



**Friends of the Koala**  
**Annual Report 2021/2022**





## Contents

Our Impact in 2021/2022	04
Patron's Message	06
President's Report	07
Financial report	08
Koala Hospital	10
Research	11
Koala Rescue, Rehabilitation & Release	12
Data Management	13
Habitat Protection and Enhancement	14
Community Education and Engagement	16
Our People	17
Koala Success Stories	18
Our Supporters	19





# We believe in a future for koalas.


Australia's koala is on the brink of extinction. For over 35 years, Friends of the Koala has been on the frontline of the battle to save the species.

With over 500 members, 170 active volunteers, and 8 staff, we operate the largest Koala Hospital on the East Coast of Australia. This is the only specialised Koala Hospital in the Northern Rivers, a region that is home to one of the last significant, genetically diverse koala populations in Australia.

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.

We tend to hundreds of sick, injured, and orphaned koalas each year.

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



## Our Impact in 2021/2022

### Koala Rescue, Rehabilitation and Release

**321** Koalas rescued      **32%** Release rate  
**104** Koalas released      **14** Koalas vaccinated  
**4794** Hotline calls answered

**Only** specialised Koala Hospital in the region



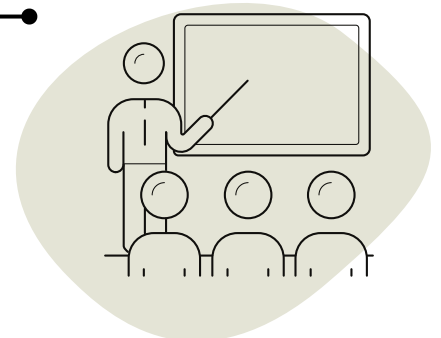
### Habitat Protection and Enhancement



**38,500** Trees sold      **72,100** Trees issued  
**900** Trees planted      **14** km wildlife corridor enhanced  
**20** Landowner partnerships

### Community Engagement and Education

**>120** School children engaged  
**1** Koala documentary and five short films produced  
**5** Regional Koala Group meetings hosted







## Advocacy



- **7** Responses to development applications and the Draft National Koala Recovery Plan
- **5** Council meetings attendance and presentations
- 1** Submission lodged to NSW Legislative Council Upper House Inquiry into Koalas and Koala Habitat in NSW

## Our People

**170** Active volunteers

➤ **54,000** Volunteer hours

➤ **500** Members

**8** Staff



## Financial Sustainability



- **500** Individual donations from over 39 countries
- 737** Adopt a Koala packages purchased



## Patron's Message

**The koala's reclassification to endangered was driven by the tireless advocacy of countless organisations and individuals who are passionate about the koala's welfare and long-term survival in nature.**

The past year has seen further acknowledgements by the Federal and NSW governments that the koala, or at least the combined populations of Queensland, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, is heading towards extinction.

The declaration of these populations to comprise a species back in 2012 enabled their inclusion in the Vulnerable category on the list of threatened species under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. In February this year reassessment by the Threatened Species Scientific Committee up-listed them to Endangered. A month later the overdue National Recovery Plan for the koala was released.

Hot on their heels, in April and May respectively, the NSW Government announced the NSW Koala Strategy: towards doubling the number of koalas in New South Wales by 2050 and the NSW Threatened Species Scientific Committee determined the koala Endangered under the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016.

Despite our serious misgivings with the capacity of either instrument to achieve its objective without changing current planning, land clearing and other policies, it is important to acknowledge that their existence has not come out of the blue. They and the koala's reclassifications were driven by the tireless advocacy of countless organisations and individuals who are passionate about the koala's welfare and long-term survival in nature.

From its very early days, advocating for koalas and their habitat, whether by educating the community and our leaders, lobbying for stronger legislation and against inappropriate development, even mobilising action, has been central to Friends of the Koala's mission. Often the work has been undertaken collaboratively with groups sharing similar goals. Sadly, to recover and maintain our koala populations here in the Northern Rivers, the need for such advocacy has never been greater.

Our region encompasses ten of the State's 50 Areas of Regional Koala Significance (ARKS). It remains a nationally significant stronghold for the koala's survival. The North Coast Regional Plan 2036, presently undergoing its first 5-year review, is an alarming reminder of the formidable growth forecast and of the amount of clearing for urban development, infrastructure and agriculture ahead of us.

