



A voice
for koalas
in the Redlands

www.koalagroup.asn.au
email: admin@koalagroup.asn.au

KAG Newsletter

July-Sept 2022

DIARY DATES

Saturday Sept 17

8.30am-11.30am

Toondah Welcome Back Shorebirds Festival

GJ Walter Pk - water end of Shore St East, Cleveland
Fun and inclusive morning suitable for all of the family. Art Activities, face painting, kids book readings, live music, displays, sausage sizzle, shorebird spotting and a koala walk.

For more info -

acfccommunitybayside@gmail.com

Sunday October 2 and November 6

8.30am

KAG Tree Planting

Catherine St, St James Pk Birkdale

Wear closed-in shoes and sun safe clothing. BYO gloves, hand tools provided and holes are pre dug. All are welcome and a delicious morning tea follows the planting.

Redlands IndigiScapes Native Community Nursery

Opening hours: 10am-3pm Monday-Friday and 9am-12 noon the first Saturday of each month

With an assortment of groundcovers, shrubs and trees, for many different habitat types, your garden is bound to be a naturally wonderful oasis for you and the local wildlife to enjoy. Plants are \$2.50-\$3.00 each, koala food trees are free!

Community Group Alliance fights Olympic Whitewater Plans for Birkdale Land

KAG has joined forces with a number of Redlands community groups to oppose the Olympic whitewater facility which Council have included in the masterplan for the Birkdale land.

Community Alliance for Responsible Planning, Wildlife Preservation Society of Qld Bayside, Aust Conservation Foundation Bayside, Birkdale Progress Association and Redlands2030, along with some concerned residents have written to Olympic organisers as well as politicians to ask that the Birkdale site be removed as the location for the Olympic whitewater facility.

Instead, the existing purpose-built whitewater rafting venue in Penrith NSW should be considered to host the two week event during the 2032 Olympic Games, achieving a cost saving of about \$100 million and meeting the International Olympic Committee's policy to be 'climate positive' and to avoid new builds where possible.

Council's draft masterplan for the Birkdale land ignores the wishes of community who during the extensive community consultation overwhelmingly did not support the Olympic whitewater idea and wanted the Birkdale site to be kept natural for koalas and other wildlife.

The draft masterplan compromises the environmental and cultural heritage values of the site, including the natural underground springs due to the massive amount of on ground works and construction required to build an Olympic sized facility plus associated infrastructure.

The financial implications to Redlands ratepayers to run and maintain such a facility have not been considered enough and there is a real threat that it could end up being a costly 'white elephant', as has been the case in other host cities.

The Alliance suggests the Birkdale land be called 'Redlands Wild Koala Refuge and Cultural Heritage Precinct', that will not only protect the values of the site and create a special place for Redlands community to enjoy, but also attract domestic and international tourists before, during and long after the 2032 Olympic Games.

KAG understands that Council has not yet signed the Conservation Agreement that was supposed to be one of the conditions of sale in 2019 when the Federal Government sold the land to Council. Below are listed some of the conditions stated in the Conservation Agreement:

- *Council to develop a management plan for the site to protect, manage and improve over time the quality of Koala habitat and improve the viability of coastal saltmarsh in ecological communities;*
- *Maintaining the conservation area as a wildlife corridor, with a particular focus on koalas;*
- *The retention of all native trees, shrubs and undergrowth for native fauna;*
- *Ensuring the conservation area is substantially free of weed and invasive species;*
- *Restricting domestic, feral and wild animal access; and*
- *Ensuring the development proposed on the land is sensitive to the protection and management of the fauna including Koala habitat within the Conservation Area, and that it does not restrict movement to and from the site.*

The questions must be asked; why has Council not signed the conservation agreement in the three years since taking ownership of the site?

Why has the Federal government not insisted that the agreement be signed, especially considering this was part of the conditions of sale?

**This newsletter is produced by
The Koala Action Group Qld Inc**
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(Tree Planting Convenor)

Treasurer Tanya Golitschenko

Newsletter Debbie Pointing

Executive Members

Chris Bray

Carmel Rackemann

Congratulations and Thank you!

