "Adopt a Tree" and "Joey Buddies", increased our online payment options and added opportunities for recurring donations and automatic renewal of membership. This also included transitioning to a monthly instead of bi-monthly newsletter, strongly increasing our presence on social media, creating a fundraising strategy and starting a fundraising subcommittee.

I have thoroughly enjoyed the communication with and visits from our partners and donors, and want to thank everyone for their invaluable support. We simply could not do our work without you.

Internally, we have introduced an extensive wellbeing and support program including workshops and professional counselling. Our people remain our number one priority. Their passion, dedication and commitment to koala conservation continue to inspire me every single day, and I feel very grateful to have the opportunity to contribute to this incredible organisation. We stand on the shoulders of giants and I want to express my immense gratitude to everyone who played and is playing a role in koala conservation in the Northern Rivers. In particular, I want to thank all supervisors and coordinators for supporting and leading their teams through the wins and challenges this year has brought, and thank the Management Committee for their guidance throughout the year.



Silva Everaers
General Manager



Financial report

Passion and expertise alone cannot fund the medicines, equipment, vehicles and facilities we so desperately require to help these vulnerable creatures.

Passion and expertise alone cannot fund the medicines, equipment, and facilities we so desperately require to help these vulnerable creatures. While recovery from the devastating floods in our region still impacted many local supporters, Friends of the Koala managed to secure a diverse range of funding. The love for koalas and appreciation of the work we do continued to be reflected through donations, grants, partnerships and other income throughout the year.

From expanding on existing relationships to starting new ones, we would like to thank everyone who contributed to our cause financially, this year or in the past.

The confidence of charity partners, foundations, trusts and government remains strong as Friends of the Koala delivers critical, on-the-ground action towards koala conservation. We were successful in securing twelve new grants while continuing to manage six ongoing multi-year projects.

Amongst other things, these grants enabled us to:

- fully fund wages for our veterinary staff, volunteer coordinator and regional koala officer
- open a state-of-the-art Research and Diagnostics Laboratory (soon to be completed)
- execute multiple habitat restoration projects
- install a custom-built emergency response canopy on our rescue vehicle
- fit out ten additional koala rehabilitation runs
- fund a variety of volunteer and administrative costs, including equipment and PPE
- execute NSW's first Wild Koala Vaccination Project
- continue the Koala Hospital building expansion project

We are incredibly grateful for the donation of a 4WD Ford Ranger rescue vehicle (IFAW), and the grants that paid for a new lawn mower for our plantation team (IFAW) and electric van for our nursery (WWF & Koala).

The nursery continues to deliver on Friends of the Koala's objective to create and restore koala habitat in the Northern Rivers, while also providing crucial funds for the operations of our organisation. Our appreciation goes out to the Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife for their significant contribution which enables us to distribute koala food trees free of charge.

We also want to emphasise the crucial role of in-kind donations, pro bono and discounted services, and the enormous amount of volunteer hours contributed by our people. Although not reflected in our income, the value of these donations in both time and materials exceeds \$3,500,000.

A strong focus this year has been to increase transparency and timeliness of financial reporting, which included the creation of a budget and automating financial processes. Last but not least, I want to thank Nicci Carter for her efforts in her role as Finance Manager of the organisation and wish her all the best in future endeavors.



Silva Everaers
General Manager



Beth Wilson
Treasurer



Financial report

We can observe the following in comparison to the results of last financial year

- Corporate sponsorship income increased by 64%
- Donations income increased by 67%
- Nursery income increased by 6%
- Membership fee income decreased by 46%
- Expenditure increased by 17% which includes expenditure funded by grants

Revenue exceeded the budget by 152%, while expenses were 7% lower than anticipated. As a result, a surplus of \$10,115 was achieved versus a budget of -\$132,002.

Friends of the Koala Care Fund has been an endorsed Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) on the Register of Environmental Organisations since 1994 and is entitled to receive tax deductible donations.

All funds are expended on costs directly related to koala conservation.

After Friends of the Koala reinvested the 2023FY surplus of \$10,115, the Public Fund finished the year as at 30th June 2023 with a balance of \$588,949. This money will continue to be invested in the Friends of the Koala strategic objectives, including our Koala Hospital expansion.

Revenue	2023	2022	2021
Donations	404,807	241,802	296,310
Fundraising	4,040	219	5,266
Grants	744,784	857,104	614,486
Interest & Investment Income	9,607	1,793	5,417
Membership Fees	4,905	9,100	16,020
Merchandise Sales	5,739	1,761	12,267
Nursery Income	173,547	164,121	148,922
Sponsorship	44,633	27,294	35,476
Other Income	13,114	8,500	42,205
Total Revenue	1,405,175	1,311,695	1,176,369

Expenses	2023	2022	2021
Grant Expenses	331,442	528,437	412,275
Administration	11,087	9,810	15,696
Advertising & Marketing	49,683	23,096	8,286
Accounting & Audit Fees	8,797	3,725	3,115
Bank Fees and Charges	4,405	4,854	5,327
Care Centre Expenses	10,730	19,978	25,272
Conferences & Training	6,020	0	6,017
Computer, Telephone & IT	7,856	9,319	6,668
Cleaning	4,461	4,773	1,933
Depreciation	49,739	53,888	54,455
Fundraising Expenses	139	7,196	10,567
Koala Medicine & Care Costs	50,985	45,598	59,869
Legal and Professional Fees	9,200	370	4,655
Merchandise	10,523	340	1,343
Motor Vehicle Expenses	18,586	9,109	8,943
Nursery	128,123	127,495	89,683
Repairs and Maintenance	17,933	15,141	16,828
Subscriptions	1,115	4,289	978
Superannuation	64,379	45,229	31,147
Wages	593,796	489,565	352,448
Workers Compensation	5,622	12,264	3,228
Utilities	10,023	15,187	10,045
Total Expenses	1,395,060	1,442,405	1,136,889

