



# Gum Tips

Quarterly Newsletter of the  
Koala Hospital Port Macquarie

June  
2009



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# Happy Birthday Girl!

Birthday Girl has earned her “star billing” as front page news again. This grand old female koala has now clocked up just on 22 years of living, which is a phenomenal feat for any koala. On average most wild female koalas make it to around 15-18 years, with wild male koalas reaching only 10-14 years.

We can confidently predict her age, due to the fact her first admission to the Koala Hospital was way back in February 1990 when, as a young three year old (based on weight and skeletal measurements), Birthday Girl was found sitting on the side of a busy main road. Why she was



*22-year-old matriarch*

there, we do not know. Why she was called Birthday Girl is also a mystery lost in the gum leaves. Nonetheless, Birthday Girl presides over Yard 9, bossing about any koala who dares to sit on her gunyah, or eat her leaf, or sit in her favourite tree fork.

For a very, very old koala, she is holding remarkably good weight and body condition, and has a superb appetite for both choice leaf and her daily feed of formula. Birthday Girl is also quiet, gentle and very photogenic.

More mature readers may sympathise with Birthday Girl’s medical condition, which includes



an advanced case of arthritis of the hip joints. Consequently, Birthday Girl doesn't move so well these days, but nonetheless she still manages to climb trees every so often (although not too high), much to the amazement of staff. We all still laugh at her "escape" out of the yard about 18 months ago in search of a "bit of love" with Roto Randy, the local alpha male (and the same alpha male we suspect fathered Bonny Fire's last joey, little Blaze). She ended up stuck 30 metres up the tree and had to be rescued by a tree climber (see the March 2008 edition of *Gum Tips* at <http://www.koalahospital.org.au/gumtips/>).

Birthday Girl is part of the Sydney University research study into various medications, including the NSAID drug (anti-inflammatory) that she receives daily. This drug keeps her pain level under control and allows her the freedom of movement she needs. Birthday Girl contributes blood samples

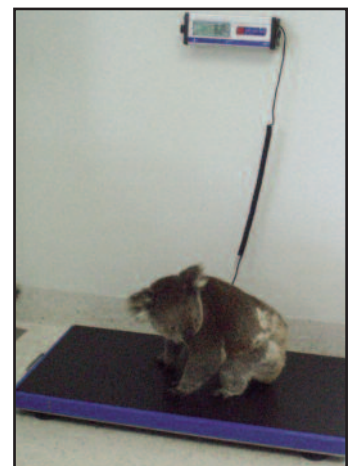
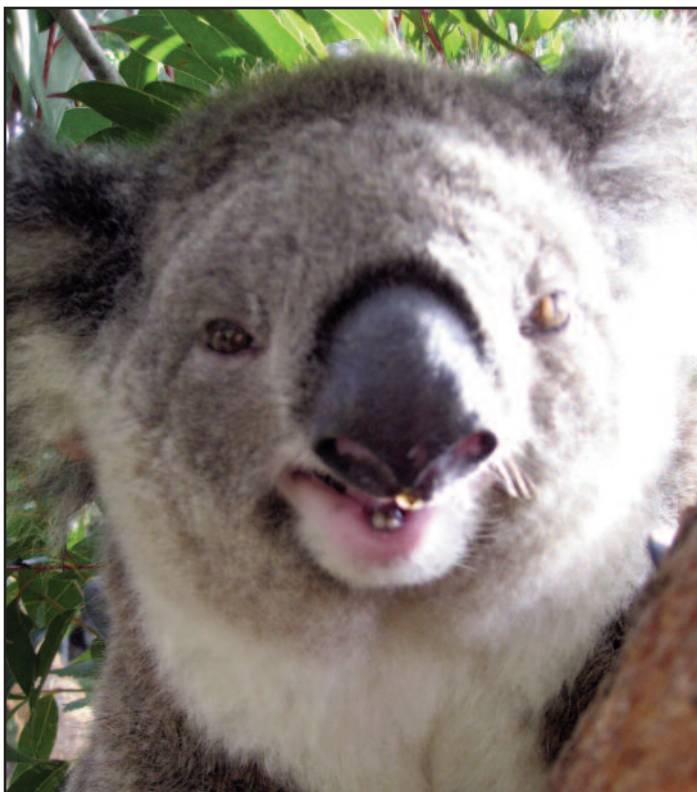


as part of this ongoing research program. Results of these tests have proven that this drug can be given for longer periods than was initially thought acceptable, without any clinical side effects being evidenced. This drug, of course, was the reason she felt so good and decided to escape and seek out Roto Randy. With Birthday Girl stuck so high in the tree, she started to miss out on her daily medication and eventually the arthritis pain won out, leaving her immobile—and stuck up the tree!

Birthday Girl is also teaching us a lot about age-related changes in koalas. It's amazing to actually see how fit and well she is at her advanced age. Consequently, Sydney University are following her progress with interest. At 22, Birthday Girl has now surpassed the age of another very old female koala patient called "Miss Beautiful" who reached 21 years a few years ago.

Knowing that koalas can indeed reach ages far beyond what is generally considered the norm can have implications for both captive and wild koala management issues in the future.

