

SAVE

THE KOALA



KOALA CAMPAIGN GUIDELINES



**Australians
for Animals**

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KOALAS - HOW TO HELP GUIDELINES.

This fact sheet has been put together by Australians for Animals Inc. to help individuals and communities take action to help save koalas. These guidelines include rescues, local government action, state and federal action, media and information on petitions. Importantly emotional stress is also covered!

The charity has a long history of campaigns for koalas, the most successful resulting in the koala being listed as Threatened under the US Endangered Species Act.

Our Co ordinator was Secretary of the Sun Herald Koala Fund for many years writing regular columns and making extensive field trips to koala regions.

PEOPLE POWER.

Remember we're fighting for the defenceless. Koalas and all our wildlife are under major threats of extinction because of governments' failure to protect habitat.

The most important foundation of ensuring future survival of Koalas is legal protection of habitat. Every problem flows from this failure to legislate.

Australia is a developers' paradise, with the red carpet laid out in some of our most precious and irreplaceable environmental regions.

There's no doubt that the push for a Big Australia is the driver of the ongoing loss of habitat, of protection of species, the pollution of our rivers and the exclusivity of the courts.

The current rate of migration is unsustainable. Australia is an ancient continent with a very limited carrying capacity. Unfortunately you will find that most major conservation organisations and the Greens ALL support increased migration levels.

The argument used by supporters of Big Australia is that the lack of infrastructure is the problem, refusing to deal with the impacts on the environment.

The long term plan is to cify the east coast from Coffs Harbour to the Sunshine Coast, a recipe for extinction for koalas coastal forests and the creatures dependent on these forest ecosystems.

Famous American anthropologist Margaret Mead said:

'Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.'

Let's start with the basics.

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RESCUES.

If you live near a koala colony, and you drive roads where koalas may be found injured, obviously sick or stranded, these are the steps you need to take.

- Always have a plastic clothes basket in the car readily available as this is the easiest way to confine a koala until help arrives.
- Make sure you put something heavy on top of the basket so koala doesn't escape.
- Keep any dogs well away from koala.
- If there's no help available and you need to pick up the koala, remember to always pick them up from the back not the front as they have sharp claws which can hurt.
- Have a rug, old blanket or something you can use to lift up injured koala.
- Make sure you have the phone numbers of nearby vets, koala hospitals or sanctuaries in your smart phone and house.
- Remember that koalas are easily stressed so try to be calm.
- If a koala is dead, check the pouch to make sure there's no joey. Do not try to remove joey without experienced koala carer or vet.
- Call the nearest vet etc and let them know you're bringing in a sick or injured koala.
- If it's night time and no one is available, keep the koala enclosed in the clothes basket in dark cool area until you can get emergency help. Soft mat please.
- Keep a bottle of water and bowl handy.
- If a koala is seen on the ground, it's usually sick.
- Chlamydia is rampant in wild koala populations as a result of stress caused by loss of home ranges.
- Chlamydia presents as conjunctivitis, blindness, painful urinary tract infections.
- Sick koalas need to be taken urgently to koala hospitals or vets.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS WHERE DESTRUCTION OR IMPENDING DESTRUCTION OF HABITAT IS ABOUT TO HAPPEN.

- Get the details and relevant number of the development application, name of developer, lot numbers, what's planned for the area under application, whether the development has been approved, if so when.
- Find out if the community has been notified of the development application and request details of dates of any publication and names of publications.
- Take photos of koalas in trees likely to be impacted.
- Lobby any friendly Councillor and unfriendly, lodge objections in writing.
- Contact the Environmental Defenders Office in Brisbane or Sydney.
- If you have a friendly local solicitor, go see him/her. Often the first meeting is free.
- Keep a daily diary of events, phone calls, newspaper articles.
- Remember any lawyer needs to be properly briefed otherwise it's a waste of time.
- This means providing him/her with the development details and a time line.
- Send protest emails in Queensland directly to the Premier at: thepremier@premiers.qld.gov.au
- In NSW, send protest emails directly to the NSW Premier at:
Gladys.Berejiklian@parliament.nsw.gov.au
- It's really important that your protests go direct to both Premiers as
- Local Government and relevant Ministers ignore the public.
- Contact your local media, write letters to your local papers,
- If a Queensland Council is involved, complain that Council is ignoring the Koala Expert Panel's second recommendation to protect koala habitat.
- If the targeted koala colony is a reasonable size, the developer should refer the project to the Federal Government under the Koala Referral Guidelines.
- Get footage of any destruction as it takes place or the war zone which remains.
- It's helpful if you have some knowledge of the history of koalas in your areas.
- Search wildlife data bases usually held by environmental departments for koala records.
- Search internet to see if any studies of koalas have been undertaken in the Local government area.
- Remember most koalas are faithful to their home ranges and translocation is rarely successful.
- Offsets are also usually unacceptable, either already owned public land or areas which are useless for koalas.