Net profit	10,115	-130,710	39,480
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Koala Data - Rescue, Rehabilitation and Release

Admitted: 326 | Released: 88 | Healthy admitted and vaccinated: 43 | Died: 238 | Gross Release 27%

Total Deaths (admitted or not): 303
Total not admitted: 1135

Deaths within 24hrs: 192
Live: 1070

Rehab Release 66%
Dead: 65

LGA	Admitted	Outcome	Cause of Death	
Ballina	16	Released - 4 In Care - 0 Died - 12	Vehicle collision - 0 Disease Chlamydia - 8 Disease other - 2	Dog attack - 0 Other - 2
Byron	57	Released - 11 In Care - 0 Died - 46	Vehicle collision - 9 Disease Chlamydia - 25 Disease other - 10	Dog attack - 0 Other - 2
Clarence Valley	14	Released - 3 In Care - 0 Died - 11	Vehicle collision - 1 Disease Chlamydia - 8 Disease other - 2	Dog attack - 0 Other - 0
Kyogle	21	Released - 6 In Care - 0 Died - 15	Vehicle collision - 1 Disease Chlamydia - 12 Disease other - 2	Dog attack - 0 Other - 0
Lismore	145	Released - 44 In Care - 0 Died - 101	Vehicle collision - 11 Disease Chlamydia - 54 Disease other - 25	Dog attack - 8 Other - 3
Richmond Valley	25	Released - 6 In Care - 0 Died - 19	Vehicle collision - 0 Disease Chlamydia - 8 Disease other - 6	Dog attack - 2 Other - 3
Tweed	43	Released - 14 In Care - 0 Died - 29	Vehicle collision - 3 Disease Chlamydia - 15 Disease other - 5	Dog attack - 2 Other - 4
Other	5	Released - 0 In Care - 0 Died - 5	Vehicle collision - 0 Disease Chlamydia - 2 Disease other - 1	Dog attack - 2 Other - 0
Total	326	Released - 88 In Care - 0 Died - 238	Vehicle collision - 25 Disease Chlamydia - 132 Disease other - 53	Dog attack - 14 Other - 14



Data Management

One of our powerful assets is our database, the largest koala database in the world.

One of our powerful assets is the largest koala database in the world. The data allows us to answer many questions about the situation for our koalas in this region.

Our data is supplied by citizen scientists reporting to our website as well as the detailed clinical data when a koala is admitted. The main statistical report included gives us a snapshot of the year. As the largest koala database in the world, it is one of our powerful assets is. The data allows us to answer many questions about the situation for our koalas in this region.

In total we collected 1461 koala records. These records may include multiple records for an individual koala at times. For example, sightings of a koala months after release from care.

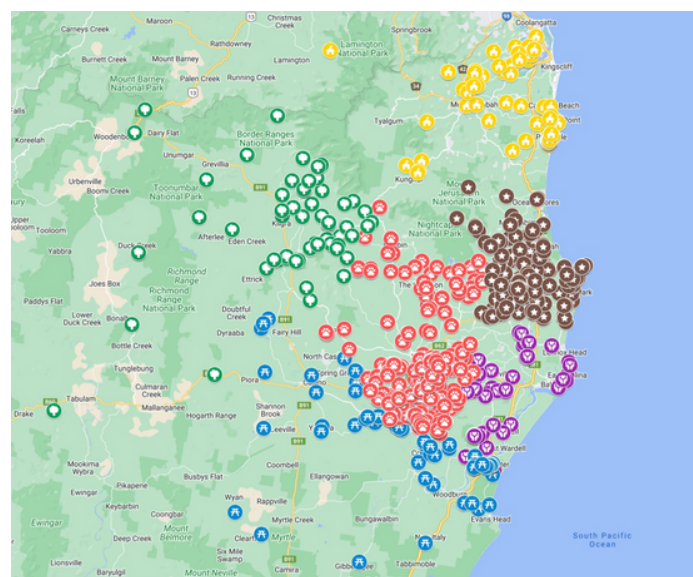
To measure our success in rehabilitating koalas we need to separate koalas that were too ill or injured to survive, despite rescue. The statistics show us that while a total of 238 koalas out of 326 admitted died, the majority died within 24 hours of capture. These koalas had advanced disease processes or serious injuries that were not treatable. If removed from the rehabilitation equation, we can calculate how many koalas we had a chance of saving. We were successful in returning 66% of these to the wild.

Chlamydia remains the predominant reason for hospitalisation and death in the Northern Rivers. 49% of admissions were for chlamydia and 18% for other diseases. Chlamydia is indeed serious with only 17% of these admissions progressing to release.

The following map gives a great visual of how large an area Friends of the Koala services and where the koalas were captured to come into care. The colours indicate the different Local Government Areas we cover.



Katrina Jeffery
Data Coordinator





Koala Hospital

The Friends of the Koala Hospital continues to tend to more sick and injured koalas than any other wildlife hospital in New South Wales.

This year we had 369 koalas come into care versus 321 last year. Out of those, 43 were healthy koalas admitted, vaccinated and released through our Wild Koala Vaccination Project in partnership with the University of the Sunshine Coast. Our release rate was 27% excluding the healthy vaccinated koalas, and 36% including them. The Friends of the Koala Hospital continues to tend to more sick and injured koalas than any other wildlife hospital in New South Wales.

