

# Threats to Koalas



# Fragmentation/Loss of habitat

Since European settlement, approximately 80% of koala habitat has been cleared. Of the remaining 20%, little is protected and most occurs on fragmented privately-owned land.

Animals need to be able to safely move between different habitats through vegetation corridors.

When forest is cleared for roads, houses and agriculture, Koalas lose vital habitat and must face many dangers in order to find food, shelter and mates.

List all the dangers for Koalas to move from habitat 1 to habitat 2.





# Solutions

- Plant koala food trees to help connect habitats in your back yard, at school, along fences and waterways
- Road crossings for animals
- Drive carefully and pay attention to road signage- slow down!



One way that children can help koalas is by planting koala food trees. There are many other easy ways to help koalas.

*Photo: .Ioan Limon Australian Koala Foundation*



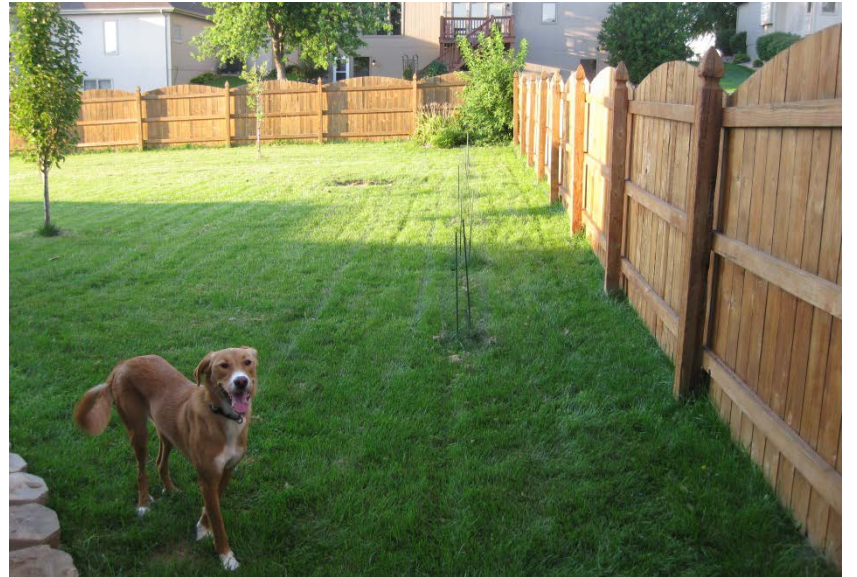
# Predation by Dogs, Cats & Foxes





# Solutions

- Keep cats inside or in a cage (especially at night).
- Keep dogs on a lead and in your yard
- Check trees for koalas before leaving dogs unattended
- Councils and National Parks consider fox baiting programs
- Information brochure for the community

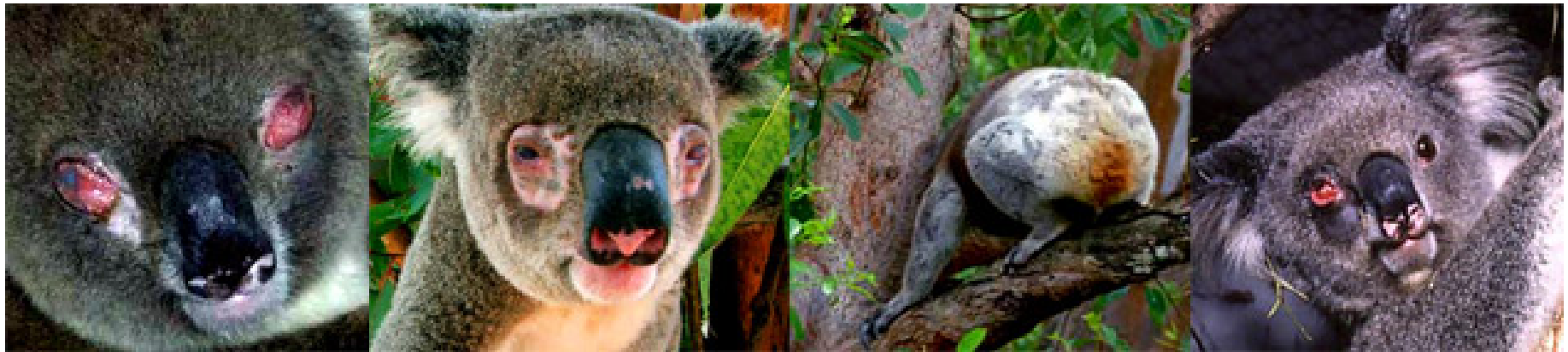


See Friends of the Koala website for an example brochure:

[http://www.friendsofthekoala.org/fok/dl/Responsible\\_Dog\\_Ownership\\_and\\_Koalas.pdf](http://www.friendsofthekoala.org/fok/dl/Responsible_Dog_Ownership_and_Koalas.pdf)

# Disease

- Koalas are badly affected by a disease called Chlamydia.
- Chlamydia is a small organism that causes:
  - Conjunctivitis, which can cause blindness
  - Pneumonia
  - Urinary tract infections and reproductive tract infections, which can cause female infertility
- Chlamydia is worst in Koala populations that are under stress, eg when food is scarce.