Year 1 teachers from Cleveland State Primary School wrote, produced and choreographed a story dance piece for the nation-wide competition 'Wakakirri'.

The story is based on the theme 'Rise' and has student dancers portraying characters as trees and their struggle to survive due to human impact.

It also features dancers playing the parts of native Australian animals, including Rainbow Lorikeets, Kangaroos and Koalas.

The show is important as it teaches students to look after their environment and nature - the home of our beloved koalas. The 'Wakakirri' team fundraised and donated the proceeds to KAG which we are extremely grateful for.

The talented team won four excellence awards and were nominated for two national festival awards. We wish them the best of luck for the national titles!



Koala reports - June to September 2022

Alexandra Hills: Allenby Rd.

Birkdale: Collingwood Rd, Creek Rd, Marlborough Rd, Mary St, Old Cleveland Rd E, Sunnybay Dr.

Capalaba: Ney Rd, Runnymede Rd, Tipuana Dr. **Cleveland:**

Coburg St W, Erubin St, Gretel Pl, Island St, Long St, Middle St, Princess St, Shore St E, Trinity Ct, Wellington St. **Mt Cotton:**

Wrights Pl. **NSI:** Dickson Way, Kindara St, Tramcan St. **Ormiston:**

Dundas St W. **Redland Bay:** Marine St.

Thornlands: Park St. **Victoria Pt:** School Rd. **Wellington Pt:**

Belford Dr, Bligh St, Hardy Dr, Marlborough Rd, Nelson Rd.

Other LCA's: **BCC:** Carindale, Mt Gravatt. **LCC:** Tamborine. **SCC:** Palmview. **SRC:** Fernvale.

Primary data sources:

<https://biocollect.ala.org.au/project/index/edad0555-32a6-473e-8956-c70cf80329c4>

<https://biocollect.ala.org.au/acsa/project/index/f3d0ad81-135d-40bb-baec-50db553df6d0>

[https://biocache.ala.org.au/occurrences/search?q=text:koala&fq=cl959:%22Redland%20\(C\)%22&fq=occurrence_decade_i:%222020%22&pageSize=100](https://biocache.ala.org.au/occurrences/search?q=text:koala&fq=cl959:%22Redland%20(C)%22&fq=occurrence_decade_i:%222020%22&pageSize=100)



Girl Guides Lend a Helping Hand

The tree planting at Silkwood St, Capalaba had lots of hands on deck with the Cleveland Gumnut Girl Guides attending to help plant 350 trees, shrubs and grasses.

This important wildlife habitat and movement corridor contains a watercourse that flows

into Coolnwynpin Creek and koala sightings are reported on occasion.

Creative Arts Display helps raise awareness

A display featuring life-size koalas made from recycled material is set up at Capalaba Park shopping centre for the month of September to highlight 'Save the Koala' month.

Artists Sheree and Shane (pictured far left and middle) are part of the team at Multicap's Centre of Creative Arts program.

Thanks to Redland councillor Adelia Berridge, Capalaba Park Shopping Centre management and the Multicap facilitators for collaborating to create such an excellent display.



COUNCIL'S PLANS TO DESTROY KOALA HABITAT FOR SPORTS PRECINCT UNACCEPTABLE SAYS KAG

Redlands Council is planning to destroy more than 500 koala habitat trees as part of its plans to construct sports fields, bike tracks, playgrounds, multiple clubhouses and car parks at Heinemann Road in Mount Cotton. Some of the Koala habitat proposed for clearing is mapped as being of Local and State significance and exemptions have been used by council to gain approvals to remove it.

The Koala's listing was upgraded to 'Endangered' in February this year, therefore it's completely incomprehensible that Council thinks this is an acceptable outcome.

Many trees earmarked for removal contain hollows that support wildlife such as gliders and are vital for many species of birds. These trees were supposed to be protected as they were identified in one of the consultant's reports as some of the oldest and largest trees in the Redlands, but many will be lost or compromised by the planned BMX tracks and clubhouse.

An active Wedgetail Eagle nest is located right in the middle of the impact area. Construction work will likely result in the pair of birds abandoning this nest in territory they may have had for decades.

