

Keeping dogs happy and koalas safe

Koala's backyards can also be our backyards and those of our pets. Sadly, many koalas are killed by dogs in backyards each year.

How can you make your backyard dog and koala friendly?

- Give your dog its own play area, fenced-off from the rest of the yard.
- Check your trees for koalas and inform your neighbours when you see one.
- Keep your dog confined or tethered at night when koalas are most active.
- Retain and/or plant trees in your yard.
- Put fence escapes, such as a wooden pole or plank, up against your fence.



© Claire Bool

Putting up fence escapes in your yard will help koalas move through safely

How do dogs harm koalas?

Most dogs are instinctive hunters. They will attack koalas and other wildlife in your backyard because they are defending their territory. While other dogs may simply want to play, sadly, even in play they can kill, harm or stress a koala. Barking dogs stress koalas as well as people.

Dogs have strong teeth and jaws which can cause severe injuries. Koalas have delicate skin which is easily punctured and even though there may be no visible signs of injury after a dog attack, their internal organs may be punctured and bruised.

Koalas do not regard dogs as predators and will come down to ground even if dogs are around. Although koalas are nocturnal, they still move around during the day. They move if they are too hot, too cold, if they are disturbed or to look for an afternoon snack.

What should I do if my dog has attacked or stressed a koala?

If your dog has attacked or tried to physically play with a koala, even if you think it has gotten away unharmed, please call the Redlands 24hr Wildlife Rescue Service on 3833 4031. They are trained to assess the situation. If needed, they will come out and rescue the koala.

Due to a koala's thick fur, injuries can be hard to spot. Koalas can also easily suffer from internal injuries from crushing bites that have left no mark. If untreated, these injuries can be fatal.

Why creating a safe place for your dog can be a good option

- Dogs like to have their own space (den) where they feel safe. This is why your dog will lie under the table, your bed or a chair.
- Pet behaviouralists recommend dog denning as a way to overcome behaviour problems.
- If your dog is part of your home security, creating an enclosed space close to your home can mean it is close by for your protection.
- Enclosed yard spaces can also help to ensure dogs aren't able to chew and dig in all areas of your yard.
- Take your dog for regular walks - even when happy at home, daily walks on a lead enrich dogs' lives and help keep them healthy.

Did you know

You don't have to have eucalypts to have koalas in your yard – where there are fewer trees, koalas are forced to travel further on the ground through our yards to find their next food source. Koalas will also use trees other than eucalypts. They will often use trees such as mangoes, poincianas and casuarinas for shelter, refuge and as stepping stones to their next food trees.