We are now in a El Nino weather pattern and are preparing for a predicted severe drought and bushfire season.

Our veterinary team consists of:

- Dr Jackie Reed, Superintendent Veterinary Surgeon
- Dr Jodie Wakeman, Veterinary Clinical and Research Director
- Senior Veterinary Nurse Marley Christian
- Assistant Veterinary Nurse Liz McLeod

Wage expenses for our veterinary team were again fully funded by the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) this financial year and we are incredibly grateful for their invaluable support. Every koala counts, and we could not achieve these critical positive outcomes without them.

The Friends of the Koala hospital is operating from 9am - 5pm Monday to Friday. Through close collaboration with North Coast Emergency Vets in Bangalow and Currumbin Wildlife Hospital in Queensland, we are in the unique position to be able to offer veterinary care for koalas outside of hours. Our appreciation goes out to them and all other veterinary clinics in the region offering care for wildlife.

The development approval for the hospital extension was finally submitted and approved by Lismore City Council. The construction certificate is currently being readied for submission. A huge thank you to Richard Glasgow for volunteering his time to help with this project, and also to Isabelle Menezes. The hospital extension project is proudly supported by WWF's Regenerate Australia program. We want to thank our contacts at WWF for their patience and support throughout this project.

And last but certainly not least, a big thank you to all of the volunteers who work incredibly hard to enable Friends of the Koala to continue saving koalas. We appreciate each and every one of you.



Dr Jackie Reed
Superintendent Veterinary Surgeon



Research

Thanks to the excellent working relationship we developed with the University of the Sunshine Coast, we are now implementing another research project that involves the vaccination of healthy koalas released from the Friends of the Koala Hospital

Research at the Friends of the Koala Hospital has this year focused on chlamydial disease in koalas by implementing two projects utilising the vaccination developed by Professor Peter Timms and Dr Samuel Phillips from the University of Sunshine Coast.

Our first successful vaccination research project began in February 2023 and involved the capture, assessment, vaccination and re-release of 50 koalas from the Ruthven area. Chlamydial disease load in the colony will then be monitored by the collection and analysis of koala scats by the UniSC scientific team and scat detection dogs over the following 18 months. It is the first time the chlamydia vaccination has been tested on this scale in a wild population and the results will provide useful information on the percentage of a population that must be vaccinated to produce significant ongoing protection of the colony from chlamydial disease.

Our dedicated rescue team and the Friends of the Koala Hospital veterinary staff worked amazingly well as a cohesive unit to ensure the project ran smoothly. Stress minimisation in the capture, transport, assessment and release of these koalas was a top priority and the methods used for this research project will provide the template for koala population management programs we hope to implement in the future.

As an extra bonus, we were able to save several koalas during this project suffering from illness or injuries that would otherwise have gone unnoticed and untreated.

Thanks to the excellent working relationship we developed with the UniSC researchers, we are now implementing another research project that involves the vaccination of healthy koalas released from the Friends of the Koala Hospital.

We are the first wildlife hospital in New South Wales to become part of this program that has been running in Queensland for the past 2 years. It allows us to vaccinate 100 koalas released from Friends of the Koala every year for three years commencing in July 2023.

This second project is a big win for the Friends of the Koala Hospital, and all our dedicated and hard-working people that have contributed to this outcome over many years, as we can now give koalas released from our care protection against the biggest threat they face upon returning to the wild.

In other research news, we have also been collecting koala blood samples for researchers at the University of Sydney, led by Professor Merrin Govendir to discover whether Tryptophan levels (a marker of inflammation) can be used to determine chlamydial disease prognosis in koalas. We are also collecting pouch swab samples and milk samples from lactating females for researchers at the University of Sydney to better understand the components that make up koala milk. It is hoped that these studies will result in the development of improved milk supplements for our joeys in care. And finally, we are collecting scat samples from joeys in homecare and Koala Kindy to help Edward Narayan from the University of Queensland study how faecal cortisol levels relate to stress and outcomes for hand-reared joeys.



Dr Jodie Wakeman
Veterinary Clinical & Research
Director



24/7 Hotline & Rescue Team

In the last year we have answered thousands of calls and we continue to see growing demand as public awareness increases.

The 24 hour Rescue Hotline is currently operating very efficient and effectively. In the last year we have answered thousands of calls and we continue to see growing demand as public awareness increases.

We have trained 14 new hotline operators. Each new operator has experienced personal one on one hotline procedure and practice call training. They also have a mentor to support them.

The total number of hotline shifts has been increased from 14 to 21. We now have two day shift operators available to answer line one and line two, seven days a week. We are maintaining night shift as one operator. We also have the Hotline Coordinator as a third administrative back up line 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

We have 27 trained volunteers available to act as hotline operators when needed, including three replacement and three emergency operators.

Hotline operators have also undertaken rescue training, to more fully understand the rescue process as per the Code of Practice.

The Hotline is administered by an Administration Support Group that consists of five volunteers who watch the Viber Rescue line all day, every day. They are available to support the Hotline Operators at any time. The areas of administration and support include: training and mentoring, roster coordination and welfare, shift change over and operation and technical support.

Our team has shown real grit and excellent teamwork, and I am so proud of what we have accomplished and continue to do 24/7.

What a year it's been! After some quieter times, we made great progress with the Ruthven Wild Koala Vaccination project, and I'm delighted to say we wrapped it up. Our trap-setting game improved too; I remember when I'd be out fixing traps, but now, we're pretty spot-on from the get-go.

Lately, the number of rescue calls have increased significantly. And with the warm months around the corner, I know it will only get busier. Koalas are on the move, and we need to be there for them.

