

## **SUNSHINE COAST KOALAS SOON TO BE A MEMORY**

Wild koalas in south-east Queensland will be extinct in the near future if nothing is done to protect this iconic species.

In the past twelve months over 700 koalas have been treated from around Queensland, including areas of the Sunshine Coast and Morton Bay.

An Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital (AZWH) spokesperson said “The biggest threats to the current wild koala population include disease, car hits, domestic dog attacks, and deforestation of traditional koala habitat.”

Koala populations in south-east Queensland are in a steep decline and are expected to become extinct in the coming years.

Sunshine Coast Koala Wildlife Rescue (SCKWR) media manager Jaylene Musgrave stated the public needs to become more proactive about making a difference in the world, especially in the case of our national wildlife.

Growing expansion and development on the sunshine coast is causing a major issue. Ms Musgrave stated “development is like a virus” and the continual destruction of koala habitat as happened in places such as Peregian Springs needs to be closely monitored by not only Government officials but also the community as a whole.

With local councils heavily promoting national wildlife as a major tourism draw, Ms Musgrave says that it is disappointing that they do not invest any money into the conservation and protection of the species.

Local organisations such as the SCKWR being funded by the founders, twin brothers Ray and Murray Chambers, and public donations with no Government support.

An AZWH spokesperson stated “If nothing is done to protect wild koalas in our area, the sad reality is that they will very soon become extinct,” and that the public needs to be aware of deforestation in areas where koalas are living.

Ms Musgrave displayed how frightening the current situation is, stating “you are more likely to see a koala as road kill than in the wild on the Sunshine Coast”.

Kelly Butterworth, USC Journalism Student.