

# Central Queensland Koala Volunteers



**AUTUMN EDITION 2014**

## **A cool greeting from Julia Kamp**



Our recent intern, Julia Kamp, having survived our hot spring, has sent us cool koala greetings from Germany. While with us Julia worked on koala behaviour on St Bees Island and at Cape Otway in Victoria. She has now moved on to her new internship somewhat nearer her home. Julia says, "Since last week I'm at my internship with the wolves in eastern Germany. It is about minus 10 degrees and we have snow! Great because now we can go out and look for wolf tracks. And I build a snow-koala".

Alistair

## **Times have changed ... but the story remains the same**

An extract from an account of an excursion to Mt Jim Crow from the Old Dairy Inn on the road to Yeppoon in the Morning Bulletin, Wednesday, 24 February, 1886 (<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/page/5035075?zoomLevel=2>)

'...Mr Wyatt appears to be having the best sport...The evening is very calm and pleasant;

the moon is now half-way to the zenith; and the solemn stillness and beauty of the bush are exceedingly enjoyable. A curious sort of drumming noise falls on an acute ear, and we are told there are native bears about the hillside to which we have wandered. Guided by the sound, we are led to where a dark object can be seen moving about among the foliage of a young gum tree. All the stillness is dissipated by the bang of the breechloader; there is a dull thud on the ground; and the hapless koala is dead as a door-nail.....There are no 'possums to be seen and after a pleasant ramble we return to our hotel'

Forty years on....

An extract of a record of a meeting of the Central Queensland Native Birds Protection Association in the Morning Bulletin, Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> October 1927 (<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/page/527175>)

Protection of Bears. "Trapping on Sth. Keppel Is.' 'Mr. G.H. Barker, State secretary to the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union, asked the Association's co-operation and assistance in regard to the open season for native bears -The chairman pointed out that the *C.Q.* secretary made a strong protest on behalf of the Association against an open season to the acting-Premier (Mr Forgan Smith), who was asked to consider the withdrawal of the authority to slaughter the bear. All the representations, however, failed; the season was opened and hundreds of thousands of Koala were destroyed.' 'Mr Bolderman: We should try and to save it from extinction.'

These folk then go on to talk about the koalas on South Keppel Island being almost exterminated as soon as the season opened. 'The area in question was totally protected and it was a downright disgrace to hear such

news, especially as the lessee of the island (Mr. Leeke) was an hon. Ranger under the act.' The meeting then discussed the use of cyanide and snares to secure the koalas, and to imply that Mr Leeke was responsible for the almost total removal of the animals from south Keppel Island.

Another 76 years have passed and the plight of the koala has not changed – nor has the public concern for the species' future. Of course, the threats now are no longer from hunting and poisoning but from changes in weather patterns and clearing and roads associated with resource extraction and coastal urbanisation.

*Alistair*

### **Record heat wave a setback for western koala populations**

The recent, unprecedented, summer heatwave has resulted in koala deaths west of the Great Dividing range. This extended period of above 40°C came on top of a year of drought. Dams dried up and all animals (domestic and wild) struggled without surface water. Jim and Jenny Skelton (Tambo) rescued a bogged koala from one of their dams, and unfortunately, despite good care, the female koala died. There are reports of historically reliable waterholes drying up. So it is expected that the koala populations along the western streams will have been reduced to a few sites where waterholes or shallow aquifers persisted. This is because koalas get their water needs from the eucalypt leaves that they eat. When the leaf moisture content falls during drought and heatwave, the resident koalas cannot find sufficient water to survive. This has happened before, and will happen again – especially where extreme temperatures or extended periods of consecutive days without rain occur during drought conditions.

We'll be travelling to the Tambo region in May to look at the state of the koala habitat and to seek local advice on where the koalas have persisted. Later, we'll travel to Hughenden to have a look at the habitat there.