On the training front, we've done a brief workshop which was a fantastic opportunity for the newbies and a refresher for our experienced rescuers. There is an even bigger training session with accreditation on the cards for the new financial year.

One thing that's been very challenging to see is the rise in koalas getting hit by cars. Just in the recent weeks, we've seen too many. It's devastating, and we're working hard to get the word out to the community about this. Awareness is key.

We're very grateful to WIRES for the grant for rescue equipment and FNPW - Wildlife Heroes for our new emergency response vehicle canopy. Thank you IFAW for donating the rescue vehicle we have been using for quite some time now. We could not do it without the support of donors and funding partners.

We've been all over the region, rescuing koalas from all kinds of tricky situations. It's been challenging, but when we can rehabilitate and release a koala it is so rewarding too. Our team has shown real grit and excellent teamwork, and I am so proud of what we have accomplished.



Luke Kane
Hotline Coordinator



Written on behalf of Paul White
Rescue Coordinator



Leaf Harvest

A huge thanks to the team of dedicated and long-term leaf harvesters, many of whom also take care of other ongoing leafing tasks such as equipment maintenance, vehicle maintenance and used leaf disposal.

Key moments and achievements:

- Roster operating smoothly: with a crew of 19 active and 11 backup volunteer leafers.
- Private plantations; our leaf is sourced from a variety of places such as FoK plantations, roadside reserves and private landholders including private koala food plantations (thanks Scott & Lucy and Katrina) which require maintenance.
- Training; we are fortunate to have eucalypt expert David Sharpe to talk all things eucalypt at our workshops,
- another of which was held in Dec with 17 attending at the SCU grounds. Four koalas spotted too.
- FoK Plantation labelling; a small group under the guidance of eucalypt expert David Sharpe have begun labelling the secondary species to assist the leafing team.

A huge thanks to the team of dedicated and long-term leaf harvesters, many of whom also take care of other ongoing leafing tasks such as equipment maintenance, vehicle maintenance and used leaf disposal.



Fiona Dawson
Leaf Harvest Coordinator





Plantation Maintenance

It has been a huge work load to bring our plantations back after 7 out of the 9 plantations we care for went under in the floods.

Key moments and achievements:

- Friends of the Koala Plantation team has numbered 10 over the year with a core group of 7 what a magnificent team of hard-working folk. It has been a huge work load to bring our plantations back after 7 out of the 9 plantations we care for went under in the floods.
- Sadly, one of our team passed away this year, we were able to honour his devotion to Friends of the Koala with a scattering of his ashes and a tree planting ceremony in one of Friends of the Koala plantations.
- 640 trees planted this year in the Friends of the Koala plantations to replace and extend the existing plantations.
- Friends of the Koala received funding from DPE to get drainage works done on the Bruxner Hwy Plantation that had been badly impacted by the floods. After the work was complete and successful, the team were able to successfully plant over 100 more trees greatly extending this plantations capacity.
- Ongmac kindly donated 3 battery operated Stihl Brush cutters and a Stihl battery operated Push mower all had been through the flood but had been checked over and all in working order. They have been an invaluable part of our plantation team's equipment each week in looking after Friends of the Koala's 8 plantations
- Wyrallah Rd Plantation was under water for the longest time after the flood the lower trees suffered. The Plantation team spent a long time cleaning up this site from rubbish and weed infestation. With funding through DPE the team and a Tree looping company successfully pollarded around 200 trees in this plantation we have had a 99% success rate with the trees sprouting healthy new growth. All the trees in the plantation have been given a mulch of woodchip.

At the end of the financial year, we found out we had received funding to purchase a new zero turn mower, so needed for the plantation we maintain. Thank you so much to IFAW. The Plantation team would like to thank Anthony one of the team that in the interim bought his own zero turn mower to mow the plantations.



Heather Gillard
Plantation Maintenance Coordinator





Habitat Protection and Enhancement

Nursery

Our Bushfire Recovery Nursery in Lismore continues to produce and distribute thousands of free trees to landholders in the Northern Rivers region.

Our Bushfire Recovery Nursery in Lismore, which was made possible with funding received from the Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife (FNPW), continues to produce and distribute thousands of free trees to landholders in the Northern Rivers region. By the end of June we had distributed 205,200 trees with our overall project quota of 240,000 trees soon reachable. With that, we also reached the milestone of distributing the 800,000th tree from our nursery this year.

FNPW have offered additional funding for another 80,000 trees in recognition of the ongoing need to support flood-affected landholders restore their properties.

In addition to the free trees distributed, the Nursery also sold 12,608 trees to Councils and private regeneration contractors. These and other plant sales in the nursery generated \$45,933 of income for FoK.

Our seedling propagation efforts were supported by tree donations from the NSW Department of Planning and Environment totalling 20,000 trees.

We are also incredibly grateful to WWF and Koala for funding an electric van, which is being used by the nursery team every single day.



Mark Wilson
Nursery Manager





Habitat Protection and Enhancement

Hanging out at East Coraki

The project aims to support community-led koala recovery by improving resilience and viability of the high density East Coraki koala subpopulation and its habitat.

Friends of the Koala submitted an application for the Federal Government Koala Community Grants program and were successful in receiving funding of \$199,980 over two years for the “Hanging out at East Coraki: Koalas thriving in an agricultural landscape” project.

The project aims to support community-led koala recovery by improving resilience and viability of the high density East Coraki koala subpopulation and its habitat. Historic clearing for agriculture resulted in a matrix of habitat (riparian vegetation, patches of forest, linear roadside vegetation, corridors, scattered paddock trees, and open ground).