This being the final year of my 5-year term as Patron, I would like to express my continuing admiration for our striving organisation and its incredible work. I thank President Aliison, the management team, staff, volunteers, members and supporters for your total engagement in the all-consuming work of conserving our region's koalas as best we can.



**Lorraine Vass AM**  
**Patron**



# President's Report

**Friends of the Koala is a multifaceted organisation that works across all conservation issues faced by koalas.**

Friends of the Koala is a multifaceted organisation that works across all conservation issues faced by koalas. From habitat creation to rescuing, rehabilitating and releasing where possible back into the wild, every aspect is undertaken by passionate individuals who we refer to as Our People. We would not be here if it wasn't for everyone involved in the organisation both now and over the last 35 years. By working together, we are making a difference and I am proud to be writing my first President's report.

The year 2021/2022 was another big year for the organisation. This year's test was helping the organisation move through the region's biggest floods in Australia's history which saw years of habitat restoration work heavily impacted, five of the seven plantations besieged by debris and a number of volunteers lose everything. We also saw key staff and volunteers leave the organisation, in particular I would like to pay tribute to Claire Agnew who helped Richard Atkin guide the transformation of Friends of the Koala from a volunteer organisation into a professional community organisation.

Due to the passion of Our People the organisation continues to thrive. From the dedicated hospital staff who are building our Koala Hospital together, to our valuable hotliners who commit themselves to running a 24/7 hotline. Working with the rescue team, these people are prepared to rise to the call to save a koala regardless of the day, time or weather.

Once the koala is at the hospital we rely heavily on our leafing and plantation team to provide the leaf our koalas need on a daily basis. They work together with our care shift volunteers who clean and scrub the cages 365 days a year.

There's the operational staff whose work keeps this whole organisation functioning and provides much needed support to everyone. The Management Committee work beside them to help guide and steer the organisation strategically and our nursery team provides thousands of trees each year to Friends of the Koala and the general public. Then there are others who work quietly in the background collating our data, looking after our membership, writing submissions and managing some extraordinary habitat restoration projects. Excitedly this year we commenced hosting a 5 year Regional Koala Officer, funded by the Department of Planning and Environment.

I would like to acknowledge our major partners particularly IFAW, WWF-Australia and the Department of Planning and Environment as well as our Foundation partners, Southern Cross University and Lismore City Council.

Thank you also to all our members particularly our Honorary Life Members who believe in the work we do day after day, year after year.


Lastly, I'd like to thank my mentors Lorraine Vass, our Patron, and past Presidents Dr Ros Irwin and Susannah Keogh. These exceptional women have really helped me through this first year.

Friends of the Koala's success is a testament to every individual's involvement, and I hope along with me that your connection to Friends of the Koala is something you are proud of too.



**Aliison Kelly**  
**President**





# Financial Report

Despite some really challenging times during the 2021/22 Financial year for FOK supporters; their love for koalas and appreciation of the work we do at FOK continued throughout the year.

The floods impacted our capacity to fundraise as our focus was on the wellbeing of our people and continuing high quality care for our koalas. Sponsorships, donations, adoptions, merchandise all declined during this time. In addition, COVID continued to impact our ability to fundraise, host Educational Tours and sell merchandise throughout the year. Membership fees were waived for Northern Rivers residents and businesses. Consequently we had a decline in revenue and recorded an expected loss in 2022.

There was significant investment in additional infrastructure for the organisation (website upgrade, help line resourcing, upgrading rescue and plantation equipment).

The confidence of government and other organisations and individuals remains strong as FOK delivers quality koala care in the Northern Rivers region. This was demonstrated through additional grants awarded (in particular the NSW Department of Planning and Environment funding of a Regional Koala Officer position hosted by Friends of the Koala and including significant funding towards habitat restoration) and a few significant donations received throughout the year.

Two fundraising campaigns were running quietly, as we continued our business as usual at Friends of the Koala. One being a commemorative statue to honour our three-legged legend Triumph who passed away last year. We also changed our donation form on the website to allow for recurring donations and additional payment options.

The nursery continues to deliver on FOK's objective to improve koala habitat in our region, while also providing good cash flow for the operations of the business. In 2022 it was not as profitable as previous years due to our commitment to the Bush Fire Recovery project, dispatching 80,000 trees free of charge. We expect the 2023 FY will see a return to stronger profitability.