The 250 acre parcel of land at Heinemann Rd, Mt Cotton was predominantly purchased in 2017 with the ratepayers' environment levy's contribution being \$5,148,000.00.

KAG president Debbie Pointing questions whether this is an appropriate use for the environment levy considering a substantial amount of koala habitat on the northern end of the site is planned to be bulldozed.

The intent for the Environment Levy is stated on Council's website, ***"The Environment Charge protects places of environmental significance in the Redlands Coast that are not protected through Council's land use planning powers or local laws."***

As the southern end of the site was already zoned 'Conservation' it would appear this parcel of land did not fit the criteria to use millions of dollars of ratepayer funded environment levy to purchase it unless the intention was to revegetate the partially cleared northern part.

The community expects that the priority on properties acquired with the Environment Levy is to protect their natural values and to rehabilitate previously degraded areas to create additional habitat for koalas and other wildlife.

KAG's key concerns are that the northern part of the site will now be so intensely developed that most environmental values will be destroyed in the attempt to cram in too many sporting and recreation uses.

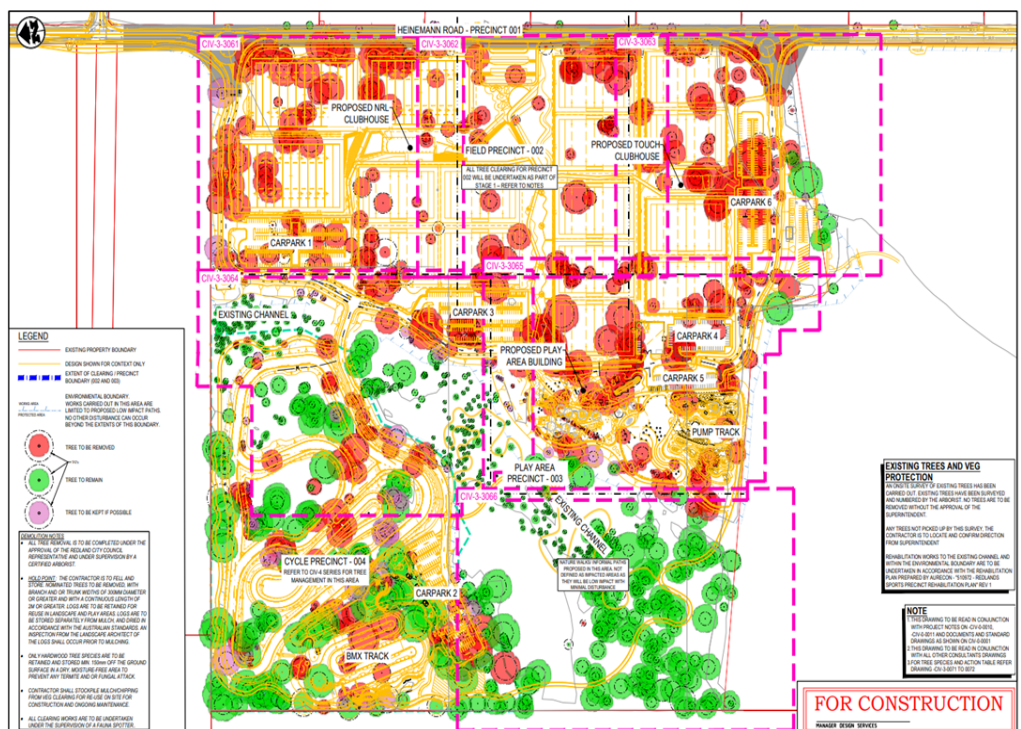
Suggestions from KAG during the consultation process to improve outcomes included the relocation (to an alternative site) of the BMX facilities and instead to have low impact walking trails to protect the historically important trees.

KAG also recommended a reduction in the 16 planned sporting fields to enable retention of some paddock trees to provide a connectivity buffer to enable fauna to move across and around the site.

However, it appears our suggestions have been largely ignored and disappointingly this has resulted in the planned loss of significant koala trees and habitat vital for other wildlife.