Good on you Birthday Girl—you are changing scientific data for the better! Watch this space for an update on Birthday Girl's 23rd birthday!



# From the President

After a lot of fundraising and support from the local business community during this last 12 months, we were able to purchase the Koala Ambulance, which has proved to be a tremendous asset—not just with rescuing koalas—but also with building local awareness of the work of the Koala Hospital.

Our first 'Family Fun Day' in September and the 'Open Day' in April were both outstandingly successful. The volunteers within 'Friends of the Koala Hospital', the 'Maintenance team' and our 'Souvenir Kiosk' did a tremendous job to raise much-needed funds. Special thanks go to Geoff and Robyne for organising these events.

Adopt-A-Wild-Koala has also been an exceptional success due to the commitment of Lorraine and Jan especially during the December period when 'Friends' worked tirelessly with them to meet the Christmas deadline.

To the committee, staff and volunteers who worked well together achieving a great deal over the last 12 months: a big thank you for what you have done, for supporting me as president and being prepared to continue on with the work at the Koala Hospital.

To Cheyne and her team, the team leaders, leaf collectors and volunteers: thank you for a job well done. This is where teamwork pays



off and we see the results of our efforts to rescue and rehabilitate koalas, to increase habitat and to educate and influence the local and greater communities.

*Bob Sharpham*

**President**

## Friends of the Koala Hospital

**28 March.** We had a morning tea/fundraiser at Bain Park in Wauchope in conjunction with a local group. We raised over \$320 for the Victoria Bushfire Appeal in a couple of hours. I'd like to thank Geoff and Lorraine for their help on the day.

**5 April.** We had a team working at the Triathlon serving meals...it was full-on and thanks go to all who helped out on behalf of the Koala Hospital. Special thanks to Brian Crisp. We received a cheque for \$350 for our efforts.

**11 April.** This was our Open Day. Again very successful, a big thank you to all involved...without your efforts it would not have been the success it was. We raised \$3,923.39. As some of you know, I did a follow-up after the day and got some good feedback as to how we may be able to improve next year's event.

**28 April.** Geoff, Lorraine, Kev and myself were invited to the Quota Club's Installation evening at

East Port Bowling Club. The Koala Hospital received a donation cheque of \$300 as their annual contribution.

**13 May.** Geoff and I attended another presentation at Bananacoast Community Credit Union (BCU) where we received a cheque for \$419.75 being the first year's proceeds from the Community Saver Account programme. It's nice to know that people in Port Macquarie are choosing to support the Hospital in this way.

We still have our donation boxes active around town and Wauchope. Also we will be participating in NAIDOC week on Wednesday 8 July on Town Green. We will be looking for volunteers to assist on the day.

Thank you,

*Robyne Leadbeater*

**Friends Co-ordinator**

# Supervisor's Report



At the time of writing, the hospital is very quiet, which is normal for this time of year. Just before breeding season gets under way, the koala population tends to lie low for a short period.

Consequently, we have more volunteers than we have koala patients at the moment—so those koalas who are here in the hospital are getting that extra special attention from so many devoted carers.

Nonetheless, we still have had a run of motor vehicle impact admissions with some unfortunately not making it. We do have two in care at present who, even in spite of fractures of limbs and pelvic areas, should recover completely and will be releasable in the near future. We are also getting call-outs to check on koalas in areas that don't have a lot of trees available them. Usually we can point out to the concerned resident a number of good-quality food trees just over the

fence or not too far down the road, and reassure them that koalas will often “camp” in any tree during the day and then go on to feed on the good trees at night.

It is heartening to note that these koalas we have been sent out to check on lately have all been in excellent health, good condition and appear to be doing extremely well. It's great to see this occurring instead of seeing so many koalas debilitated and in poor health coming in as patients.

It seems we are becoming in hot demand for public speaking this year. The hospital has had representatives speaking at veterinary conferences, and will be speaking to various community groups shortly about koala population issues. We will be speaking at the NSW RSPCA conference, and, by the time this is printed, a team of us will have been to the Lismore Friends of the Koala (FOK) Koala Conservation Conference to present. We will also be conducting Chlamydia training workshops in two locations in Victoria in July. Plus, we will be hosting and training TAFE students again in August. Phew!