Key activities include:

- Weed Control - improving the quality of koala habitat by removing weeds, including Weeds of National Significance, around and between koala food trees, providing koalas with immediate access to trees, reducing the need to walk on the road.
- Planting Koala Habitat Trees - increasing the extent of existing known koala habitat across the East Coraki landscape. Satellite planting of koala habitat trees from the riparian area across the landscape will provide additional habitat connecting the riparian area toward other koala food trees, and increase the network of stepping-stones across the landscape to support koala dispersal.
- Community Field Days - we had one of the three community field days in May, with 535 trees in the ground planted by 25 volunteers, in addition to the 300 trees planted by the landholder on the site.
- Koala Surveys, Health Checks, Population and Habitat Assessments – the baseline habitat assessment across four of the six sites (mapped out within the project) as well as the koala baseline population survey and first health check throughout most of the East Coraki landscape are concluded. Through our health checks we were able to identify 150 individuals and at least 32 joeys so far. Seven koalas were brought to the Friends of the Koala hospital - either rescued during our health checks or called in by landholders due to education about our project. As of June 30, three koalas have been released and one was still in care.
- Landscape Management Planning - to assist with longer term management of koalas across the landscape.
- A scientific poster was presented at the National Koala conference in Port Macquarie in May this year.

There are lots of activities coming up in the next 18 months. If you would like to be involved and learn more about koala habitat and koala health checking contact Maria or Ina.



**Maria Matthes
& Ina Egermann
Project Officers**



Northern Rivers Regional Koala Partnership

The Northern Rivers Regional Koala Conservation Strategy and associated mapping provides a regional approach for coordinating the conservation, recovery, and management efforts to protect and recover koala populations in the Northern Rivers region

The last 12 months have seen the beginning of the Regional Habitat Restoration project with over 30ha being restored over 17 sites across all 6 local Government area.

These projects were primarily focused on assisted natural regeneration, working with local landholders, using weed control, raking, fire and the direct seeding of native grasses to restore koala habitat.

Key Achievements for the Northern Rivers Regional Partnership

- Supported the work of over 8 organisations working together on koala conservation in the region
- Delivered \$85,000 in habitat restoration assisting regeneration in over 30 hectares of koala habitat in strategic locations.
- Facilitated the delivery of over \$300,000 helping to manage vehicle strike in the Northern Rivers
- Development of the Northern Rivers Regional Koala Conservation Strategy and associated mapping. This strategy provides a regional approach for coordinating the conservation, recovery, and management efforts to protect and recover koala populations in the Northern Rivers region. [Koalas Habitat Restoration for Local Landholders, Northern Rivers \(friendsofthekoala.org\)](https://www.friendsofthekoala.org/)
- Presented to local landholder and industry professionals at over 10 workshops focused on koala conservation
- Facilitated a regional workshop focused on habitat restoration prioritisation to strategically select sites of high priority to undertake habitat restoration over the next 3 years. This incorporated the Regional Strategy mapping, recent survey results and expert elicitation.
- Coordinated the development of a Regional Communication package which produced messaging around the threats to koalas. This will be utilised by Councils and FOK allow for consistent messaging and branding across the 6 LGAS. This project included the promotion and organisation of 3 Co-designed stakeholder workshops which included koala carers, landholders, community members and school students from 2 different schools.
- Supported the delivery of koala education and awareness programs with presentations to over 100 students.



Angie Brace
Regional Koala Officer



Community Engagement & Education

August 26th a small group of likeminded volunteers met to hold the inaugural meeting of the renewed Community Engagement & Education Subcommittee.

The Subcommittee was redefined as CEE with the motto "See our way forward to educating public via community involvement".

We have since attended 21 markets, schools and events, including:

- Byron Bay International Film Festival - premiere of our documentary Every Koala Counts (now available to watch on our website)
- Lismore Square - merchandise/plant sales/information table
- Big Scrub Rainforest Day, Rocky Creek - information table/plant sales
- Primex - information table/plants sales/merchandise
- SCU Lismore Orientation Day - information table
- SCE Lismore Campus Connect Day - information table
- Ballina Probus - FOK talk & information table
- Bangalow Monthly Market - merchandise/plant sales/information table

The subcommittee sourced a local clothing company to create T-shirts to promote FOK and these were offered to all volunteers at a preset purchase price. These shirts have been very popular and a huge success.

The Mens sheds of Lismore and Bangalow were approached and willingly created remembrance crosses to be placed at the site of koala car strikes in an attempt to create awareness of koalas needing to use roads in their habitat areas.

We are very excited about the electric van donated by WWF and Koala, which will help us reach many more community events in the 2023-2024 financial year. We have a lot of plans to raise awareness of Friends of the Koala and the work done by creation of banners to be displayed in local towns, posters to be displayed in local businesses, eg. vets, schools, public notice boards.

Joey Buddies as a concept was developed late last year and launched in July. It is a monthly subscription membership and email aimed at koala lovers of all ages. Joey Buddies is designed to be given as a gift, and the giver also receives the email free. At \$5/month it's priced intentionally, at less than a cup of coffee.

The emails follow the life of our joeys from rescue to release, starting with Pala, our Joey Buddy mascot. There is in depth information about koalas, as well as fun facts, competitions, prizes, photos and videos.

Joey Buddies was designed with three aims; to educate about koalas in a fun, enjoyable and engaging manner; to raise the profile of Friends of the Koala and the work we do; and to raise funds for Friends of the Koala to support our work with koalas. As part of the launch the joey buddies team organised a Joey Koala Photographic Exhibition at Ballina of Brad Mustow's work which was very successful. We have been asked to exhibit again next year.