We can observe the following

- Total donations declined by 19.65%
- Grant income increased by 28.62%
- Nursery sales increased by 25.54% despite the requirement of the bushfire program to give away 80,000 trees. This is also reflected in the increased cost of nursery purchases (39.23% on 2021FY)
- 43% decline in membership fees (mostly Northern NSW residents/businesses)
- 85.64% decline in merchandise sales, due to COVID and floods preventing tours and fairs
- Cleaning expenses increased 147% as a professional cleaner needed to be engaged during COVID
- Cost of living rises resulted in consumable and volunteer refreshments increasing, along with the cost of fuel. More of the regular volunteers are now submitting fuel claims as a small reimbursement for their travel costs
- The water resources required to run the additional nursery and plants saw an increase of 77% in water costs this year
- Additional staff, veterinary surgeon, veterinary nurse and volunteer coordinator, as well as increased employee pay rates, resulted in wage expense growing by 41%. Fortunately 47.5% of this expense is currently funded by IFAW and DPE.



**Nicci Carter**  
**Finance Manager**





## Public Fund

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.

In the 2022FY, \$161,544 was raised through the Public Care Fund. \$111,218 of these funds was expended on costs directly related to the rescue, rehabilitation, and release of koalas. This included the operations of the koala hospital, the management of our volunteer workforce, and maintenance of koala food plantations.

After Friends of the Koala reinvested the 2022FY surplus of \$47,233 the Public Fund finished the year as at 30th June 2022 with a balance of \$578,834. This money will continue to be invested in the Friends of the Koala strategic objectives.

The detailed financial statements can be obtained by emailing [accounts@friendsofthekoala.org](mailto:accounts@friendsofthekoala.org)

Revenue	2022 \$	2021 \$	2020 \$
Donations	241,802	296,310	841,149
Fundraising	229	5,266	2,365
Grants	598,638	479,992	453,481
Grants unexpended carried forward	-448,016	-292,830	-194,368
Interest Received	2,219	5,891	5,000
Membership Fees	9,200	16,020	11,588
Merchandise Sales	1,761	12,267	9,373
Nursery Sales	141,758	112,922	124,478
Other Income	8,500	18,332	4,036
Sponsorship	27,294	35,476	59,344
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>571,285</b>	<b>689,645</b>	<b>1,316,446</b>
Other income (incl. unexpended grants)	292,404	193,895	70,726
<b>Total Revenue &amp; Other Income</b>	<b>863,689</b>	<b>883,540</b>	<b>1,387,172</b>
Expenses	2022 \$	2021 \$	2020 \$
Admin & Advertising Expenses	74,208	63,480	25,761
Audit fees	3,725	0	1,450
Care Centre Expenses	47,564	38,998	32,293
Conferences & Seminar Costs	0	0	429
Depn & Amortisation	53,888	54,455	28,442
Fundraising Expense	7,196	10,567	5,026
Habitat Regen. Works	45,447	86,057	95,816
Koala Medicine & Care Costs	50,475	66,308	26,571
Minor Equipment Purchased	3,204	5,098	38,577
Motor Vehicle Expenses	10,555	13,372	14,033
Nursery	124,867	89,683	93,093
Project Studies, Surveys, Assessments	24,451	0	17
Superannuation	45,229	31,147	13,059
Wages	497,740	352,448	155,201
Other Expenses	5,850	32,447	67,168
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>994,399</b>	<b>844,060</b>	<b>596,936</b>
<b>Current year surplus attributable to members of the Association</b>	<b>-\$130,710</b>	<b>39,480</b>	<b>790,236</b>



# Koala Hospital

**The Friends of the Koala Hospital continues to tend to more sick and injured koalas than any other koala hospital on the East Coast of Australia.**

This year we had 321 koalas come into care (335 last year) and our release rate was 32% (up by 3% this year). It was a year like no other.

The weather decided to throw us some incredible curve balls. Water over roads prevented our staff and volunteers from accessing the Hospital and Koala Care Centre and we were operating with a skeleton crew. Our people did an incredible job despite the challenges.

The hospital hours of operation have changed during the past year. I had undertaken the majority of out of hours shifts, and staying open 24/7 with a small veterinary team proved unsustainable. I made the difficult decision to cut back my hours at Friends of the Koala and am now working 2 days a week.

