

Breaking News

After the KAG July – September KAG Newsletter was printed, we received a response from the Qld State Government Department of Environment and Science in relation to the front page article in this newsletter. The response was signed by Ben Klaassen, Deputy Director-General Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships.

The newsletter article referred to the department granting permission to the developer of a site in Cowley Street, Ormiston to have a resident koala captured and moved elsewhere on the basis that the female koala with a pouch joey was in 'imminent danger'.

KAG questioned the department on the rationale for this decision and the evidence demonstrating that the koala was in fact in any danger.

The essence of the Department's response was that their officers had conducted inspections and monitoring of the site and that the koala had not moved on of its own free will in an allotted time span of 120 days. It would appear on that basis the Environment Department decided the koala with pouch young should be removed.

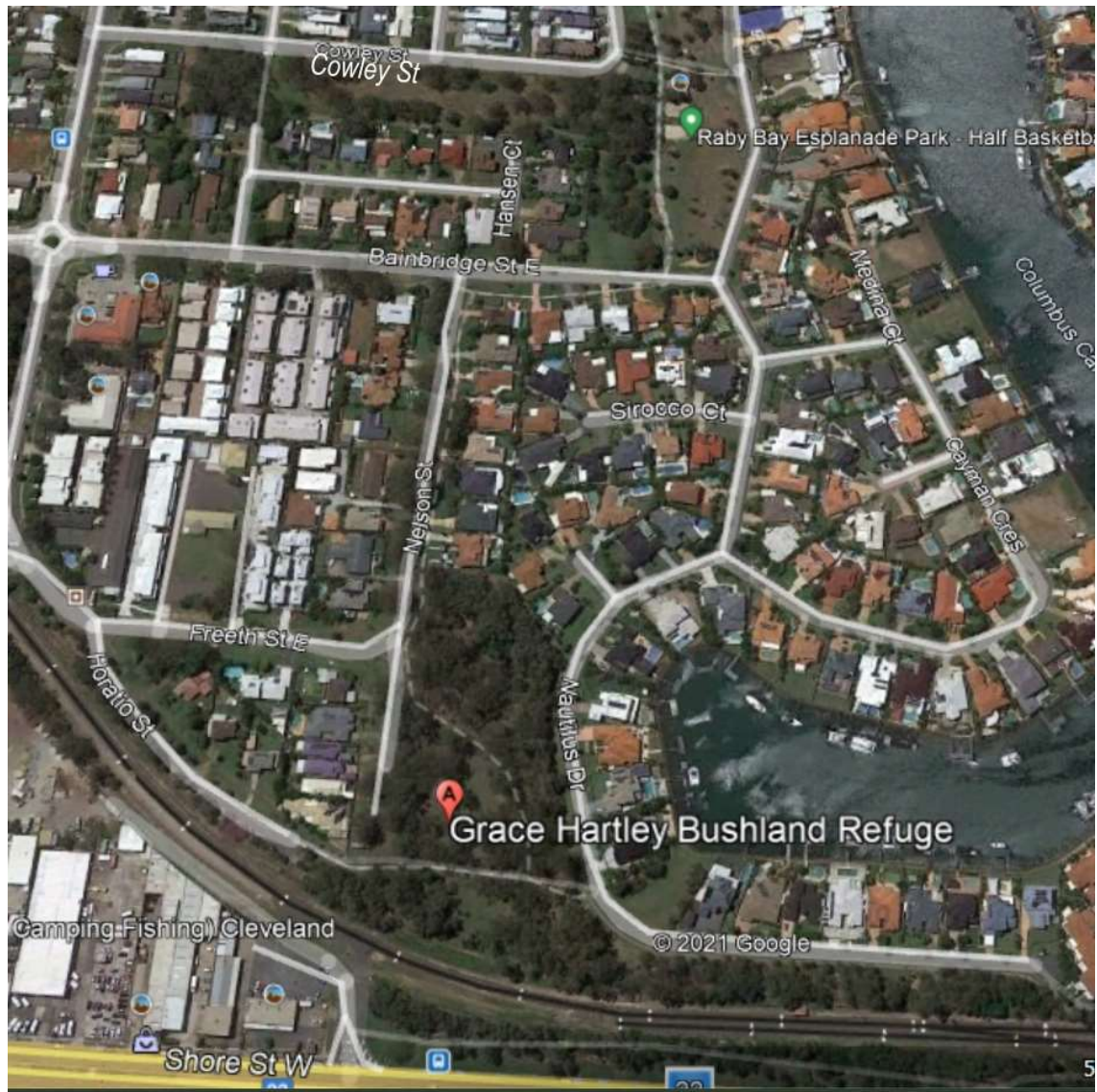
Mr Klaassen's response continued *"In considering the request from the developers, the department formed the opinion that, due to proximity of the location to the urban footprint and the lack of immediate adjoining contiguous habitat to support the safe natural dispersal by the koala, there is a risk of death or injury to the koala if it were to try to naturally disperse from its current location. The current location does not provide long term sustainable habitat and the koala at some point will try to find alternative habitat."*

This incredulous conglomeration of words dispels any confidence one should be able to have in a department which should have a least some knowledge of the environment urban animals reside in. So where was the koala moved to following its capture? well to a park adjacent to a rail line and on the other side of that, a road carrying much more traffic than the local traffic the koala has previously contended with, and now likely is in an unfamiliar area.

There are around thirty koalas living in the suburb of Ormiston, let alone hundreds of others resident in the Redlands and thousands elsewhere in Brisbane City and other areas in Queensland which are also in the *proximity of the location to the urban footprint*. The rationale, if it can be referred to as such, supplied in the Department's response could be applied to each of those koalas.

KAG conducted a year long research into koalas living in a highly urbanised area and amongst the data we found was that female koalas with young tended to remain very local and used few trees. Details of that research is available at <https://koalagroup.asn.au/toondah-koala-tracking/>

We can only assume pressure was applied to the Department to appease the developers, but now that the precedent has been set the name of the Department seems irrelevant. Perhaps the Minister can explain where her Department is headed.



The female koala with pouch young was moved from Cowley Street at the top of the map approximately 400 metres south to Grace Hartley Bushland Reserve. (Google Earth photo)