To be a success, Joey Buddies needs the support of the Friends of the Koala community. Go to joeybuddies.org for more information and to sign up.

This has been a hugely successful year for the new CEE subcommittee and the Joey Buddies team, in what has proven to be a very busy time for all our people. Thank you to everyone who engaged with us at events, watched our documentary, subscribed to Joey Buddies and bought one of our t-shirts. Please remember to drive slow on our roads and report all sightings on our website!



Dale Viola
Community Engagement & Education Coordinator



Deb Lewis
Joey Buddies Coordinator



Advocacy

Advocacy is undertaken by all active Friends of the Koala volunteers when they are out in the community performing their range of activities related to koala care, conservation and protection.

Our advocacy subcommittee encompasses various activities, including forms, letters and submissions to face-to-face meetings with politicians at all levels of government to advocate for Northern Rivers Koalas and Friends of the Koala. We have sent letters of introduction to all relevant Local, State and Federal politicians requesting meetings at their office or a visit to our facilities. Although results sometimes take time, our dedication is unwavering. This will provide the opportunity to promote our activities and discuss our needs to continue to provide high level care to koalas and to protect their habitat in the region.

Our Area Coordinators, Regional Koala Officer and the working group play pivotal roles to identify koala habitat requiring protection, challenge Development Applications that impact koalas and ensure that the role of Friends of the Koala is recognised at all levels of government. Advocacy is undertaken by all active Friends of the Koala volunteers when they are out in the community performing their range of activities related to koala care, conservation and protection.

Attendance by nine of our members at the Koala conference in Port Macquarie provided the opportunity to promote Friends of the Koala and to network with others, including the recently appointed Minister of the Environment, the Hon. Penny Sharpe who are all involved koala conservation from care to protection.

Valuable advice from past President Ros Irwin and active involvement of our Patron, Lorraine Vass, has been extremely beneficial as they have a wealth of knowledge of the issues impacting koalas over many years.

Our collective advocacy has not only safeguarded koalas in the Northern Rivers but also garnered recognition statewide. As we persist, our impact resonates, and together, we stand as the guardians of our beloved koalas.



Advocacy Subcommittee
Aliison Kelly, Rhonda James, Lorraine Vass & Silva Everaers



Area Coordinators

Lismore

Ina Egermann

It's been really busy here in the Lismore LGA, especially when it came to Development Applications with negatives effects on wildlife. I have submitted 5 objections to development applications on behalf of FOK with 226 Invercauld Road, Goonellabah being the most time consuming one as it involved preparing speeches for 3 council meetings, where, after a hard battle, it finally got refused. The developer subsequently went to the Land and Environment Court to appeal the decision which increased my work load. Extensive prep work went into the attendance of the conciliation conference and as the parties couldn't reach an agreement the matter was taken to court. I executed my own koala surveys on all adjoining properties whose owners allowed me access and created maps in preparation for the court hearing, which I also attended. The Land and Environment Court upheld the council's decision, which was a massive win for koalas and wildlife in general.

I have been and will continue to work closely with council representatives to progress the installation of koala proof fencing along our most notorious black spot - Bruxner Highway/Tatham Road in South Gundurimba. We have lost way too many koalas there and need this fence, including an underpass, up as quickly as possible. Sadly, there are many other black spots and I am trying to raise awareness with signage and I am talking to council and Transport for NSW about options in those spots.

Much work goes into education. I have attended events at schools or had students coming to FOK to ensure the next generation are equipped with knowledge to help us save koalas. I am liaising with many landholders, educate them and walk their land checking on koalas. Most of them have given me permission to access their land whenever I have time...but time is what I never have enough of.

I have also extended FOK's participation in the "Return and earn"- scheme, that I set up the year before.

Byron Shire

Dale Viola

Only new to this role for Friends of the Koala for the Byron Shire area, I am still feeling my way, getting to know roles and responsibilities.

I have contacted all Landcare groups in the local area, in an attempt to become known to see what it might look like to attempt to work together on future projects.

I have objected to three developments proposals, being

- High level development behind the shopping centre in Suffolk Park, which would impact the wildlife area in this precinct.
- Proposed footpath along Raftons Rd, which would disrupt the corridor koalas use to make their way in the landscape.
- Proposed function venue site along Hinterland way, which would impact adversely on koalas in the area.

To date, there has not been a decision forthcoming on any of these applications.

Attended meetings with Byron Council environment officers and Broken Head Wildlife actions group regarding wildlife corridor Coast Road Broken Head.

Council apparently has funding of \$75,000 to implement mitigation steps along this 7km stretch of road where we have seen numerous koala car hits in the past 12-18 months. These steps include road pavement signage, static signage, LED vehicle activated signage.

At this stage works have been delayed by being unable to obtain the services of an Engineer to commence the works.

Looking forward to becoming involved locally as I become accustomed to the new role.



Advocacy

Tweed Shire

Rhonda James

The position requires working with Tweed Shire Council, local Landcare, wildlife and environmental groups, and the local media on behalf of Friends of the Koala. Below I have briefly outlined activities during the past year.

Tweed Rescuers – In addition to the rescue chat on Viber, Tweed rescuers have their own chat to discuss local rescues, releases and other relevant issues. Although rescue numbers are low compared to the Lismore area there are koalas being notified in residential areas with no apparent habitat nearby, resulting in the dilemma whether to rescue and if so to select a release site. Jenny Graham the newly appointed koala representative from Tweed Valley Wildlife Carers, with whom we have a Memorandum of Understanding, is a member of our team enabling her to keep up to date on FoK and Tweed Koala activities.

