

Koala Annual Report - May 2016

Myall Koala & Environment Group



Kingfisher Avenue

In just the last week, after 18 months of negotiation with Great Lakes Council, the solar-powered, speed-activated koala sign was installed at the foot of the Singing Bridge. A major factor in this project going ahead was our Group's \$5,000 contribution towards the cost. The sign lights up when a vehicle exceeding the 50KPH speed limit approaches. The sign collects information about the speed of each passing vehicle as well as the date and time. This information can be downloaded by the sign manufacturer using a mobile phone. We are currently negotiating with Council to obtain this data so that we can see if the sign is actually slowing traffic down from the average 64.8KPH it was last year.

In addition, we are continuing to press Council to implement other measures to slow traffic on the stretch of Kingfisher Avenue between the bridge and Ibis Avenue where four koalas have been killed in that past two years. We would like to see painting and koala images on the roadway to highlight that this is a koala zone. We would also like to see narrowing of the roadway, preferably with a reduction in the speed limit, or traffic calming measures, possibly similar to the "pinch points" recently installed on Marine Drive in Tea Gardens which seem to have slowed traffic quite well.

All these projects cost money and we know Council is always short of funds. The Group currently relies on membership fees and donations as well as the generosity of the community for funds. To contribute towards future projects, we will have to creatively look at additional avenues to achieve our objectives.

Koala Sightings

The number of koala sighting reports we have received this year is significantly lower than last year (97 down from 161). In fact, sightings do vary quite a bit from year to year. For example, the numbers over the past five years are 97, 161, 209, 218, and 147. Some of this may be due to koalas moving in and out of town via the corridors to the National Park, Monkey Jacket and Pindimar. Another possibility is the loss of habitat due the significant removal of koala food trees in Hawks Nest following the introduction of the Rural Fire Service's 10/50 Rule. It may also be that fewer people are telling us about their koala experiences by calling the Koala Sightings Hotline (4997 0878) – the percentage of calls to the hotline were down from 70% to 65% this year. However, the trend may indicate a greater concern that permanent koala numbers are actually declining. For example, we only had two sightings of mothers with babies this year whereas there have been up to five in previous years.

The Koala Group will need to be more proactive with activities to improve our local environment, particularly koala habitat. In particular, we need to have a person to take over the local and state government lobbying role that Kevin Haskew has carried out with

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great skill over many years. We would welcome with open arms any person who has a knowledge of local and state planning policies and can concisely articulate in writing, submissions in support of or in opposition to matters that affect our local, or sometimes wider, environment.

General

There was only the need for one koala rescue this year - the young male Jye fighting and falling from a tree in December. Fortunately a happy ending with him being returned to Hawks Nest after 5 days in care.

Don't forget, please report you koala sightings on our Hotline answering machine (4997 0878). Help for sick or injured wildlife can be obtained on 0418 628 483 (0418 NATIVE).

Gail & Ian Morphett (4997 1550)