*Alistair*

### **Di and Peter have migrated south.**

Long-term members, Di Pollard and Peter Hackett, have resigned from the CQKV as they abandon Redcliffe (I don't understand that! A.M.) and move south to Tasmania. We wish them well, and sincerely thank them for their participation and support for the koala cause over the years. However, our loss could be the Devil's gain as Di has already expressed an interest in adopting the Tassie Devil.

Best wishes from us all.

*Alistair*

### **From the Treasurer's Desk**

For CQKV, the year to 31 December, 2013 was very quiet. Only minor fund-raising was undertaken, amounting to \$361. The major income of \$1 140.66 came from interest on our investments.

Our only expenditure was \$3 630.00 for a research expedition to St Bees Island by CQKV members and internees. Our assets were reduced by \$1 948.00 which is a reasonable amount as the group raises money for koala research in Central Queensland.

Assets as at 31 December, 2013 are:

- Cheque A/c \$237.65
- Savings A/c \$2 918.35
- Term Deposit \$27 907.68
- Total \$31 063.68
- 29 caps.

*Shirley Hopkins*

## **Mission**

*CQ Koala Volunteers seek the conservation of the koala and other tree living mammals in Central Queensland by*

- *Supporting research into koalas, other arboreal mammals and their habitat through (a) providing volunteer support to research projects, and (b) assisting in the raising of funds for research and the volunteer teams;*
- *Developing public awareness of the needs of koalas, tree living mammals and their habitat requirements generally;*
- *Fostering community support for koalas and tree living mammals generally;*
- *Encouraging and assisting with the development of habitat rehabilitation projects where necessary through the region;*
- *Supporting the rehabilitation and release of sick, injured or displaced koalas and tree living mammals.*

*The Central Queensland Koala Volunteers are not about stopping development. They seek to encourage planned development, which allows for the co-existence of koalas and other tree living mammals with human activity.*

*Funds are used to buy equipment for the researchers, to fund volunteer field teams and provide limited support for animal carers. Donations may also be made to the Koala Research Centre of Central Queensland and are tax deductible.*

### **Office Bearers**

*Alistair Melzer, signatory, Chairperson*

*Carmen Drake, signatory, CQKV representative on Koala Research Centre Board*

*Shirley Hopkins, signatory, Treasurer*

*Doreen Lovett, Editor: [drl33@bigpond.com](mailto:drl33@bigpond.com)*

*Nick Quigley, Web designer*

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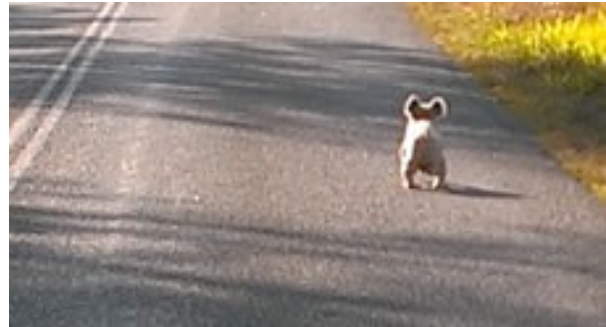
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## **Koalas at Sarina Beach**

These photos were taken by a Mackay Regional Council officer on Sarina Beach Road adjacent to a small patch of remnant vegetation adjacent to the coast during last years' breeding season. Koalas are well known from the area and represent part of a greater population that stretches from south of St Lawrence to about Collinsville.



Unfortunately most of the coastal populations have been affected by land clearing for agriculture and, more recently, for expanding urban development. However, the animals on the western side of the ranges are largely secure and probably represent the greatest surviving intact regional population in Queensland.

There are some challenges, however. There is ongoing road mortality around St Lawrence on the Bruce Highway and east of Nebo on the Peak Downs Highway. Broad community effort across all sectors will be required to retain those animals living in and around the developing coastal corridors and associated road networks. The unfortunate catastrophic decline of the koalas around Brisbane, despite government regulation, is a clear warning.

*Alistair*