My colleague Dr. Jodie Wakeman had been working for us two days a week and luckily was able to take on more hours. Dr. Jodie decided she would take on some of my responsibilities and she was promoted to a management role, and now we are running the hospital together. My role as Superintendent Veterinarian is to keep the hospital equipped with supplies and equipment, calculate the hospital budget, ensure all legal conditions are met, oversee the hospital upgrade and extension, and continue to carry out my research work. Dr. Jodie is overseeing the day-to-day hospital operations/vet staff management, communications with volunteers/staff, sourcing grants, and is managing FOK research projects. Her title is Veterinary Clinical and Research Director and we are all very happy to see her in this role.

Two new staff members have commenced work at the koala hospital. We welcomed a third vet to our team on a casual basis, Dr. Alex Brandon. Alex has broad veterinary experience and has devoted much of her time to working in emergency and critical care which is very helpful for our trauma cases. We were also able to create an assistant veterinary nurse role which was filled by Liz McLeod. Liz has a background in human nursing and is also one of our joey carers. She is being trained up and working closely together with our amazing senior veterinary nurse Marley Christian. We are grateful for our incredible and expanding IFAW-sponsored veterinary team.

Our current hospital hours are Monday-Friday 9-5 until we have enough staff to continue after hours work. The rescue hotline still operates 24/7 and volunteer rescuers attend to collect ill and injured koalas. Dr. Jodie has organised after hours help through the North Coast Emergency Vets in Bangalow who spent some time training at Friends of the Koala to feel comfortable enough to assist koalas out of hours. We are also receiving help from local clinics for emergency care and Currumbin Wildlife Hospital.

We are extremely grateful for all the help we have received from veterinary clinics and emergency and specialist hospitals, in NSW and interstate. We are incredibly fortunate to have such wonderful volunteers that dedicate their time to helping koalas. Thank you to everyone that makes our facility a wonderful place to work and enables us to continue saving koalas.



**Dr Jackie Reed,  
Superintendent Vet**





## Research

**Friends of the Koala is uniquely placed to make significant contributions in support of research projects and training programs being undertaken by other institutions. It is through collaboration of this type that we ultimately save the species.**

This year has been an exciting time for koala health research projects at Friends of the Koala as collaborative partnerships finally come to fruition.

Our main research focus in the hospital has centered on projects that will allow us to utilise Chlamydia vaccinations that are currently under development. Chlamydial disease impacts the health of koalas in our region greater than any other threat, with almost 50% of koalas admitted to the hospital suffering with Chlamydia pecorum infection – a bacteria that infects the eyes and urogenital tract of koalas. Of these patients, 80% are euthanased (usually at the time of admission) due to the severity of their disease. If it were possible to vaccinate enough koalas to effectively prevent transmission of Chlamydia, then there is the potential for hundreds of koalas to be saved each year.

Although there has been quite a lot of data collected on the Chlamydia vaccine's safety and efficacy, it is still unfortunately unregistered and is therefore only available through participation in research programs. There are two separate research groups developing Chlamydia vaccinations and we are partnering with both to ensure we are maximising our opportunities to prevent this disease in our koalas.

We have been working on finalising the details of two research projects with Professor Peter Timms and Dr Samuel Phillips from the University of Sunshine Coast. The first project involves vaccinating a wild population of 50 koalas in the Ruthven region. The second will allow us to vaccinate 100 koalas per year through our Koala Hospital. We are on track to start the first project in late October 2022.

Commencing in February 2022, we have been vaccinating some of our koalas with Dr Michael Pyne from Currumbin Wildlife Hospital as part of a research program he is undertaking with Professor Ken Beagley at the Queensland University of Technology. Through this

program we have been able to vaccinate and release 14 koalas until July 2022. To put this in perspective, that is almost a third of the koalas that are released from the Friends of the Koala Hospital each year. Being part of this vaccination program requires transportation of the koalas to Pottsville which is only possible thanks to the dedication of our volunteers who have made the three hour round trip almost 20 times!