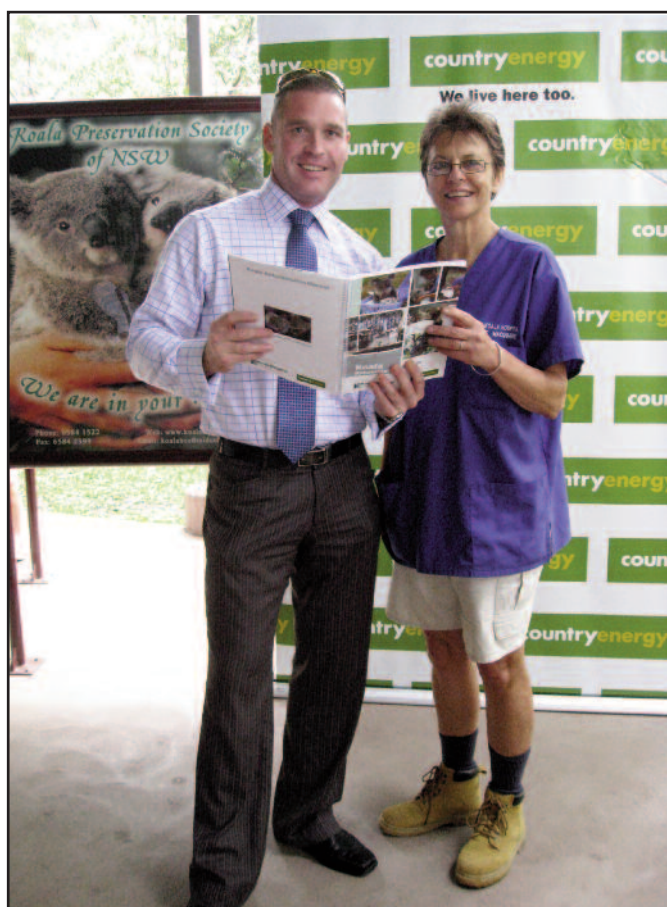
The second edition of our Koala Rehabilitation Manual, which was proudly sponsored by Country Energy, is selling really well with copies being sold in Victoria, NSW and Qld, with some even going to zoos in Europe. We are most grateful to Country Energy for this opportunity to produce the manual in such a professional way.

As stated previously, the volunteer team number is high with plenty of enthusiastic workers. The supervisory team are flowing along beautifully with just enough koala patients admitted for everyone to keep their skills up.

What scares me is that we are almost half way through the year already. Wasn't it Christmas just a few weeks ago?

*Cheyne Flanagan*

**Supervisor**



Country Energy's Andrew Latta presents Cheyne with the *Koala Rehabilitation Manual* whose publication Country Energy sponsored.

# How much can a

People hold many different views regarding what koalas are actually like. Some believe that koalas are ferocious, aggressive animals that can leap out of trees and tear you apart. This has probably arisen from the very loud growling and hooting that males exhibit at mating time—especially when in pursuit of a fertile female or when warding off a rival male. Such a sight is usually enough to scare the uninitiated, especially when the koala’s sharp, scimitar-shaped claws and long, biting incisors are visible during the scuffle.

But the most commonly held view about koalas is just the opposite: that they are cute, soft, sweet animals that you could simply pick up and cuddle (please don’t try this if you see one!). This idea probably came from their resemblance to soft plush toys that have fluffy fur and fluffy ears (such as teddy bears) that even the most hardened person wants to squeeze. Combine this with the sight of an adult koala whose body shape and facial design is about the same size and roundness of an 18-month-old human toddler, and it tends to bring out the “ooo and aaahh” factor out in many of us.

In reality, the koala exists somewhere between these two points of view.

## **CAPTIVE-BRED KOALAS**

Captive-bred koalas (hand-raised and kept in zoos, sanctuaries, etc.) mostly tend to be quieter and more tractable than their wild counterparts simply because they are handled daily and have been exposed to human contact from day one. However, this does not mean that captive-bred koalas are in any way “tame”—far from it! They always remain wild animals that are well and truly capable of exhibiting all the normal wild traits. This wildness is never



bred out of them. Put a captive bred koala back in the bush (aided by a few soft-release tactics) and most will revert back to their feral wild state in a short space of time.

## **WILD KOALAS**

A wild koala—one who has lived its entire life in the bush without close contact with humans—can certainly exhibit both expected and unexpected behaviours when brought into captivity. The vast majority are understandably terrified at an encounter with us very odd, strange-smelling, loud, furless, two-legged creatures. They express obvious fear: their eyes pop wide open, their whole body becomes tense, and they start to breathe rapidly. If approached or cornered, a koala will sit back with their forearms stretched out ready to slash at the offender with those scimitar claws—some will even cry out in a high-pitched call of terror. A koala in this position will readily bite at the nearest bit of human flesh that is available to them (the results can be quite painful!). Of course, we would expect this sort of reaction from any wild animal that is simply protecting itself. This sort of natural behaviour is readily seen in female koalas, especially those with pouch- or back-young. There are some adult males who remain in great fear of humans and have been observed launching themselves from their trees into thin air to endeavour to escape contact.

On the other hand, some wild koalas, particularly the males, can react in just the opposite way and appear to just sit quite passively when caught. More often than not, though, when their heart rate is checked, it will be beating extremely fast—a sure sign they are indeed terrified but hiding it very well. Usually the observer will note very rapid breathing as well. Maybe it’s some sort of survival strategy for them to sit quietly, or maybe they simply don’t know what to make of their encounter and end up in what can only be described in human terms as being “lost for words”.

# Koala 'bear'?

Then there is the odd koala who comes into care for the first time and is genuinely quite laidback in their approach to human contact. Heart rate is normal, respiration is normal and they show no sign of the normal protective strategies that koalas usually exhibit. These unusual koalas are often nicknamed “dudes” by the staff of the Koala Hospital for their calm, unfussed manner which is surprising to see in a wild animal.