POLITICAL ACTION.

- Unfortunately, petitions are likely to end up in the bin and only likely to be useful at the local community level.
- In NSW, a petition to Parliament needs 10,000 signatures for a discussion in the House. There's a proper form available: <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/la/petitions/Pages/About-petitions.aspx>.
- Set up a phone or email tree so that everyone involved in the campaign can be readily contacted.
- Have a contact list with emails, phone numbers, websites, Facebook, Instagram details of Councillors, relevant Ministers, media, vets, koala hospitals.
- Find out the names and contact details of your local Members of State and Federal Parliament as well as Senators or Upper House Members in your electorate.
- Contact their offices and let them know there's strong community opposition to any planned destruction.
- Make appointments to see your local MP. Go to his/her office and DEMAND to see him/her.
- Phone numbers and emails can be found on the net – search Queensland, NSW and Federal Parliament for contact details.
- Many politicians these days will only take complaints from their electorates so contacting your local MP is really important.
- As a constituent, you can firmly request he/she comes to the site of destruction to see for themselves.
- Call radio stations.
- Fund advertisements in local, regional papers
- Have BBQs, parties, picnics, to raise funds. Great way to get to know your neighbours and community.
- Raise funds !
- Find out the names and addresses of corporations which have or will likely be given approval to destroy koala habitat.
- Organise protests outside their offices.
- Make appointments to see their Managing Directors.
- Contact any Aboriginal Land Council in the area and see if they oppose or support the project. If they oppose, ask them to make strong protests.
- Do not assume that because your member of parliament is a Green that there will necessarily be support for the campaign if it involves urbanisation. The party supports increased immigration and claims lack of infrastructure is the major issue. The environment is not their primary focus.
- Consider voting for independent political parties (who are not funded by the majors) with strong animal protection policies such as Animal Justice, Sustainable Australia.

POLITICAL ISSUES.

IN NSW, the most urgent priority is to repeal the Biodiversity Conservation Act and the Local Land Amendment Act. Legislation must be brought in that protects habitat, and provides for public interest legal challenges.

In NSW and Queensland, emergency koala summits are needed to address the crises facing koalas and their exponential loss of habitat.

In Queensland, the legislation to protect koalas is so weak as to be useless. The Partners in Government Agreement which gives virtual autonomy to Local government needs to be repealed. This Agreement is a disaster for koalas and all wildlife.

In Queensland and NSW, developers are able to SELF REFER to the Federal EPBC Referral Guidelines, Council has no mandatory role. So developers can not only fail to refer if they have significant koala numbers but they can also employ consultants who will ensure the number of koalas is insignificant and there's no government department who will check the findings. Nor will most developers allow independent surveys on site.

Do not expect much help from Ministers or their staff. Mainstream media and local media if Murdoch owned are likely to quarantine any press releases and letters opposing developments.

Raising funds can help pay for advertisements on radio, local newspapers (who can't refuse).

Free online polls are available. Search engines provide links.

Organise lists of media, politicians, celebs, sports people, local celebs, with names, emails, phone numbers.

Do your best to organise a small group of people willing to take responsibilities for organising media, demonstrations, legal and lobbying visits, photographs, videos, fund raising.

It's a good idea to organise a lobbying trip to the relevant State Parliament. Make appointments with relevant politicians (you may only get to see staffers).

If you have a sympathetic MP, MLC, in your electorate, ask them to put up urgency motions or questions to relevant Ministers in Parliament.



FEDERAL ISSUES.

The Environmental Protection & Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC) has Koala Referral Guidelines. <http://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/dc2ae592-ff25-4e2c-ada3-843e4dea1dae/files/koala-referral-guidelines.pdf>

Whilst these guidelines are not mandatory, developers who have koalas on their project site are obliged to refer the development to the Federal government. The guidelines provide a score card and if the colony is scored at a certain level, the development must be assessed by the Federal Government for approval.

Federal obligations are complex. Projects which are referred to the Federal government are uploaded to the EPBC Referral website. You will need the project's Federal referral number.

<http://epbcnotices.environment.gov.au/publicnoticesreferrals/>

Download all relevant documents, note when the invitation for public comment closes and make sure you get a submission in on time.