For tips on how to recognise a sick Koala, see the Friends of the Koala website:

<http://www.friendsofthekoala.org/fok/thehealthykoala>

# Solutions

- If you see a Koala, look closely to see if it has sore eyes, a brown stained rump or is behaving unusually.
- Call the Friends of the Koala Hotline if you see a sick Koala.
- Plant koala food trees to help maintain healthy Koala populations.



# Unfriendly fencing

- Fences stop Koalas from moving freely between habitats.
- Koalas will climb fences and can get caught on barbed wire or may get stuck in a yard with a dog.





# Solutions

- Educate the community on dangers of barbed wire and unfriendly fencing.
- Plant vegetation hedges instead of fences if you don't have a dog.
- Avoid barbed wire fences, leave a gap at the bottom of the fence for Koalas to go underneath, or use friendly fences that have wooden posts or poles every 20m.
- Put lattices at the top of fences with occasional panels to the ground.
- Distribute a brochure on the issue and refer to wildlife friendly fencing website

<http://wildlifefriendlyfencing.com/WFF/Home.html>



# Bushfires



- Koalas are at great risk from bushfires.
- Bushfires destroy the understory and a hot fire will burn the canopy, leaving no food for the Koalas. The forest can take up to 10 years to recover from a major burn.
- In habitats surrounded by development, a single fire can wipe out an entire Koala population.

# Solutions

- Councils and National Parks need to ensure that hazard prevention burning occurs in stages i.e sections are burned each year not the whole area at once
- The public need to observe rules and stay out of National Parks and council reserves when they are closed due to 'Total Fire Bans'

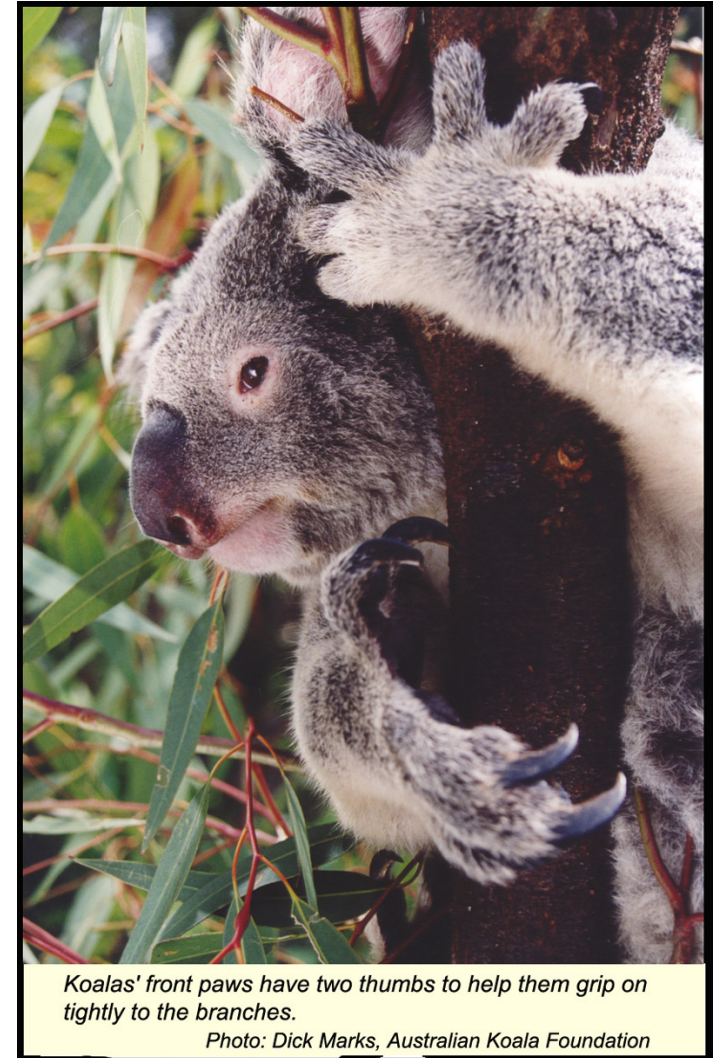




# How do Councils, NPWS & Forestry Help?

- Retain and protect areas of Eucalyptus forest that are typical habitats.
- Encourage landholders to plant Koala food trees
- Manage pest and weed populations in Koala habitats
- Councils and NPWS develop planning documents to ensure all the above mentioned solutions are implemented e.g Lismore City Council's Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management for South East Lismore

[www.lismore.nsw.gov.au/page.asp?f=RES-UAT-76-60-42](http://www.lismore.nsw.gov.au/page.asp?f=RES-UAT-76-60-42)



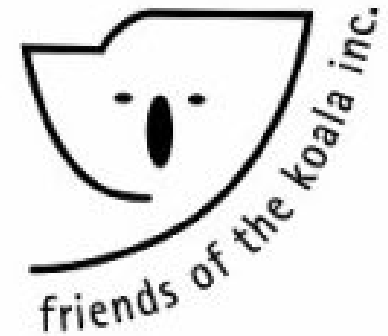
*Koalas' front paws have two thumbs to help them grip on tightly to the branches.*

*Photo: Dick Marks, Australian Koala Foundation*

# How do community organisations help?

- If people are concerned they can join a group that takes action e.g Friends of the Koala.

<http://www.friendsofthekoala.org/fok/>



- The CEN (Central Coast) runs a program called 'Landfor Wildlife' that encourages land holders and schools etc to preserve their natural bushland for animals.

<http://www.cen.org.au/landforwildlife/>