These large trees are some of the hundreds of koala habitat trees that will be bulldozed under Council's plan



The red circles show trees planned for removal. The green and purple circles are trees being retained or possibly retained. However, many of the trees marked to be kept are very close to the proposed BMX clubhouse and multitude of cycling tracks, therefore are unlikely to survive long term due to safety concerns.

Koala Vaccine - early signs of success!

In 2020, Currumbin Wildlife Hospital (CWH) launched the koala vaccine research program. A pilot research study commenced with a test population in Elanora, a suburb identified as the most diseased population on the Gold Coast. The objective was to capture and vaccinate 10% of the young adult koalas per year from the Elanora population and monitor the koala population and level of chlamydia over the following five years. After vaccination, the koalas are released back into the diseased population with a GPS collar to be tracked and tested 6-12 months later to check if they are chlamydia-free. Modelling shows that 10% should be the threshold that will have a significant impact and reduce the overall instances of chlamydia and therefore increase the breeding capacity. CWH will be tracking these koalas for up to five years. Currently, there are twelve koalas that have been released after vaccination back into the heavily diseased Elanora population with GPS trackers. Seven of them spent time at Tweed Coast Koala Research Hub. Of the twelve koalas CWH is currently tracking, 'Cassidy' has been confirmed pregnant after a recheck and hopefully now has a joey in the pouch. Two other females have mated and are hopefully also pregnant. This was a significant milestone in the CWH program since one of the most devastating and silent dangers of the chlamydia disease is infertility. Six of the twelve koalas have been recaptured and have all been in good health, hopefully indicating early signs of success.

Latest update (reported July 2022) - The team at CWH are very excited to announce, that there have been at least ten new Koala joeys, born in the past year, to wild Koalas in the dedicated vaccine trial, Elanora population. The Elanora Conservation Area provides a safe and natural environment for the wild Koala's taking part in the research trial. All new mothers have been vaccinated against Chlamydia, as part of the Hospital's ongoing research program. Male Koalas have also been vaccinated. Together with researchers from QUT (Queensland University of Technology), CWH has been trialling their world leading, Koala Chlamydia vaccine research program for just over two years now. The program is ground-breaking in that it involves tagging, physical tracking and a process of re-capture, checking and release over a period of five years. The information will be used to understand the iconic species and prevent disease throughout Australia. Over the past year, the success of the program has really been highlighted, with at least ten joeys born to vaccinated Koalas. CWH Senior Vet Michael Pyne said, "We are excited with the early success that this vaccine program is showing. Two years into the program, the results are very encouraging, with all vaccinated Elanora Koalas remaining free of chlamydia. The species is now considered endangered, and without programs like this, they still face the very real possibility of extinction." Partnering with QUT's Professor Kenneth Beagley, CWH has also administered the lifesaving chlamydia vaccine to more than 150 Koalas that have been released back into the wild.

**To report a sick or injured koala contact Redlands Wildlife
Rescue Service (24 hours) on 3833 4031**

Report koala sightings to - Redlands Koala Watch
<https://yoursay.redland.qld.gov.au/koalawatch>
OR

[Report a Koala Sighting – Koala Action Group Qld Inc \(koalagroup.asn.au\)](https://koalagroup.asn.au)

KAG Membership:Application/Renewal Please complete the following and forward to: KAG: PO Box 660, Capalaba Qld 4157 or email admin@koalagroup.asn.au
Fees can now be made via direct debit to: Koala Action Group Qld Inc. Suncorp Bank BSB: 484-799 Account No. 001748631 and include your name in the ref. line. Please note: If paying by cheque or money order, ensure the payee line includes the full name - Koala Action Group Qld Inc. (the bank does not accept abbreviations)

Name -----
Address -----
Phone/email -----

Annual membership rates: Single:\$15; Family:\$25; Pensioner:\$10; Under 18:\$10
(Donation:optional) Please specify membership type.

If you're interested in any of the following, please indicate.
Tree planting { } Help with displays { } Letterbox drops { } Wildlife Rescue { }
I apply for membership of the Koala Action Group Qld Inc and enclose my membership fee.

Signature:Date:.....

**All membership renewals are due in June unless otherwise stated on newsletter
envelope's address label. Email recipients will receive an email renewal advice.**