Nonetheless, even the more usual wild-acting koalas do settle down when they come into the care of humans and appear to be quite accepting of what we are trying to do for them. This behaviour especially applies to very ill, injured or debilitated koalas that accept all our treatments in a stoic, resigned fashion and who may occasionally cry out or growl but generally are amenable to all the fuss.

Most adult koalas in our care receive supportive nutrition/hydration in the form of a low-lactose milk formula that is fed to them. It is usually either loved or hated by the koala patients and understandably there are many who simply refuse to take it. Interestingly though, once a koala does get a taste and liking for this fluid, they will grab at the carer when it is being fed to them as they are so keen to drink it. For koalas to love something that is not part of their normal eucalypt diet is rather curious. Yet, the boost it gives to nutrition and fluid intake aids koalas' recovery so well that it is used throughout Australia for rehabilitation purposes. Why some love it, is a total mystery and it really doesn't fit the profile of a wild animal response! However, they happily relinquish the milky fluid when they return to the bush.

Eventually once a koala is well and ready for release, most of them start exhibiting behaviours that tell the carer that it's time to go. They will pace around their yard, aviary or unit throughout the night. Often this can be accompanied by hooting and growling (even females will do this). It is also not unusual for them to “self-release”, i.e., escape from their yard. Of course, this is not a good practice as the koala needs to be returned to its home range, which is usually their original pickup point or a safer location nearby.

Unfortunately, some koalas' treatment regime and stay can be arduous and lengthy (such a severe motor vehicle injury). With these cases, it's not uncommon for koalas to

exhibit depressive behaviour. They may lose their appetite, even traits of their “wildness”, and sit curled up and appear to be giving up. Getting them outside into the fresh air usually sparks them up which of course really aids a quicker recovery time. Consequently, we work on the premise that the shorter the time in care, the better.



At the actual release location, most koalas tend to start to climb the tree and then stop halfway up. Then they look around at their surroundings and often look back down at the human who has just let them go. Of course, we would all like to think it is a “goodbye” thing, but in reality they probably have just scanned the area in their view, which includes us, and are simply checking the area for higher or lower ranking koalas or any other potential threats. Then without a second look they usually head right up to the top of the tree with some hooting, hollering and scent-marking on the way—probably out of their sheer joy of

being back in the bush and a desire to advertise their presence at the same time. Most koalas revert back to their wild state immediately upon release or not long after.

Often if these koalas come back into care at some point in the future, they tend to be a little less scared, and are more easily handled and treated due to their previous exposure to humans. Other readmitted koalas don't relax at all, and react just as strongly as they did the first time. These ones really do stay in their wild state throughout. It's very much an individual thing.

It gives Koala Hospital staff cause to chuckle sometimes when a “repeat offender” (a koala that has been a patient previously) has been brought to the hospital for treatment when, the minute they are placed on the table for assessment, the koala starts licking the air in anticipation of the rehabilitation formula they enjoyed during their last stay. They certainly have good memories.

As far as a native animal goes, wild koalas are probably one of the easier marsupials to deal with when brought into captivity. Possibly, this is one of the reasons why they are loved so much, in addition to all the other factors that make them so appealing.

Nonetheless, all our native fauna are beautiful, special and unique and are worthy of the same protection, conservation and care.



# Some English friends run to raise money for our koalas!



Deana & Russell from Manchester, UK, visited the Koala Hospital in 2008. When they returned home to the UK, they decided to participate in a charity run to raise money for the Koala Hospital!

They made up some t-shirts bearing the Koala Hospital logo, and added a photo of former Hospital resident, Ocean Kim, on the front and some facts about the Hospital on the back, in order to raise awareness about the work we do at the Hospital.

Deana and Russell completed the Bupa Great Manchester Run in a good time and managed to raise £120 for the Hospital!

Deana and Russell's donation will go towards purchasing a much needed blood pathology machine!

Good on you, Deana and Russell. The koalas and the Koala Hospital thank you!

*“We hope the money we raised will go a little way towards helping the koalas.”*

—Deana & Russell



## HELP US

TO HELP  
THE KOALAS

- Become a member
- Adopt a wild koala
- Volunteer
- Donate



# A different way to help the Koala Hospital



Bananacoast Community Credit Union (BCU), your local credit union, has launched a new concept in savings—the BCU

Community Saver Account.

Here's how it works:

1. You open a BCU Community Saver Account (CSA) and nominate a community group (e.g. the Koala Hospital).

2. You start saving and earn an attractive rate of interest.
3. Once a year, BCU donates an amount equal to 1% of the annual average balance held in your account to your nominated community group (that is, the Koala Hospital).

It's that easy.

And it will result in some extra income for the Koala Hospital if you nominate us as your community group beneficiary.

For details, see: [http://www.bcu.com.au/personal/savings\\_accounts/community\\_saver\\_account](http://www.bcu.com.au/personal/savings_accounts/community_saver_account)

## Judy Brady wins Jean Starr Award

Always available when called upon (except when lawn bowls is an option) Judy is a team leader, home carer, walk and talk guide, rescuer (along with husband Paul), fireground rescuer and always on the list for training in whatever is offered. Judy takes an interest in General Meetings and is usually in attendance. She is a friend to everyone, encouraging and patient to new volunteers by taking time to explain the reasons why, not just ordering them about.