In other research news, we are busily collecting samples for various koala research and training projects. Some examples include:

- University of Sunshine Coast – DNA swabs for Koala Chlamydia pecorum genomics
- University of Sydney - Blood and scat sample collection for Koala Retrovirus and other disease study
- University of Sydney - Tissue DNA samples for koala genomic studies
- Worldwide Fund for Nature – Scat DNA identification of koalas
- Taronga Zoo – Cadavers for veterinary koala education workshops

As we admit around 350 koalas through the hospital each year, Friends of the Koala is uniquely placed to make significant contributions in support of research projects and training programs being undertaken by other institutions. It is through collaboration of this type that we ultimately save the species.

Through research, our number one goal is to prevent disease and injury in koalas and thereby reduce the numbers of patients needing veterinary care at the hospital. I might then be out of a job but the koalas will be winning!



**Dr Jodie Wakeman**  
**Veterinary Clinical & Research**  
**Director**



# Koala Rescue, Rehabilitation and Release

**TOTALS**   Admitted: 321   Released: 104   In Care: 5   Died: 212   Gross Release 32%

Total Deaths (admitted or not): 268  
Total not admitted: 980

Deaths within 24hrs: 199  
Live: 924

Rehab Release 72%  
Dead: 56

LGA	Admitted	Outcome	Cause of Death	
Ballina	23	Released - 8 In Care - 0 Died - 15	Vehicle collision - 1 Disease Chlamydia - 9 Disease other - 4	Dog attack - 0 Other - 1
Byron	47	Released - 15 In Care - 0 Died - 32	Vehicle collision - 5 Disease Chlamydia - 23 Disease other - 4	Dog attack - 0 Other - 0
Clarence Valley	14	Released - 3 In Care - 1 Died - 10	Vehicle collision - 1 Disease Chlamydia - 5 Disease other - 2	Dog attack - 1 Other - 1
Kyogle	33	Released - 8 In Care - 0 Died - 25	Vehicle collision - 3 Disease Chlamydia - 11 Disease other - 5	Dog attack - 4 Other - 2
Lismore	166	Released - 51 In Care - 3 Died - 112	Vehicle collision - 13 Disease Chlamydia - 55 Disease other - 21	Dog attack - 10 Other - 13
Richmond Valley	16	Released - 5 In Care - 0 Died - 11	Vehicle collision - 0 Disease Chlamydia - 6 Disease other - 3	Dog attack - 0 Other - 2
Tweed	21	Released - 14 In Care - 0 Died - 7	Vehicle collision - 0 Disease Chlamydia - 3 Disease other - 3	Dog attack - 0 Other - 1
<b>Total</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>Released - 104 In Care - 5 Died - 212</b>	<b>Vehicle collision - 23 Disease Chlamydia - 112 Disease other - 42</b>	<b>Dog attack - 15 Other - 20</b>





**Our data set spans back to 1989 and allows us to understand trends and changes to koala populations and issues.**

Our data as an asset is probably underestimated by many people as the hands-on work with our gorgeous koalas is always more visible. Information is power is a phrase that I love. I would say however that the real power comes from being able to ask questions from the information we have.

Understanding where our koalas are, what condition they are in, and what challenges they face across the Northern Rivers, can only be achieved by asking lots of questions from a quality dataset. Our data set spans back to 1989 and allows us to understand trends and changes to koala populations and issues.

Data collection begins the moment a phone call is answered by one of our hotline operators and continues through a range of organisation clinical staff and volunteers until we have an outcome for the koala. Our data includes sightings that are reported to us building a picture of how our koalas are moving through the landscape and even giving some glimpses of long-term outcomes when tagged koalas are reported to us.

One use of our data involves our response to development applications which may impact koala colonies and their habitat. It is vital that we can stand up and say, 'we know about koalas in this area'. There is something undeniable about presenting numbers in black and white, and our data allows us to have this power. In the upcoming year I plan to expand my learning and use of mapping our data so that reports to our key stakeholders include a visual component.

I'm a very visual person and find that 'seeing' the koalas in the statistics I work with is powerful for understanding the picture of what is happening out there. In many sections of this report, you will find members referring to facts and figures that come directly out of our dataset. Saving koalas takes a village and requires action on many frontlines. I'm proud to be part of an organisation that works across the entire battle.

