

Ormiston Koala Safe Neighbourhood update

Koalas win when we work together

Ormiston is Redlands Coast's first Koala Safe Neighbourhood and was established so we could collaborate with the community to record vital information about our local koala residents and reduce key koala survival threats - vehicle-strike, dog attack, habitat loss and disease.

It's been an exciting first year working with many of you and the University of the Sunshine Coast's Detection Dogs for

Conservation research team (DDC). You have been excellent koala-spotters! The valuable sightings you've shared have given researchers a greater understanding of the movements of our intrepid Ormiston koala family.

Thanks to your support, the program has been a success and Council plans to create more Koala Safe Neighbourhoods throughout Redlands Coast.

Work undertaken in the last twelve months in the Koala Safe Neighbourhood has included:

- ✓ A survey using the detection dogs to find fresh koala scats (poo), which helps determine the number of koalas in the area and their health status.
- ✓ Undertaken DNA analysis of the koala scats so we can better understand more about the koala's gender, genetic diversity and the prevalence of chlamydia – a serious disease threatening our koala population.
- ✓ Captured and released 26 koalas who were given a full veterinary check.
- ✓ Monitored koalas with GPS collars and tested bluetooth ear tags.
- ✓ Organised treatment for sick koalas so they can be cared for and returned to their original habitat in Ormiston.
- ✓ Partnered with community groups and schools to promote koala conservation in your neighbourhood.
- ✓ Provided regular GPS maps and photos of our koala clan's movements to share on the Council's IndigiScapes Facebook page.
- ✓ Added more koala conservation signage on roads in Ormiston.

Meet some of the koala families we are monitoring

Over the last year we have observed more than 26 koalas and we've got to know some of them and their individual personalities really well. You can also follow the adventures of our koalas on Facebook where we regularly post photos and locations of where our Ormiston koalas are. Like and follow our page to receive updates on the antics of our endearing koalas

 /IndigiScapes

For more koala statistics and information visit
redland.qld.gov.au/koala



Bruce



Rubin



Kimo & joey



Ember



Poppy



Ted



Special community events celebrated in the 'hood'

In April, more than 100 local residents joined our Bushcare team to plant a host of native plants in Fellmonger Park, Ormiston. As these trees grow they'll provide additional habitat for the koala population in the future.

In June, Redland City Council and the DDC researchers teamed up for our 'science in action' event to share valuable information about our koala population and how Ormiston locals can collaborate to protect koalas in the local area. The event was held at Ormiston State School and attendees had the opportunity to meet the detection dogs and the team of scientists, plus check out the drones used to track and monitor our tagged koalas.

In November, our Parks and Conservation team undertook key plantings behind Fletcher Terrace and Gloucester Street, Ormiston, including 50 Eucalypt Blue Gums (a favourite koala food tree) as well as 840 ground covers and small shrubs to help control a few weedy areas.

Coming up in 2020

We will be recruiting citizen scientists in 2020 to help our research team monitor Ormiston's koalas. Our citizen scientists will be part of an ongoing project that helps to locate and monitor our koalas by bluetooth. A workshop is being planned and we will announce the date soon.

Want more information?

To join our current team of resident koala spotters email researcher Romane Cristescu at rcristes@usc.edu.au



The story of Olive

Sadly not all our koalas are healthy and require hospitalisation. Redland City Council's After Hours Wildlife Ambulance (RAWA) volunteers and the DCC research team have been working closely with local residents to care for Ormiston koalas.

The team recently picked up Olive from a resident's property and took her to Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital for some much needed care.

Olive's health was so poor with the effects of Chlamydia that treatment wasn't an option. However, thanks to great communication and collaboration between local resident Paul Barfoot and the research team, Olive didn't have to continue to suffer in pain.

If you see a sick or injured koala, especially with gummy eyes (conjunctivitis) or a 'wet' or 'dirty' bottom please notify the Redlands Wildlife Rescue service by calling 3833 4031, 24 hours a day, 7 days per week.

Success for Ember

Ember, a three year old female from the forested foreshore near Empire Vista, Ormiston, was captured back in September and admitted to Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital. Following a seven week stay in hospital for treatment and observation, we are very happy to report that she has made a successful recovery and her pouch joey has also progressed in leaps and bounds to become a skilled back-rider!

Koala Action Group president, Debbie Pointing, and local Wellington Point resident Fleur Carter, assisted with Ember's release and have been generous supporters of the Ormiston Koala Safe Neighbourhood project's koala monitoring program.



Meet one of our Ormiston citizen scientist heroes – Paul Barfoot

My wife Sally and I, with our children Christian and Sarah, live in Ormiston close to Hilliards Creek, and our property has always been a source of food for koalas and a corridor for koalas moving through the area. Around 2008, when Redland City Council first introduced the Koala Conservation Agreement Program (KCAP) we were the first property in Ormiston to sign up. The KCAP is a partnership agreement between landholders and Council to protect and reinstate koala habitat, and we've had financial support through the KCAP program for approved projects that assist us with our conservation efforts. This included assistance with the eradication of non-native weeds and plants, property management advice, and the re-planting of koala friendly habitat and food trees on our property.

We've had many memorable encounters with koalas over the years, and we're glad to see Ormiston established as a koala safe neighbourhood to reduce threats to the local

koala population. Sadly, we've also had to call in a number of rescues over the years when we've noticed koalas wander onto our property with health issues or injuries.

Our visitors are sometimes lucky enough to glimpse a koala transiting across our yard in search of a more comfortable or tasty tree, or snoring away in the bough of a tree branch. But it's at night time when you really know you've got a koala or two on the property, when it's not uncommon for a couple of male koalas to be grunting in stereo around the property competing for a companion.

We're hoping we get to see many more koalas on the property in the future, and eventually when we have grandchildren, to be able to show them how we share the land with the koalas and do our best to preserve the habitat that they rely on.



How can you get involved?

Join one of our Environmental Partnership programs. For more information visit www.redland.qld.gov.au

Or just like Paul, you too can become a citizen scientist. You don't need a degree of any sort – all you have to do is submit any koala sightings by registering with Atlas of Living Australia's new platform iNaturalist.org. Download the iNaturalist app to your phone to make submitting a sighting a breeze.

Every observation helps the researchers and Council to create a comprehensive picture of what our koalas are doing in Ormiston (and across Redlands Coast), and results in better conservation outcomes for our koalas.

You can also follow the adventures of our koalas on Facebook where we regularly post photos and locations of where our Ormiston koalas are. Like and follow our page to receive updates on the antics of our endearing koalas [f/IndigiScapes](https://www.facebook.com/IndigiScapes)



Reducing koala road deaths is easy...

One simple thing everyone can do to help koalas across Redlands Coast is to watch out for them on the roads. Particularly during breeding season between July and December.

Council has also partnered with Griffith University's Applied Road Ecology Research Group to monitor and measure how smart signs can help to increase driver awareness and reduce speeds in designated important koala safe areas. For more information on the smart sign trial visit

www.redland.qld.gov.au

You can help koalas to get where they're going safely by!

- Keep your pets confined, restrained or inside at night. Even small dogs can do a lot of damage to a koala.
- Install escape devices, such as a rope or floatation devices in your pool or poles against backyard fences.
- Adapt your driving. Slow down and be koala alert – it's not enough to stick to speed limits.

Ormiston Koala Safe Neighbourhood Catchment

Ormiston koala safe neighbourhood provides a haven for the many koalas in the area. This map shows just some of the koalas being monitored as part of the current research project.

Do any of these koalas live near your property?



Acknowledgements:

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