Judy is an example to us all as a representative of a Koala Hospital volunteer.

Congratulations to those nominated: Anne Wash, Coral & Bill Lane, Hazell Sellers, Jackie Moody, Lisa Bishop, Peter Schulties, Tom & Bev Meyers.



Judy Brady (left) receives her award from Koala Hospital founder Jean Starr (centre) and President Bob Sharpham (right)



## Tiny Tot

Even though we all give our love, care, medication and lots of hope, we do have our disappointments.

We were hoping against hope that the pinkie (unfurred joey) being carried by Roto Princess (above) would survive. However, as Mum was being treated for wet bottom, the pinkie (which I called "Tiny Tot") had the odds stacked against him.

On 13 April, I was so excited to see the little foot protruding from the pouch. But when I realised there was no movement, my excitement soon turned to despair. It hurts to see one of our babies die.

—Pam Whippy.

# Technically Speaking



The University of Sydney

Report on the research undertaken by the Koala Infectious Disease Research Group (KIDReG) of the Faculty of Veterinary Science, the University of Sydney, in collaboration with the Koala Preservation Society of NSW Inc (KPS) at Port Macquarie, January 2008 to May 2009.

On Sunday 10 August 2008, our research group (with financial backing from Boehringer Ingelheim) put on an Education Day at Rydges Port Macquarie to provide information to KPS personnel about our current research on those samples collected from the KPS patients. From KIDReG's perspective, we were delighted by the number of people who attended, especially those carers who had travelled far. All of the researchers and postgraduate students had a very enjoyable day and were extremely pleased to meet and greet so many KPS personnel and other carers.

Our PhD student, Dr Joanna Griffith, is now finishing a manuscript on one aspect of her research that she conducted at KPS during 2005-2009. The manuscript is entitled, "The absorption of enrofloxacin and marbofloxacin after oral and subcutaneous administration in the koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*)". Dr Griffith has in the interim presented this work to a variety of national audiences such as wildlife veterinarians and koala carers. Dr Griffith will submit this manuscript to the prestigious *American Journal of Veterinary Pharmacology and Therapeutics*, which, if accepted will grant the work worldwide exposure. Naturally, KPS's role in the research will be appropriately acknowledged. We are also encouraging Dr Griffith to write up her additional work as an article for an Australian publication. An additional two papers are also in preparation: one describing response to treatment with the above agents; and the other reviewing past treatments and their impact based on past clinical records.

Additional samples collected during the above drug studies are proving to be valuable in Quintin Lau's post-

graduate studies of koala genetics and immunology. We expect to request some additional fresh blood samples from koalas in the coming year, probably to be collected by us on one or two occasions.

Boehringer Ingelheim has asked us to investigate whether the analgesic and anti-inflammatory agent Meloxicam is having some therapeutic affect for koalas and we will attempt to work out its pharmacokinetic profile in this species. Dr Merran Govendir is the chief investigator for this research and has previously spoken to the KPS Hospital Supervisor, Cheyne Flanagan, about collecting plasma samples from koalas that have been medicated with Metacam. We anticipate that this

Metacam project will result in outcomes for making recommendations concerning how best to use this agent to treat injured koalas. Unfortunately this work has been delayed by the withdrawal of the PhD student associated with this project. But our aim is to ask Cheyne to collect blood samples from Metacam-treated koalas and send these samples to the University for processing, commencing Spring 2009

and throughout the next koala season. We would then hope to measure the concentrations of Metacam in these samples to determine if koalas are being treated at the correct dose and dosage frequency.

KIDReG appreciates the wonderful co-operation from all members of KPS and their commitment to finding out more about how to manage more effectively diseases in one of our national treasures.

Report compiled by Paul Canfield, Mark Krockenberger, Merran Govendir, Damien Higgins and Susan Hemsley, principal academic researchers in KIDReG



Dr Joanna Griffith

adopt  
Bago Babe!

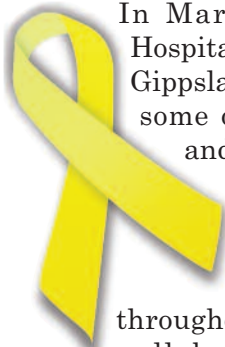


[www.koalahospital.org.au/adopt/](http://www.koalahospital.org.au/adopt/)



# Koala Hospital sends Bushfire Relief Team

*to support Victorian wildlife carers*



In March 2009, staff from the Koala Hospital were requested to go down to the Gippsland area of Victoria to give relief to some of the exhausted vets, vet nurses and bushfire rescue workers who had been working tirelessly since the bushfires began in mid-January 2009. Fires had already decimated

areas throughout Victoria well before Black Saturday (7 February 2009) occurred, with many wildlife rescuers and wildlife carers clocking up hundreds of volunteer hours in search and rescue and treatment of burnt wildlife. The Koala Hospital was called by Colleen Wood from Southern Ash Wildlife Shelter, home of the now famous “Sam” the koala.

