



Australians for Animals

PROTECT • NURTURE • RESTORE

Reg. Charity No. CFN12644

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FEBRUARY 2019 NEWSLETTER



HECTIC YEAR AHEAD

The battle to save our wildlife is well and truly happening. This ancient continent has never experienced anything like the onslaught which is happening under our horrified eyes.

A million fish dead in the Lower Darling; kangaroos, emus, sheep trapped in the bog which was once a healthy river; NSW forests trashed with old growth and hi koala use areas targeted, our river systems are in a dreadful state and wildlife are dying from drought, development and total political disregard.

Climate change scientists have constantly predicted that Australia would be one of the worst affected countries. The

impacts are obvious with record temperatures, drought and bushfires turning this ancient land into a desert.

A growing number of Australians are becoming deeply concerned by the ongoing refusal of state and federal governments to act.

Many feel powerless as mainstream media focuses on almost any subject as long as its not the massive irreparable damage to our wildlife and environment.



But with elections coming up in NSW and Federally, everyone has a unique chance to change the paradigm and to do what we can to force environmental

protection.

In spite of all the depressing news, AFA has a few goodies to share. We hope the news will lift your spirits.

THE GOOD NEWS

AFA commissioned a national poll by IPSOS on koalas with one critical question, "Do you support the urgent introduction of legislation to protect Koala habitat in NSW and Queensland?"

A whopping 80% support the urgent introduction of legislation to protect habitat !! This is an amazing response and remember it's a national poll.

AFA will be sending out a press release to metro and regional media and we'll see how many mainstream media journalists pick up the story. There's significant censoring of major environmental issues, particularly by the Murdoch media which owns most of Australia's newspapers.

Our next step is to put together TV ads to be shown before the March NSW state elections.

Thanks to a very generous donor, the charity will be running two weeks of TV ads focused on the appalling treatment of koalas, the rapidly increasing loss of habitat to developers and the NSW forestry industry and the urgent need to legislate for habitat protection.

**AFA - IPSOS
NATIONAL POLL**

80%

**SUPPORT URGENT
LEGISLATION**

The ads will target three critical Northern NSW seats in the March election. If Nationals gain these seats, the north coast environment together with koalas and other wildlife species will be lost. The TV ads do not target or support any political party but ask viewers to ensure their vote goes to a party that intends to legislate

for habitat protection.

AFA is really honoured that Mickey Ryan, Chairman of the Bundjalung Elders Council agreed to front the ad and do the voice over.

Mickey and our co-ordinator have spent a fair amount of time together at the site of the Ballina Pacific Highway upgrade, crying on each other's shoulders witnessing the dreadful damage to koala habitat trees, koalas and all the forest dependent wildlife.

The once beautiful forest is a moonscape. In spite of the koala population in Ballina Shire being designated a nationally significant population, the NSW government decided to ram the highway through the habitat, resulting in a catastrophic decline in koala numbers. All entirely the responsibility of the Nationals, led by National Minister for Roads, Melinda Pavey.

MORE GOOD NEWS

Our Co ordinator has been invited to give evidence at a hearing by the Senate Committee Inquiry into Faunal Extinction at the beginning of February.

This is a rare and important opportunity to say it plain and simple.

Australia is losing its precious irreplaceable unique wildlife as a direct result of state and federal government policies of extinction.

AFA has gathered a mountain of research through Freedom of Information requests, particularly in Queensland where the government has done its best to hide any information on the koala slaughter.

The documents we've obtained demonstrate shocking cruelty to koalas, particularly at Coomera on the Gold Coast where 180 plus koalas were translocated to areas some 40 km away to facilitate 30 developments.

The Queensland departmental wildlife returns demonstrate that only 2 koalas survived. Many were torn apart by dogs, some were killed on roads as they tried to get back to their home range. Many died of stress, no doubt as a result of being constantly captured, anaesthetised, blood samples taken as well as other invasive tests. Like all Australian wildlife, koalas are particularly sensitive to stress.

BLACK SWAN LAKE

AFA is not endowed with huge resources, the charity has always been a grass roots organisation reliant on the generosity of our supporters. Our focus for the past two years has been almost entirely on the plight of koalas.

But when AFA became aware of what was happening to Black Swan Lake at Bundall on the Gold Coast, we had to act. The Gold Coast City Council has leased a tranquil 2.75 h.a freshwater lake, home to 65 species of birds including magnificent Black Swans to the nearby Aquis Turf Club for a \$1 a year in perpetuity.

