



Devastating bushfires challenge

Inside this issue

Long term care at PSK Hospital 2

Koala Stress Research 2

Christmas Adoptions 3

Support Carers graduation 3

Newcastle Airport mobile warning sign 3

Recording your Live Sightings 4

Rescues, Releases and Deaths 4

Rescue and contact info 6

Support our Sponsors 6

All we want for Christmas is ..NO MORE BUSH FIRES!

Port Stephens Koalas volunteers have been kept busy responding to four fires, 3 in just a few weeks. A large fire affected the area around Salt Ash 22-23 November. That was due to high winds and electrical wires touching. That was after a frighteningly large blaze that threatened the whole Tilligerry Peninsula in August.

Mambo Wetlands has had two deliberately lit blazes within a few days. A small blaze near Port Stephens Drive on Friday 7 December was put out quickly thanks to vigilant neighbours and a quick response by Firefighters. Just 3 days later another fire destroyed over 8 hectares of the Wetlands near Salamander Shopping Cen-

tre, coming dangerously close to many nearby homes. It could have been worse, we all thought, as the middle of that area is low lying wetland with no trees, but we know koalas have perished and we have been kept busy for days looking for injured koalas and responding to many calls from concerned people. We have been helped through good liaison with Firefighters, neighbouring wildlife groups WINC and NATF, and a tree climber from WildThing ecologists

to reach koalas too high for usual rescue methods.

Volunteers walked the periphery of the burn several times looking for victims. 4 rescued on Tuesday: Daisy and joey Peony had become separated but were reunited and safely released the next day, a wet-bottom girl Naomi is in care, a badly burned Wuginni was euthanased. Another mother Eila and her joey rescued Thursday are in care. The joey pictured, Cohen, was protected by his mum's body from worse burns.



Koalas in long-term care at PSK Koala Hospital

Tolley has been in care since January 2017 when he was found on the ground unable to move properly. Blood tests revealed a crypto infection and he was transferred to Port Macquarie Koala Hospital for treatment, returning to us in August 2017. He is unreleasable due to some neurological issues such as not moving out of the heat, as well as gut health issues. He is approximately 10 years old. We have applied to keep him in permanent care as he helps us train new carers.

Maree has been in care since late 2017 after contact with a motor vehicle caused blindness which we now believe will be permanent. She is a young female and seems to be coping well in care. We are about to submit an application for her permanent care. We built two more yards with large live trees and Maree moved there in October. She hasn't climbed the trees but negotiates her tall upright branches and other logs easily.

Solstice has been in care since the winter solstice on 22 June 2018 after a motor vehicle impact that fractured his elbow and jaw. Solstice's recovery has been delayed by a small fall (seen on our camera) causing radial nerve damage in his left arm that had surgery. He has been treated by Dr Ilona Hudson and her vet nurse with laser physiotherapy. He is expected to be released back into his wild home-range after he demonstrates that he can easily climb the large tree in his yard.



Tai was rescued circling on the ground in September. He was blind but in good condition because he was young and still near his mother. The ruptured cataract in his left eye was removed by Dr Jeff Smith in [Sydney](#), who donated his expertise. There is still some corneal oedema which is being treated with oral medication. Early indications are that he may have vision in that eye. If it is sufficient, he may be releasable.

Joanie had an injury to her right eye that was successfully treated, but she has no vision from that eye or the other, which looked healthy on rescue. Her tiny pouch joey has grown into a back baby, named Pablo (because she has another joey called Picasso). Pablo will need a playmate to develop climbing skills before release.

It's all in the poo: Non-invasive hormone monitoring research



Koalas are facing immense pressure from human induced environmental change. Rescued koalas find it hard to settle and rehabilitate in clinics. Conservation physiology is an emerging new theme in biology, which provides an array of powerful non-invasive tools to assess the health and welfare of animals. Hormone monitoring can be done using koala scats and fur to measure quantitative data on stress biology.

Dr Edward Narayan is an expert Conservation Physiologist from the Western Sydney University. Edward's research in koala stress biology is providing interesting new scientific knowledge on stress levels of wild koalas in relation to environmental trauma. Non-invasive hormone monitoring can support our on-going efforts to better monitor koalas during rehabilitation and long term care. PSK volunteers, including vet Dr Don Hudson, attended Dr Narayan's seminar.

Adoptions — could you help?

In return for your \$50 donation you will receive a personalised e-Certificate with your name and the name and photo of the koala which you have chosen to adopt. You will also receive your koala's story so far and a notification of the outcome of their treatment. This is a symbolic adoption or 'foster' program. Your donation will contribute directly to the costs of the care of the koala. 8 koalas are available for adoption – they make great Christmas presents! Please encourage your friends and family to go to our website <https://portstephenskoalas.com.au/adopt/>.

Support Carers graduate

Training volunteers is a continual process at PSK to expand and share specialised knowledge about koalas. 17 Support Carers graduated in September. Some are also Rescuers. The venue was wonderful thank you Barry & Viv of [Wanderers Retreat Port Stephens](#). The cupcakes were delicious too!