A team of four from the Koala Hospital (Cheyne Flanagan, Amanda Gordon, Helen Meers and Peter Schulties) flew to Victoria for free—thanks to the generosity of Virgin Blue airlines. This generosity was also extended by the National Geographic Society (USA) who paid for the hire of a car and all accommodation whilst the team were in Victoria. The Koala Hospital staff were consequently accompanied by a film crew from National Geographic, who had been filming a documentary at the Koala Hospital over the previous 18 months.

The team were asked to carry out both treatments of burnt koalas at a triage centre and also to work alongside local wildlife personnel undertaking search and rescue of burnt wildlife.

Our first day of search and rescue work was behind a town called Boolarra, which only just managed to not be wiped out itself. As the fires sur-

rounding Boolarra were so intense, not much had survived except for a small number of wallabies who had managed to take refuge in a fish farm. Some of them had minor burns but others were not so fortunate. Thankfully we were able to deal with these animals quickly.

After this, our first weekend was spent treating a number of burnt koalas at the triage centre at the

Morwell Veterinary Clinic. A local construction company had set up (on loan) a large portable shed, which had been fitted out with shelves, sinks, treatment facilities and areas to house the koalas. The local veterinary team were most grateful for the weekend off and left us to do all the work. As the Hospital has had many years’ experience in dealing with burnt wildlife, we all slotted quickly into the task—the only problem was finding where all the equipment and medications were stored!!!

Incidentally, the wonderful vet who owned the veterinary clinic was actually treating burnt wildlife at the Morwell triage centre on Black Saturday and at the time was

unaware that, not only had his own house just burnt down, but he had lost four of his neighbours on that day. What these people have experienced has been horrific and too hard to fathom.

As the burnt koalas still needed daily treatment, one of our team stayed on during the following week to assist the vets and vet nurses. The other three members of the team, all fully trained and experienced in search and rescue of burnt wildlife worked alongside the local wildlife rescue teams. These wildlife rescuers were amazing, having undertaken literally hundreds of hours of search and rescue since mid-January. They were absolutely exhausted but still kept on working. They were most grateful



Cheyne holding a young koala joey.



Victorian wildlife rescuers scour the decimated landscape for surviving wildlife.

for some assistance to take the pressure of them for a short period. We only wish we could have brought more people down to help, but this had not been possible. As working in burnt country can be very dangerous, there was certainly a lot of paperwork and bureaucratic hurdles to overcome, which was quite frustrating at times. Full confirmation only came through at the eleventh hour, so we were lucky to be allowed in ourselves!

One of the worst areas where we carried out rescue work was a place called Callignee. The whole area looked like a bombsite with stumps of trees and sections of trunks all facing up hill—such was the force of the heat and wind that accompanied the fires. The soil was baked like white powder. The whole valley as far as the eye could see was just decimated. There were burnt homes everywhere. Three people had died on one of the roads we travelled on, with 29 people losing their lives across the whole val-



Helen, Peter and Cheyne look on as a treeclimber rescues a koala (out of shot).

ley. For us, it was so hard to comprehend and the continual silence that echoed across the valley sent chills down our spines.

Nonetheless we did find two koalas on this road who had taken refuge in a small area of green unburnt vegetation. As they were so high in the trees we were unable to check their status.

All throughout that week we worked in numerous firegrounds throughout the Gippsland area. As the fires had been so intense



Amanda and Cheyne get hands-on in triage.

and the damage so huge, the majority of the wildlife we located had all died during or not long after the fires had passed through. This was a situation commonly found throughout Victoria with not a huge number of live animals being brought into care. A number that were brought in were so badly burnt that they had to be euthanased. It was not all bad though, as we did locate koalas, wombats, echidnas, goannas and wallabies all in good condition, even though their habitat was reduced to small pockets of unburnt country.

After nine days of working alongside these wonderful caring Victorian wildlife people, we reluctantly had to head back to Port Macquarie, as we were needed back at the Koala Hospital. We found the whole episode a very humbling experience: what we contributed was but a tiny drop in the ocean compared to what so many wonderful other people had done and were still doing throughout Victoria. We also found the generosity of the local people amazing and their positive spirit very uplifting. It made us proud to be Australians.

—*The Koala Hospital Wildlife Rescue Team*

# Adopt-A-Wild-Koala report

Adoption requests have slowed back over the last three months, after the record breaking time in December/January. We have been processing about 25-30 adoptions a week recently.

We then had a sad duty when Bonny Fire died to contact as many of her adopters as possible, offering them a 12 month replacement adoption. This activity resulted in about 70 people taking our offer up, which required us to re-enter all their data for the new adoption, produce and post each new certificate and story.

A lot of adopters responded that their priority was to support the Hospital, and did they not want us to go to the extra expense of issuing a new certificate for another koala, and would wait until their renewal was due.

Unfortunately we also lost another of our adoptable koalas during April—Lindfield Holden came into the Hospital after his third motor vehicle accident, this time he did not recover.

Jan Campbell has now been fully trained and is more than capable of handling the adoption process, which is a big relief for me to have someone else involved. Between us we are working about 20 hours per week on adoptions. We have been using the new system for some months and after a few teething problems, now have a better understanding of its capabilities.