The club wanted to turn the lake into a car park to facilitate the Magic Millions races and sales. There's pretty good evidence that the long term plan is to build a resort and apartment complex on the filled in lake, bringing major Hong Kong racing enthusiasts to the Magic Millions.

Aquis Turf Club is owned by a Chinese billionaire. Its becoming very clear that Chinese interests are responsible for massive environmental damage being waged in Australia and the Turf Club is a prime example.

Starting in November, the breeding season for water birds, the Club employed contractors to begin filling the lake. Thousands and thousands of tonnes of dirt were dumped into the water.

AFA has visited the site on a number of occasions. Our Co ordinator watched in horror as unmarked double bogey trucks thundered down the lane to the lake dumping dirt every two minutes.

To make matters even more perilous for the wildlife, an eight

foot high fence was erected around the entire lake, with mesh below the fence so that water dragons and turtles couldn't escape.

Many birds had hatchlings. Scientists AFA consulted told us emphatically that Mama birds will not leave their hatchlings ensuring a dreadful outcome for these poor creatures.

The massive fill dumped in the lake smothered eels, native fish and any aquatic creatures that struggled to survive.

MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE FAILURES

No proper monitoring was being undertaken by the Council, none of the conditions of approval under the Fauna Management plan were being met. Although translocation was included in one of the conditions of approval, no translocations took place and in any event there was no suitable place to translocate any species to.

Another condition required the fill to be staged, giving animals a chance to adjust to new conditions. Instead, day after day, literally every two minutes double bogey trucks dumped fill driven into the lake by bulldozers with no relief of the noise and stress except on Sundays.



THOSE THAT TURN THEIR BACKS

In the process of taking this step, AFA was truly shocked by the refusal of not only major environmental organisations to step up but mainstream media refused to cover the destruction as well.

Let's not forget the RSPCA Queensland with an inspector on the Gold Coast. In spite of repeated phone calls, emails to the organisation from AFA, the rigid un-moving response to our calls and calls from the community was the same.

"Unless someone actually witnesses and documents a worker deliberately harming an animal, there's nothing we can do."

AFA has taken part in demonstrations outside Gold Coast City Council chambers. The charity has donated funds to the legal appeal as it was very clear that many breaches of consent conditions were in plain sight and a lawsuit had to challenge the violations.

Because no major environmental organisations were prepared to lift a finger to help save the lake, AFA decided to volunteer Face Book Koala Crisis page to campaign to Save the Black Swan Lake so as to raise as much awareness throughout Australia and overseas.

As our Koala Crisis page gets a huge amounts of hits, ranging from 20,000-60,000 a week, we knew that we could get the word out and help raise funds for a lawsuit to stop the terrible destruction.



**PLEASE
HELP SAVE THE
KOALAS**

AFA asked if the RSPCA would make a request to the Council and Turf Club to be allowed on site to inspect the impacts on wildlife. No, the RSPCA couldn't do that.

The best that AFA and the community could get was a weak press release and the ongoing excuse that "legislation prohibited RSPCA from doing anything other than acting on deliberate cruelty."

How drowning, smothering creatures and placing birds with young in a virtual jail whilst their home is covered in dirt, noise, and loss of habitat is not a cruel act is hard to understand.

AFA is not impressed with any RSPCA these days. Their reluctance to stand up and be counted in situations such as Black Swan Lake is really outrageous and inexcusable. If organisations like this won't speak out against these kinds of travesties, who will??

Dozens and dozens of requests were sent to celebs, sporting heroes, well known international environmental leaders such as David Suzuki, no one responded.

The only organisations that helped have been the Animal Justice Party and the Queensland Coast to Coast Animal Friends. Both organisations helped organise demonstrations at the lake.

The Gold Coast City Council is responsible for the deaths of 180 plus translocated koalas. Council has ignored public protests, ignored monitoring conditions of consent, failed in its financial duty to ratepayers by leasing the lake for \$1.



Complaints have been sent to the Crime & Corruption Commission in Queensland as if ever there was a Council that needs to be investigated, Gold Coast is top of the charts.

QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT - ON THE NOSE

In the process of trying to help save the lake and the exquisite bird life, our Co ordinator called and emailed the principal advisor to the Minister for Environment, almost on a daily basis.

It soon became pretty clear to AFA and the Gold Coast community that the only action the Queensland government is

prepared to take is the political merry-go round.

