

# THE LAST KOALA?

## ICONS LIVING ON BOROBİ'D TIME

**JEREMY PIERCE**

CONSERVATIONISTS fear the local extinction of an Aussie icon as bulldozers move in on one of the last pockets of koala habitat on the Gold Coast.

The head of Dreamworld's koala breeding program, Al Mucci, said authorities needed to turn words into action or Commonwealth Games mascot Borobi (pictured) would be the only koala left on the Gold Coast.



The Coomera Conservation Group feared the local koala population would become unsustainable within five years if urgent steps weren't taken to protect the region's remaining marsupials and their habitat.

About 100 koalas are already trapped in isolated pockets in the development hotspot, with at least 14 surrounded by bulldozers at a residential estate under construction at Foxwell Rd.

Queensland Environment Minister Steven Miles has asked his department to investigate ways of relocating the animals to other habitats better connected to the so-called "koala corridor".

But it could be too little too late, with at least three koalas killed by cars in the area in the past few days.

Even a Gold Coast City Council planning report concedes different solu-

tions were needed for isolated koala populations that "face increased threat to their survival". It says planning measures do not provide "safe movement off isolated development sites".

Coomera Conservation Group spokeswoman Nicole Taylor said council should be doing more to protect koalas.

"Action must be taken within the next five years or the population will be unsustainable," she said. "They knew this was going to be a catastrophe and they haven't done anything about it."

Dr Miles said he met with conservationists who made "a strong case" for government intervention.

Dreamworld this year launched its captive breeding program to shore up the region's koala population, but Mr Mucci said authorities needed to get serious about saving the animals.