A new business-size laminator has been purchased, to replace the small one we have been using, which has been working well, but overheating on several occasions, as it was never designed to process the quantity of work we have been producing.

*Lorraine Best*



# Maintenance report

During the previous 12 months, our hard-working maintenance team has completed some much needed projects:



Ashley and Hamlyn Bev

- ➔ Most recently of these was the construction of the car-port with a compacted floor. Also filling and consolidating the foundation and laying the pavers outside the education facility recreation area. We should soon be ready to construct a bench and shelter on that site which will comply with NPWS guidelines—a project that has long been on the agenda.
- ➔ We are fortunate to have on our team a licensed electrician who installed low-energy lighting in the office and day room and an exhaust fan over the copier. Various other items were also attended to, such as re-locating switches, points and wiring.
- ➔ Following a recent recommendation by the police, a padlock and bolt have been fitted to the kiosk roller shutter. Also security mesh was fitted to the large ICU window facing Lord St. Other security measures to be implemented ASAP.
- ➔ Thanks go to Bob McClure and the Westport Tennis Club for several rolls of grass matting that were donated a couple of weeks ago.
- ➔ Unfortunately, our efforts to retrieve other grass matting from a property failed due to the inclement weather and the sodden condition of the matting, not to mention wet cow pats that had fouled the goods. Thanks to Ray Abbott for his part in all this. Perhaps if the property owner's time permits—we will have better luck next time.

Thanks again to all the team for their efforts.

*Brian Westoby*

**Maintenance Co-ordinator**

# Education report

Since taking on the task of Education Coordinator at the last General Meeting I have been busy getting to know the routine and I thank Maree for all the assistance she has provided.

In the past three months, the Koala Hospital has hosted visits by more than 30 organisations including pre-booked coach groups, schools, Rotary exchange and seniors groups, in addition to the regular daily "Walk and Talk".

Walk and Talks are still being well attended, with the daily average around 30 people. I expect this number to drop in the coming weeks as the weather cools and tourist numbers fall.

We have commenced a familiarisation program for new guides and have three people preparing to take up duties in this field. This is not strictly an Education matter, however, it is an activity which I have been involved in since its inception.

My thanks to all guides who have contributed to these activities, especially Maree, who has also accepted the duties of stand-in Coordinator when I was unavailable.



Geoff and Oxley Griffin

I would like to draw your attention to the BCU Community Saver Scheme advertised in this issue of *Gum Tips*.

*Geoff Best*

**Education Co-ordinator**

## Media & Comms Report



It's been a very busy 12 months for the Koala Hospital. The media, in particular the local media, have been very supportive. But the koalas have been the stars of the show.

### **Media**

- We have had media relating to our grand old lady Birthday Girl, Bonny Fire and Blaze, adoptions, dog attacks, Chlamydia, the ambulance, habitat, WYD Pilgrims, the Koala Rehabilitation Manual, Hibiscus Street, the Victorian Bushfires, Family Fun Day, Open Day, and we have been included in two leisure reports on Prime television throughout the last 12 months.
- NSW Tourism (Gabrielle Brewer) and PMHC Tourism have been fantastic in providing three Media Releases: one about Bonnie and her midnight tryst resulting in Blaze and two about adoptions: "Adopt A Koala For Xmas" and "Koalas Become International Stars". The response was amazing and brought us an unexpected but wonderful windfall. We are certainly on the world stage now.

### **VIP visitors**

- The NSW Minister for Tourism, Jodi McKay, on behalf of the Mid North Coast Region Tourist Organisation, launched the "Natures Wonderland Campaign" at the hospital.
- The Regional Marketing Manager for NSW Tourism had a tour around the hospital.

- The PMHC new Administrator and his wife and Andrew Roach visited and left with a very favourable impression.

### **Journalists**

- Susan Kelly from National Geographic, has spent a lot of time at the hospital gathering information for a documentary. She also accompanied us to the Victorian Bushfires and generously paid for our accommodation and car hire. Virgin Blue airlines were also very generous in covering our airfares.
- Watch out in August, when we are going to be part of Greg Grainger's "Travel Oz" production on the ABC.
- We also had journalists from Open Road, New Idea, AAP, Germany, Switzerland, Japan and Hong Kong and China visit the hospital.
- On behalf of the Hospital, I attended the workshop and launch of PMHC Tourism's new brand for Port Macquarie "Come Out Of Your Shell", as well as their workshop on the regions tourism awards. We now hope to enter a submission for the Ecotourism category. We have also been invited to participate in a display for the GPM Business Awards, their theme being Koalas.

