



Ambassador Report September 2020

7th Sept 2020



Hi everyone,

What a time we are living in with regards to an unprecedented change in our society due to a global pandemic! There are many different views being discussed across multiple platforms and perhaps it is time to stop and ponder the future we have in store for humanity, the planet and our beloved native species. It is truly a time that we need to address the fundamental importance of living within our ecological limits and being the change that we wish to see in the world. It can be looked at from a perspective of fear or of one of opportunity. I have pondered these thoughts in times of great personal challenges, and I see the way forward as a time that we need to work smarter and not harder. We need to act with kindness, consideration, tolerance and forgiveness in a spirit of gratitude. The choice is ours and the decisions we make going forward need to address this change.

My activities as ambassador have been limited this month but a few exciting activities are in the works.

KOALA LAND AND WILDLIFE SUPPORT INC. (KLAWS) 16th August

Jill Richardson and I joined Martin Taylor and Darren Grover from Worldwide Fund for animals (WWF) at a property in Geham Qld near Toowoomba QLD to get a tour of the facilities formerly run by Clare Gover of "Return to the Wild Inc.", who sadly passed away in 2019.

KLAWS is a newly formed group who worked with Clare and are utilising the property for rescue and rehabilitation of sick, injured and fire effected koalas continuing to provide support to the wildlife populations here and to the wider public community in their region. They are seeking support and funding to purchase the property and commit to continue the work that Clare began. It would be advantageous to be part of this project in partnership with WWF and we will continue these conversations. We left Geham with a koala in need of care and were able to transport him to RSPCA Wacol for treatment. Collaborative efforts are what are most likely to be the success of future projects combining skills and efforts.

Social Deck 28th August

We are in the process of working with The Social Deck in Noosa Junction to write a feasibility study and Koala Sanctuary Strategy for the Noosa Region. Members Rex



Halverson, Sarah Radge, Jodie Sargeant and I have contributed to the collaborative process with Social Deck to research and write this document. This dream has always been a part of Queensland Koala Crusaders aspirations and thanks to the years of perseverance and organisation growth, we are closer to this dream becoming a reality. Our next step is to finalise the draft document in the coming weeks and distribute to management committee for further discussion. Once we are satisfied with this final step, we will be seeking partnerships and support for this exciting project.

... and then there are those activities that challenge!

Transport and Main Roads Bruce Highway Cooroy to Curra (C2C) upgrade

After our TMR meeting in Pomona at Noosa and District Landcare on the 8th July we requested that Transport and Main Roads address the significant findings in a paper published regarding animal welfare after land clearing.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-019-42448-8>

They have agreed to address this in our next stakeholder meeting - date to be determined.

SEQ Koala Conservation Strategy 2020-2025

https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/211732/seq-koala-conservation-strategy-2020-2025.pdf

The Qld State Government has published its final document regarding policy going forward. As we were involved in the stakeholder meetings and workshops alongside long standing koala experts, leading up to this document being published, we contributed with submissions and suggestions to best practice. I was interviewed on ABC radio regarding my views on this final document and I have to say that I am highly disappointed. The situation remains that mapping is flawed, and exemptions remain that will not protect our koalas especially in the urban and peri-urban footprint. The management and care of koalas is still not best practice especially in terms of "essential" infrastructure projects such as Main Roads and pre-approved developments. Until the system is changed and Planning departments have less say, continued land clearing will be the greatest threat to the survival of koalas and the many animals that live under their umbrella in areas of critical habitat.

Therefore, I am left feeling both hopeful and disillusioned. The exciting prospects of Sanctuary within reach gives me hope. Political will and a flawed system continue to frustrate. If we keep doing things the same way and expect to get different results, we will continue to see a species head towards extinction. However, if we raise our voices and continue to press for the change we wish to see in collaboration and connection amongst us, then perhaps we can turn the tide and see a better future for koalas.

This is "Save the Koala" month and together we can make a difference! It begins with our amazing event with Romane Cristecu and her furry friends at the University of the Sunshine Coast. Watch our facebook page for more upcoming events.

Meghan Halverson, Ambassador
Queensland Koala Crusaders Inc.
www.koalacrusaders.org.au