CONSERVATION ORGANISATIONS.

- Support your local community conservation groups and koala care organisations as a priority.
- If you donate to major conservation organisations, write and ask them to let you know specifically what they are doing to protect koalas.
- Request that they send representatives to your area to help the community oppose the development(s)
- Ask for funds to help your campaign and legal expenses.

LEGAL HELP.

Unfortunately, there's no free legal advice these days. The Environmental Defenders Offices now ask for funds to do advices and although some barristers will act on a pro bono

(free) basis, there's court filing costs, costs for experts, and the risk of the developers demanding huge amounts of dollars to be set aside by you, the plaintiff to cover costs of economic loss in the event of losing any lawsuit.

- <https://www.edoqld.org.au>
- <https://www.edonsw.org.au>

PROTECTING YOURSELVES

If it looks like a lengthy battle, registering as a not for profit organisation will protect individuals from being sued, or any legal threats. It's not expensive and can be withdrawn when the campaign is over.

- In Queensland go to: <https://www.qld.gov.au/community/community-organisations-volunteering/setting-up-charity-ngo>
- In NSW go to: <https://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/associations-and-co-operatives/associations/starting-an-association>

In many respects, its useful not only legally but also politically to have a registered non profit organisation.

PROTEST DEMONSTRATIONS.

Remember that protests have been virtually declared illegal in NSW –

- <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-06-26/new-protest-regulations-labelled-attack-on-democracy/9905676>
- Queensland protest legislation can be found here. <https://www.lawbuddy.com.au/protest-laws-qld/>

However, there's no law against people praying, or cars accidentally breaking down in inconvenient places. Use your imagination !

SOCIAL MEDIA

Australians for Animals Inc authors the Koala Crisis Facebook page with articles on current campaigns, legal and political issues, latest scientific research, and scandal.

Koala_crisis at Instagram is also a vehicle

Social media can only be effective if people take action and send emails, call politicians offices, call the media, and fund campaigns. Many hits which make suggestions about who to contact make work and can be done by the people making the suggestions.

Funding campaigns is critically important but make sure that it's done through a registered charity, or incorporated association if you're seeking funds publicly. Some conservation groups will set up specific funding arrangements for community campaigns.

Many groups fighting for koalas have websites and Facebook pages. Keep a look out for your local conservation organisation's pages.

MEDIA

Press releases should be no longer than one page well set out with bullet points or paragraphs. Publish on social media, websites, Contact details are essential.

Make sure you have fax and emails for all relevant media. Don't insult.

EMOTIONAL COST.

All of us who fight tooth and nail to save koalas and other wildlife feel disempowered by the appalling loss of democratic rights and justice. It's a very tough battle taking on Councils, developers and governments.

We need to respect each other, to weed out ego and control freaks, to identify the talents of those involved and use these talents to the best advantage. Regular meetings whether by phone, skype, conference calls, and BBQ'S to raise funds and ensure the community knows each other all help. There's strength in numbers and emotional support as well.

If you're feeling very stressed or depressed, its time to bail out for a little while, take care of yourself and renew your strength. Meditation helps, group support and funny movies.

KOALA HOSPITAL CONTACTS

Currumbin Wildlife Hospital: 07 5534 0813

RSPCA Brisbane Wildlife Hospital:

1300 264 625 or 1 300 ANIMAL

Australia Zoo Rescue Unit: 1300 369 652

Return to the Wild – Darling Downs: 0427 969860

Port Macquarie Koala Hospital – 24 hour rescue:

02 65841522

Friends of Koala, Lismore: 02 6622 1233

WIRES: 1300 094 737

Website link with regional area contacts:

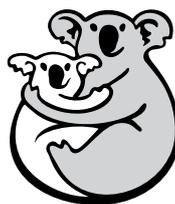
<https://www.wires.org.au/rescue/regional-branch-contact>

Wildcare Queensland:

<https://wildcare.org.au/>

Coast to Coast Animal Friends:

<http://coasttocoastanimalfriends.org.au>.



**Australians
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This publication is the work of Australians for Animals Inc. The charity is making this guide freely available but we appreciate any donations to assist us in our work to ensure Koalas survive into the future.

Contact Australians for Animals Inc: at Koala Crisis Facebook, Instagram koala_crisis, Twitter : @koalacrisis. Email: info@australiansforanimals.org.au

PO Box 414, Brunswick Heads. NSW 2483

Donate to: <http://www.givenow/koalacrisis>