*Helen Meers*

**Media Co-ordinator**

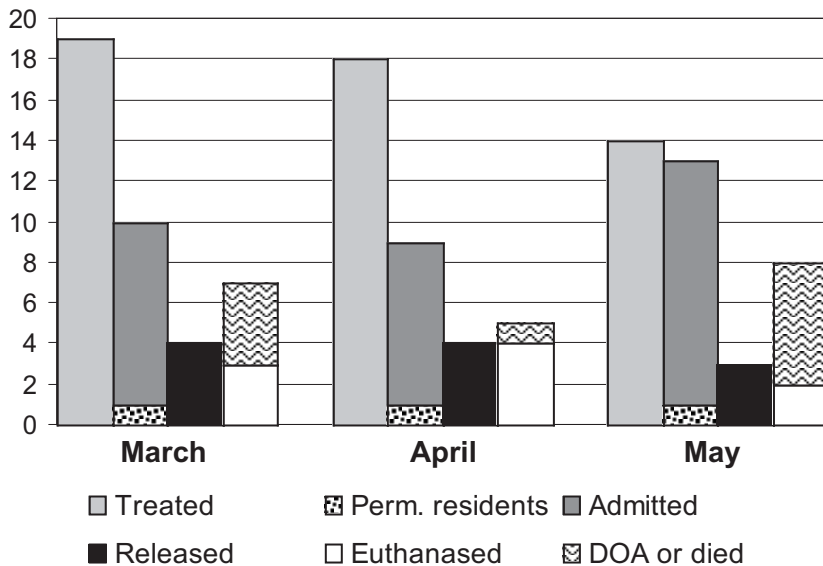
# Hospital Activity Report



Admission	Name	Reason	Result
6.11.00	Kempsey Carolina F	Head trauma – motor vehicle accident	Permanent resident
22.10.04	Tractive Golfer M	Underweight – scoliosis of spine	Treating
	Birthday Girl F	Severe arthritis right hip	Treating
10.10.08	Settlement Point Bea F	Fell 20m onto oyster rocks; home care	
28.12.08	Waugh Lord M	Hind leg infection	Released 03.04.09
02.01.09	Dunbogan Col M Joey	Orphaned – in home care	Died 07.03.09
12.01.09	Newport Bridge Gloria	Motor Vehicle Accident – broken femur	Released 04.03.09
25.01.09	Somerset Sam M	Chlamydia	Euthanased 06.03.09
31.01.09	Roto Princess F	Chlamydia	Euthanased 23.04.09
02.02.09	Lake ACS	Motor vehicle accident	Released 03.04.09
02.02.09	Salamander Bay Jed Joey	Home reared - dehumanising	Released 17.03.09
23.02.09	Calwalla Munchkin	Hind leg infection	Released 07.04.09
25.02.09	Lake Innes JB M	Dog attack	Died 05.03.09
03.03.09	Salamander Bay Shazza J	Home reared - dehumanising	
11.03.09	Kulai Rosemary	Necrotic – sitting on ground	Euthanased 11.03.09
16.03.09	Ruins Way Margaret F	Sitting on ground	Released 25.03.09
17.03.09	Golf Blackspot M	Motor vehicle accident	Self release 25.03.09
20.03.09	Orchid Otto M	Drowned in swimming pool	Dead on Arrival
20.03.09	Bangalay Susan F	Chlamydia	Released 01.05.09
21.03.09	Ellenborough Kelly F	Chlamydia	Euthanased 24.03.09
26.03.09	Tozer Tom M	Motor vehicle accident	Died 26.03.09
30.03.09	Central Milton M	Motor vehicle accident	Released 07.04.09
06.04.09	Grant Kim M	Moribund	Euthanased 07.04.09
10.04.09	Emerald Downs David M	On ground, debilitated	Euthanased 15.04.09
15.04.09	Hastings River Dr. Maree	Right eye injury	
16.04.09	Crestwood Stuart M	Conjunctivitis left eye	Released 29.04.09
17.04.09	Golf Jan F	Conjunctivitis both eyes	Released 06.05.09
17.04.09	Kennedy Kirk M	Motor vehicle accident	Released 08.05.09
18.04.09	Treeview Way Sam M	Motor vehicle accident	Died 19.04.09
23.04.09	Lindfield Holden M	Motor vehicle accident	Euthanased 23.04.09
01.05.09	Ocean Roy M	Motor vehicle accident	Dead on Arrival
08.05.09	Coastland Steve M	Motor Vehicle accident	
11.05.09	Park Tricia F	Motor Vehicle accident	
15.05.09	Links Reg. M	Dog attack	Dead on Arrival
21.05.09	O'Briens Ros F	Possible fall from tree	Euthanased 21.05.09
22.05.09	Colonial Charlie M	On ground (Chlamydia)	
24.05.09	Warrego Martin M	Unknown	Dead on Arrival
27.05.09	Blackbutt Peter M	Moribund – renal disease + dog attack	Euthanased 27.05.09
28.05.09	Lighthouse June F	Chlamydia	Dead on Arrival
29.05.09	Oxley Bill M	Motor vehicle accident	Dead on Arrival
29.05.09	Mill Millkip F	Dog attack	Died 30.05.09
31.05.09	Kennedy Kirk M	Motor Vehicle accident	



### Hospital Activity (March - May 2009)



Barbara Barrett and Ocean Therese

## Notice of Future Meetings

10 July 2009	Management meeting
14 August 2009	Management meeting
16 August 2009	General meeting
11 September 2009	Management meeting
9 October 2009	Management meeting
13 November 2009	Management meeting
15 November 2009	General meeting
11 December 2009	Management meeting

## Gum Tips

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