Liaison with Tweed Shire Council has been ongoing during the year. I am a community member on the Tweed Coast Koala Management Committee along with FoK representative Lorraine Vass. The committee is currently updating the Tweed KPOM. I am also in regular contact with Council as Tweed Co-ordinator to provide information and to discuss Koala activity to assist with distribution of funding particularly in relation to road hot spots. Tweed has recently received DPE Koala Strategy funding which will be used to address vehicle strike and to investigate koala habitat in the KPOM area north of the Tweed River.

Articles have been placed in the local Tweed Weekly and have included articles on Koala activity, vehicle strike, notification of objection to proposed caravan park and the recent Save the Koala Month. Stalls have been held at World Environment Day, Koala Beach 20year Celebration and Tweed Sustainability event.

An FoK flyer was prepared and distributed to encourage the community to object to the proposed Caravan Park at Pottsville which would have had significant impact on the movement of Koalas. The response was excellent with 319 submissions against the proposal which assisted in the decision to refuse the DA. There is on going requests to NPWS for additions to Cudgen Nature Reserve in partnership with Friends of Cudgen Nature Reserve.

Looking forward to continuing the established relationships to promote the management and survival of Koala populations in Tweed Shire particularly within the areas designated in the Tweed Coast KPOM.

Ballina Shire

Maria Matthes

Ballina Shire Council has two new staff working part time on koalas. We have been working on vegetation and habitat mapping, updating and collating koala records, and developing a habitat restoration program. I have delivered another round of Koala Spotter Training for Council staff working in various aspects of road related works.

Ballina Council has prepared and approved a Biodiversity Strategy for the Shire. Comments were put forward for consideration of koalas in this Strategy. Council also reviewed its deferred Conservation Zones this year and a submission was made. Koala zones were established on a number of roads within Ballina Shire last year, and with some heavy lobbying the Koala Zone Signs finally went in.

It has been a fairly quiet year on the rescue front with the majority of rescues from the Plateau Subpopulation and the Northern Subpopulation, and a few from the Southern Subpopulation. The Transport for NSW population study for the Southern Subpopulation continues with the population finally stabilising after the Pacific Highway Upgrade, although three colonies continue to struggle to rebuild numbers.

A post-fire study, led by IFAW and University of Sunshine Coast was undertaken in the Ngunya Jargoan Indigenous Protected Area. The study used koala detection dogs, drones, and field teams to determine the number of koalas,



Advocacy

in the area, genetics, gender, and disease. The results of this study provided some interesting insights to the post-fire habitat refugia use, as well as scat assessments to revealing a higher level of chlamydia in the colony than expected, with a few koalas presenting clinical signs, but the majority of cases showing no sign of the disease.

If anyone would like to be part of any of the exciting koala conservation projects planned for next year contact Maria on 0467 855 990.

Richmond Valley *Maria Matthes*

The main focus in Richmond Valley LGA this year has been submissions. In the absence of a Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management for Richmond Valley to guide decision making for strategies and developments, ensuring impacts to koalas are avoided or minimised and our koalas given due consideration.

A submission was made to Richmond Valley Council's Draft Regional Growth Strategy. A submission was made to the Northern Regional Planning Panel against the proposed development at Iron Gates Road, Evans Head. This is a development with a long history. I represented FOK at the Planning Panel public hearings where the NRPP refused the development. The developer appealed this decision and again I represented FOK at the Land and Environment Court Conciliation Conference. The proposal is expected to go before the Land and Environment Court next financial year. Watch this space.

Submissions were also made to Richmond Valley Council against a rezoning proposal at Rileys Hill and a proposed development at Broadwater that would significantly impact on local koala population and its habitat. The outcome of these proposals are expected next financial year.

I have also been liaising with the NPWS to reduce the impact of Hazard Reduction Burns in Broadwater National Park on koalas and to have any koalas located during burns to be reported to FOK, as well as lots of

community liaison and a workshop down in Bungawalbin. Being such a large LGA anyone who would like to assist with koala conservation in Richmond Valley LGA can contact Maria on 0467 855 990.

Kyogle *Linda Swankie*

Key activities and progress:
Engagement with Landholders: I've communicated with several landholders about the possibility of accessing their land for koala surveys. I am pleased to report they have granted permission. I've been in touch with the local Landcare group. We are in the process of gathering information on potential release sites in Kyogle. I plan to personally visit and assess these sites as time permits.

Community Awareness: Multiple posts were made on the Kyogle Facebook page urging the community to report koala sightings. This aims to gather more real-time data about koala movements and their habitats. Distribution of FOK leaflets is ongoing, with several locations receiving these informative materials, including new spots not previously targeted. I have also published three articles in the Kyogle Talking Turkey.

Veterinary Support: Collaboration has been established with a local vet who has generously offered emergency euthanasia or pain relief services from approximately 7am to 9pm on weekdays. It's important to note their availability may vary.

Training and Meetings: I had the opportunity to attend a Communications workshop and a regional koala group meeting, which were instrumental in fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing.

Engagement with Kyogle Council: Efforts are being made to organise meetings with significant personnel at Kyogle Council, including Judy and members from planning and development control teams.

Data Review: An in-depth review of Kyogle's koala data is underway.



Emergency Response

We have been busy this year preparing a draft Emergency Response Plan which will increase our ability to respond to various scales of emergencies including bushfires, droughts, heatwaves, storms, flood, habitat loss, and disease.

I have been appointed as FOK's Emergency Response Coordinator, and Jen Ridolfi is our Deputy Emergency Response Coordinator. We have been busy this year preparing a draft Emergency Response Plan which will increase FOK's ability to respond to various scales of emergencies including bushfires, droughts, heatwaves, storms, flood, habitat loss, and disease. Jen is also working with the Vet Team on an Evacuation Plan for FOK's facilities and for home carers.