**Katrina Jeffery, Data Coordinator**



# Habitat Protection and Enhancement

## Environmental Restoration Projects

The past twelve months brought many victories followed by major setbacks as a result of destructive floods that devastated the region. The nine kilometres of riparian corridor that had been restored over three years with funding from the NSW Environmental Trust, were impacted to various degrees with some sites completely gone. Many of the koala food trees that had reached a height suitable for koala browsing were damaged or covered in flood debris, koalas completely disappeared from the riverbank, fate unknown. Months later koalas are beginning to reappear with many sightings at higher elevations and in the few mature trees on the floodplain.

Stage 2 (4 years) of the Environmental Trust funding with financial support from Lismore City Council, has enabled bush regeneration contractors to replant areas of deposition on the floodplain and continue to expand safe corridors on to the foothills. The Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) have assisted this work by supplying replacement trees and funds to assist with the clean-up of previously fenced and planted sites.

Thirteen new sites will have koala habitat restored to increase wildlife corridor connectivity and provide safe passage for koalas across the landscape.

### Key Achievements

- Six new landowner partnerships, total now at 20
- 600 endemic plants in the ground including 40% koala food trees
- Twelve monitoring points set up
- Five organisations working together to bring about change
- 13.66 kilometres of wildlife corridor enhanced
- 786 contractor hours of weed control and planting
- 416 volunteer coordinator hours
- \$219,432 funding received/committed for restoration work to repair & restore koala habitat

### Julie Reid, Environmental Project Coordinator



Project Coordinator Julie Reid coordinator with flood damaged sites in the background



Bush regeneration contractors planting replacement trees





## Community Nursery

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 72,100 trees with our overall project quota of 240,000 trees still being a fair way off.

The major flood events in the region in February/March this year meant the nursery was called upon to support many landholders who had suffered landslips and erosion of creek and riverbanks with the provision of plants suitable for riparian restoration.

In addition to the free trees distributed, the Nursery also sold 38,500 trees to Councils and private regeneration contractors. These sales generated valuable funds for FoK.

Our seedling propagation efforts were supported by tree donations from Forest Corp NSW and the NSW Department of Planning and Environment totalling 27,500 trees.

A \$10,000 grant this year provided by the Northern Rivers Community Foundation enabled us to cover many of our nursery production costs such as potting mix, fertiliser and pots.

### Mark Wilson, Nursery Manager



Mark Wilson pictured with Patrick Medley, FNPW



# Community Engagement & Education

After years of Covid and disasters our work in this sector had decreased substantially. Work is now underway to reverse this decline.

We did visit six schools and hosted educational presentations and Koala Detective Training. We attended Primex and they supported us by providing a free site. The event was highly successful for Friends of the Koala as we engaged with hundreds of people who were interested in saving koalas on their properties either through biodiversity agreements, planting more koala food trees or expanding their habitat. We sold 340 trees which are now going to go into the ground to help build and restore habitat with a further 5600 trees ordered by 19 landholders under the Bushfire Recovery Program. At Primex it was confirmed again that koalas and farmers can have a future together and that many farmers are very keen to save and preserve habitat on their farms.

A new sub committee has been created - CEE - Community Engagement and Education who will build on this valuable work.

## History Project

Many of you are aware of and inputted into The History Project that was filmed last year to celebrate 35 years of FOK. After unsuccessfully looking for funds outside the organisation Richard Atkin convinced the Management Committee the time was now to capture our legacy.

The initial idea was to interview as many people as we could who had contributed significantly to FOK over the years. Twenty four people were interviewed culminating in five short films that celebrate the passion of Our People who have contributed so much.

Not everyone interviewed or filmed are in the films as there were too many wonderful folk to include but we

plan to building on this asset through potentially producing more short films or within the pages of a tabletop book.

Catherine edited the footage into a 42min documentary that has been accepted into two film festivals. "Every Koala Counts" is an intimate exploration of the inspiring people who have taken a stand to this species - past and present.

Thank you to everyone involved particularly Invercauld House who hosted the film makers for four days and the production team headed up by Annie Benzie and Catherine Marciniak, Charlie Chan for the beautiful music and Lara van Raay for editing.

We will continue to look for places to screen the film in the hope we can reach a larger audience to showcase the important work of Friends of the Koala.

## **the Community Engagement & Education Subcommittee**





## Our People

**It is truly humbling to witness such a passionate group of people, showing up tirelessly for koalas and displaying incredible resilience in the midst of devastating natural disasters and beyond.**

The 2020 bushfires and 2022 floods heavily impacted the Northern Rivers area, and with that staff and volunteers at Friends of the Koala. Loss and destruction of homes and belongings, the devastation to our natural environment and catastrophic effect on wildlife caused grief and distress amongst our people and their loved ones.

