

Koala Annual Report - May 2017

Myall Koala & Environment Group



Kingfisher Avenue

The past year has been a roller coaster ride of activities related to trying to protect our koalas on Kingfisher Avenue. As we have reported previously, the stretch of the road between Ibis Avenue and the bridge is an area where our koalas periodically cross the road to move between the township and the national park. Sadly, this has resulted in numerous deaths of koalas hit by cars here. Just this year over New Year, Princess (one of our better known koalas) TWICE decided to stroll down the middle of the road, stopping traffic and providing photo ops for many holidaymakers. .

In May last year, a radar-activated speed sign was installed at the foot of the Singing Bridge in an endeavour to slow traffic to the speed limit. Unfortunately, speed checking has shown that traffic continues to average speeds above the speed limit. Also, just before Easter the sign stopped working. It was assessed that the rechargeable battery had failed but replacing it didn't fix the problem. We are now waiting on the manufacturers to come and fix the problem. On the other hand, the Local Traffic Committee instituted a public awareness program over the Easter school holidays by installing a larger radar-activated sign facing east on Kingfisher Avenue.

In the meantime we have been pressing Council and Roads and Maritime Services to introduce additional traffic calming measures to try to keep vehicles at or below the speed limit. There are possibilities of additional signage and pavement markings.

Koala Sightings

People frequently say to us that they have "lived here for years and never seen a koala". Most of you would probably be VERY surprised how many koalas are actually seen around our towns. Since 1989 The Koala Group has been recording reports to us from the community, often on our Koala Sightings Hotline (4997 0878). Over the intervening years we have received more than 5000 koala sighting reports in Hawks Nest and Tea Gardens!

It has always been our desire to plot these sightings onto a map of the area so that we can graphically display the distribution of koalas and their frequency of visiting specific locations and possibly even which food trees they visit. The labour intensive work to map sighting locations from so many records has always been just too much for our small volunteer Group. However, this year we discovered a website that enabled us to supply thousands of addresses and it returned GPS co-ordinates of those locations. It wasn't perfect and many of our addresses needed work but finally we managed to get GPS co-

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ordinates for 3,500 sightings. These sighting records have now been uploaded to the Department of Environment and Heritage's Bionet Atlas database which means they will be stored in perpetuity as a record of the koala population in our towns. In addition, Mat Bell, Senior Ecologist at MidCoast Council is arranging for the data to be analysed and mapped in various ways so that the information can be used to determine koala activity in the Myall Coast area.

To help us to continue to understand local koala movements, PLEASE report every sighting on our Hotline answering machine at 4997 0878.

Gail & Ian Morphett (4997 1550)