A group of representatives from Friends of the Koala are also working with the Northern Rivers Wildlife Network, and other organisations' Emergency Response Coordinators on Disaster and Emergency Planning, in preparation for the predicted dry spring and summer ahead. We want to thank Rob Leach from IFAW for facilitating these meetings.

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) have been charged with wildlife during state declared emergencies. In February, I attended the EPA Wildlife Listening Workshops to have input into what we need from the EPA during emergencies.

The NPWS have set up a Wildlife Emergency Response Taskforce (WERT). Friends of the Koala is a member of the WERT, and I have attended several on-line meetings, as well as a Bushfire Wildlife Training Workshop in June. The NPWS has developed draft Wildlife Emergency Response Guidelines that will form the basis of the wildlife response in bushfires, including the mandatory PPE and training required for volunteers to participate in the wildlife response.

Jen and I have also worked with the WERT and National Parks Foundation Wildlife Heroes to build Friends of the Koala's capacity to respond through increasing number of volunteers trained in Basic Wildfire Awareness and Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System, as well as available PPE for bushfire emergencies.

Responding to emergencies takes a lot of co-ordination and management, and many hands on deck. We will need volunteers to fill a number of roles to assist with logistics, planning and intelligence, operations (field and vet teams), and more. If anyone is interested in being part of the emergency response team, please apply to become a volunteer through our website.



Maria Matthes
Emergency Response Coordinator



Our People

It takes a village to assist one injured koala and Our People are that village. So thank you to Our People. Without them, there would be no organisation and no koalas rescued, rehabilitated, or released.

Once again our FOK Volunteers have been the mainstay of the running of the Friends of the Koala organisation. Behind every koala that has been brought in to the Burribi Centre, there is a story of a group of people who have taken the call on the hotline, gone out at any time to rescue the koala, assessed the koala, transported the koala into the hospital, taken care of the koala while it has been in care, provided leaf for the koala and then in the best circumstances release the koala. It takes a village to assist 1 injured koala and Our People are that village.

We now have 239 volunteers with 16 different roles available and on any given day up to 48 volunteers can be working for our organisation, on hotline, rescuing, leafing, habitat restoration, plantation and nursery or other jobs. Every volunteer is an advocate for our organisation.

We also have volunteers who look after the Adopt a Koala program, vehicle and maintenance operations, cleaning of the centre, administration tasks, tours, management committee members, fundraising, advocacy, HR, project management and social media.

I have implemented new training programs in cooperation with team coordinators where applicable. These include Rescue Training, Leafing ID training, Induction Training and Art of Guiding Training. All include the requirements of the new Code of Practice for Sick, Injured and Orphaned Koalas.

A successful Information Day was held to engage new volunteers, including Our People Presentation, Koala Information walk around the lake and a visit to the Burribi Centre. A new data base program has been implemented for the FOK Volunteer Program. This has made the management of volunteers more efficient, as it includes rosters, reporting data and training completed.

There is no way to single out any individual volunteer for awards, as each one of Our People deserve an award for the work they do for Friends of the Koala.

So thank you to Our People. Without them, there would be no organisation and no koalas rescued, rehabilitated, or released.



Jen Ridolfi
Volunteer Coordinator



Koala Success Stories

Hi, my name is Frankie! I am pretty new at Friends of the Koala, rescued in Goonellabah in July. I am about 7 - 8 months old, and was weighing 730 grams when found, but with Liz's help I am steadily growing and gaining weight. I am over 1 kilo now!

The vet team suspects I fell from my mum's back, as I'm the right age to start climbing on there and am showing some mild signs of injury. But I'm very well taken care of in home care and am loving the supplements and leaf.

Unfortunately my mum cannot be found, but I am lucky to be at Friends of the Koala now which will greatly improve my chances of survival in the wild - when I am ready! I am getting pretty excited to join Pikachu in Kindy soon, and cannot wait for all the playtime with the other joeys in there.

Hi, my name is Pikachu!

I was found in Coraki in the beginning of June, and after a short time in home care (which I loved) I have now been "promoted" to Koala Kindy!

It's a little lonely in there at the moment but luckily I am right next to residents Ivy, Charlotte and Hope. Very soon there will be more buddies to play with in Kindy, can't wait.

At the moment I am a little bit itchy, but the volunteers and vet team are working on it! Apart from that, I am gaining weight and looking good. Am I the cutest of the joeys? I think I am!



Hi, my name is Pudding! I joined Friends of the Koala in January. I was only little, about 11 months old and weighing 1.5kg. I was found clinging to my mums back, who still managed to look after me quite well even though she was very sick with mesothelioma (cancer). I had a brief stay in home care but was keen to get out there and hang with the other joeys in kindy!

I was already well used to eating leaf and at an age where I was gaining some independence away from my mum. I am settling in nicely and having a great time with my new bestie Waratah. I am loving the fresh leaf that gets delivered by the leaf harvesters every day!

I am quite the socialite and love chatting and snuggling with the other koalas. Sometimes they don't seem very keen, but I think they secretly love it too.



Our Partners

Friends of the Koala gratefully acknowledge the generous contributions made by our partners and supporters. Working with Northern Rivers communities, we collaborate with our foundation, principal, project, and community partners to achieve our mission and secure a future for koalas.

Foundation Partners



Principal Partners



Project Partners



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Veterinary & Research Partners



Northern Rivers Koala Partnership



Northern Rivers Wildlife Network



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