During the 2022 floods, Friends of the Koala identified the need to create a more robust Mental Health and Wellbeing program to support our people during disaster situations and recovery efforts afterwards. An HR Subcommittee was formed and several initiatives have been implemented in the period March 2022 to June 2022, focused towards three "Our People Pillars":

- Appreciation & Acknowledgement
- Support & Development
- Mental Health & Wellbeing

In the midst of the floods, WWF-Australia, IFAW and the NSW Department of Planning and Environment immediately responded to our call for support. We would like to take this opportunity to thank our partners for the assistance provided.

Above all, we would like to acknowledge the absolutely outstanding efforts of our management committee, staff and volunteers. Amidst the uncertainty and chaos in the region, the Koala Hospital stayed open, koalas were cared for, leaf was harvested every single day, our nursery was looked after and our hotline and rescue team continued to operate 24/7.

In the aftermath, special thanks goes out to our Environmental Officer Julie Reid, and our plantation team coordinated by Heather Gillard. While we were lucky that our care facilities stayed dry, these teams have taken on the mammoth tasks of cleaning up and restoring impacted habitat and Koala Food Tree Plantations in the last few months.

It is clear that none of the work we do for koalas could be done without the amazing people in this organisation. It is truly humbling to witness such a passionate group of people, showing up tirelessly for koalas and displaying incredible resilience in the midst of devastating natural disasters and beyond.

A heartfelt thank you to every single person that contributed to our organisation this year, whether it was as a volunteer, member, partner organisation, donor, visitor or by spreading the message about koalas and the threats they face. We could not do this work without you.

### **the HR Subcommittee**



# Koala Success Stories

## **Pala the Koala**

I came to Friends of the Koala in November 2021 from Larnook after I insisted on being rescued by an unwary farmer. The property owner was walking his dog in the middle of a treeless paddock minding his own business. When I spotted him, I ran up to him and straight up his leg... needless to say, the man was VERY surprised to see me!

The fate of my mother is a mystery as she was never found. It was clear that whatever had happened though must have been sudden as I was in excellent health when presented to the Friends of the Koala Hospital for assessment. No injuries were found on examination, and I only needed some subcutaneous fluids to treat mild dehydration.

At the time, I was a back young joey, estimated to be about 9 months old and would still have needed my mother's care in the wild. Liz became my new human mum for a few weeks along with "Penguin" my comfort teddy.

I was very active in homecare and couldn't wait to join the crew in Koala Kindy. I might have been the youngest, but I wasn't going to be bossed around... it wasn't long before I became the leader of the pack. Gulliver, Keogh, Magnus were happy enough to let me have the high spot and the freshest leaf! I weaned myself off my milk supplements quite quickly as I preferred the fresh leaf anyway – forest red, in particular.

Everyone could recognise me by my cute distinctive nose shape and animated personality. There is no doubt that I will be an Alpha male in good time, but for now, I still have quite a lot of growing and learning to do.

My fellow joeys and I have all been vaccinated against chlamydia and are lucky to have some protection against this disease before we head out to the big wide world.

I can't wait for all the adventures I will have in the future.

There can only ever be one "Pala the Koala" and while they wish me the best of luck, I will be greatly missed by everyone at Friends of the Koala.

## **Gulliver**

A 14-month-old male koala, named Gulliver, was rescued amid the torrential downpours in Tregeagle in the NSW Northern Rivers region on February 28.

The joey was found walking on the ground alone, calling for his mum, who sadly couldn't be found. Gulliver evaded capture while he was on the ground forcing Friends of the Koala rescuers to set a trap to rescue him before more torrential rain fell.

Once the trap was set, Gulliver began climbing down the tree and was safely captured so he could be taken to the Koala Hospital. Because of his young age, Gulliver was put into home care with an experienced koala carer.

Although Gulliver wasn't suffering from any underlying health issues, he wasn't out of the woods yet. As he was only a joey, he was to be in care at koala kindy until he was old enough to be released back out to the wild.

Gulliver was very lucky that he was rescued when he was – with floodwaters rising, he could have ended up in a far worse situation.





# Our Supporters

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



**Southern Cross University**



## Principal Partners



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