Callers and emails to the Premier's office were told to contact the Minister for Environment who in turn told callers to contact the Minister for Local Government & Racing (a wonderful conflict of interests given that the Turf club operates the Magic Millions races).

The foundation of this bad situation is an agreement known as Partners in Government which was signed off initially by Campbell Newman when he was Premier and re-affirmed by the current Queensland Premier, Annastacia Palaszczuk.

The agreement virtually gives Local Government complete autonomy to do what they like, destroy wildlife, habitat, corridors, wipe out

forests – all under the control of Local Councils.

And no legal challenges. No wonder Queensland is a disaster zone.

The Premier's response to the October meeting AFA had with her was to set up a new talk fest, the Koala Advisory Council, headed by Queensland's RSPCA and dominated by zoos and developers.

Meantime, the remaining koalas at Coomera are likely to be wiped out by ongoing development given the green light by government and the Federal Minister for Environment, ex mining company lawyer.

SAVE THE KOALA

CAMPAIGN GUIDELINES



AFA has put together a booklet for communities fighting to save koala habitat which is free on line.

The booklet is full of useful information including rescue guidelines, hospital contacts, media and political guidelines. The booklet is free of charge.

GET YOURS HERE:

<http://bit.ly/koalarescue>



PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY

You can donate to Australians for Animals through GiveNow's secure online server or please send your donations to:

**AUSTRALIANS FOR ANIMALS
PO BOX 414
BRUNSWICK HEADS 2483**



www.givenow.com.au/koalacrisis

MENINDEE LOWER DARLING RIVER SCANDAL WHAT THE MEDIA WON'T PUBLISH.

Cubbie Station is the largest irrigation business in the Southern Hemisphere - its a cotton growing empire. Its irrigation channels are bigger than the River itself.

Cubbie amalgamated 12 floodplain properties. Its water storage dams stretch for more than 28 kilometres along the Culgoa River. The Culgoa is a tributary of our Darling River.

Our Darling River is being starved of the one thing it needs to

function as a healthy river - WATER.

Cubbie is managed by the Lempriere Group, on behalf of CS Agriculture, a joint venture between Lempriere and Shandong Ruyi, a textile manufacturer owned by investors from China and Japan.



Cubbie Station, west of Dirranband.
Picture: Lyndon Mechelsen

SUPPORT AFA BY BUYING KOALA MERCHANDISE



A3 POSTERS, KOALA KEYRING
KOALA TOTE BAG:
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donate your total and check "Leave a message..." with the items you'd like us to send.



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CAMPBELLTOWN KOALAS MUST BE PROTECTED

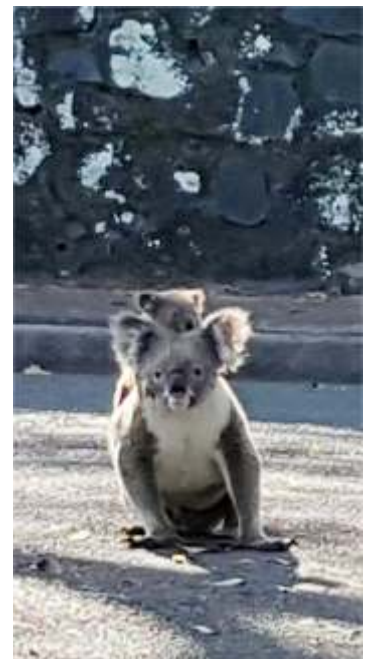
Last but not least, AFA is doing everything in our power to help the dedicated community folk at Campbelltown and Appin save this important koala colony.

Just to give you an idea of the green light given to developers, try this. Campbelltown Council is considering the Development Application by LendLease who want to build 1700 residential lots in prime koala habitat.

The Council refuses to put the DA online so there's no possibility of environmental organisations outside the immediate area accessing the relevant documents. The only place anyone can see actual docs is at Council chambers or the local library.

Lendlease allegedly refused to allow the DA to be put on line. So Council just does as its told. Then an even more extraordinary event. Federal Government's Minister for Environment approved the DA in mid January in spite of the fact the Campbelltown Council has not made any approval. In fact submissions don't close until January 29.

This is highly irregular. All sorts of dirty business are happening in



the rush to approve as many destructive projects before certain election defeat.

Many grateful thanks to you all who have made it possible for AFA to be a powerful voice for animals. Please help keep us happening!

**For the Animals,
Sue**