About 40 volunteers are rostered regularly at our Hospital, they help with rescues including answering the rescue line, pick koala food, look after our plantation, sell raffle tickets, organise fundraisers, do talks, letter box drops after fires advising of wildlife rescue numbers, do admin tasks and provide IT help. Members can apply to help on our [Volunteer page](#).



Newcastle Airport donates mobile warning sign

Port Stephens Koalas took delivery in June of a mobile roadside warning sign donated by [Newcastle Airport](#) at a cost of \$16,500. The 'slow down' message lights up when vehicles approach at more than 40kmh. The sign will be moved to different locations to alert road-users of high koala movements in that area.

"Initiatives like this are vital. Every one of the koalas we save helps us stop the slide so we can begin to rebuild the population." Ron Land said in a Port Stephens Examiner story. Newcastle Airport CEO Peter Cock, and Port Stephens Koalas' secretary Ron Land are pictured right.

In-kind support from the manufacturer [Hi-Vis Group](#) has ensured the sign is fixed securely to the trailer.



Record your live sighting of a koala

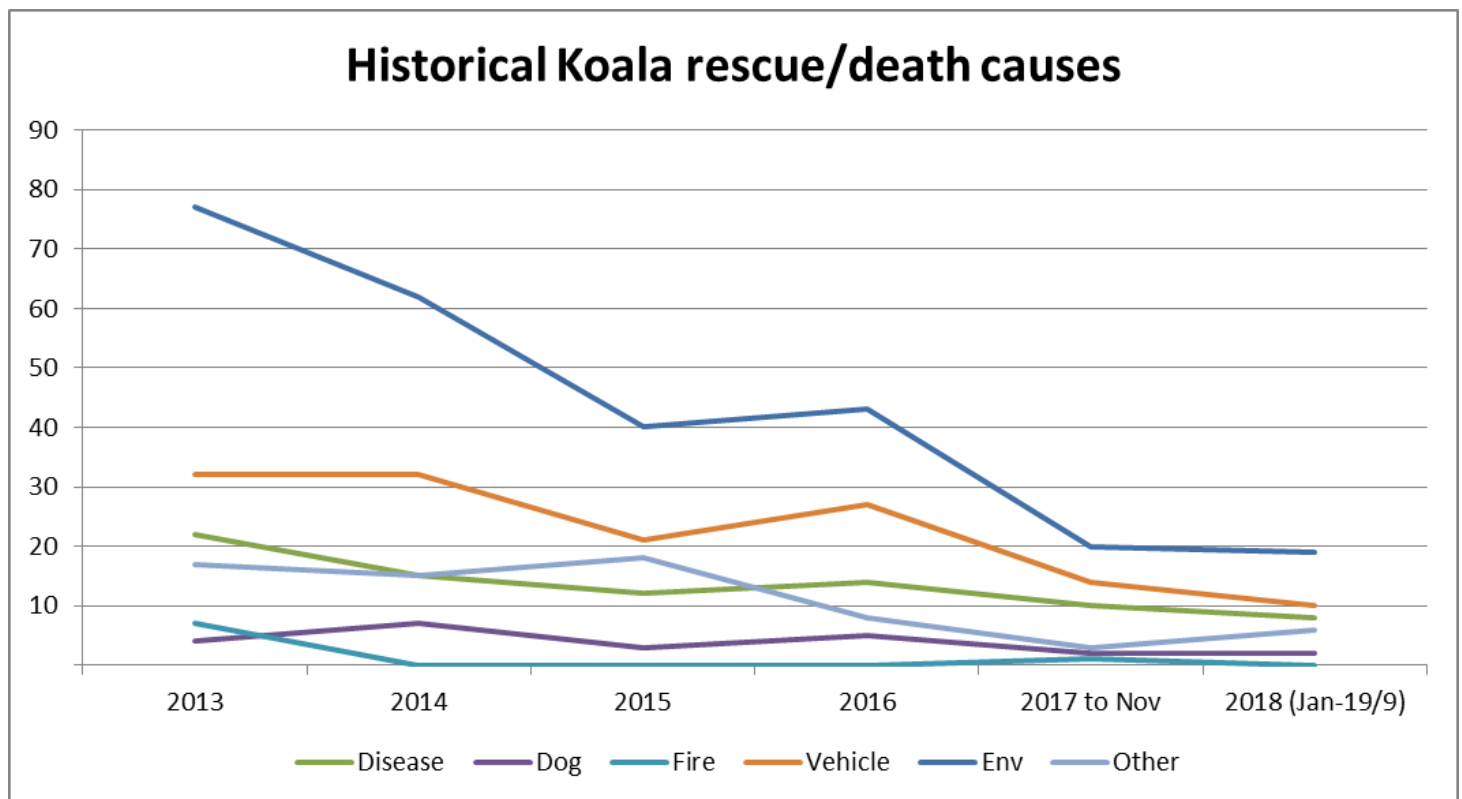
Live sightings of koalas are becoming more important as koala numbers decline in Port Stephens and across the Hunter Valley.

Since 1994 koala records have been kept for every koala coming into care in Port Stephens and these have been uploaded to the National Parks Bionet (aka Wildlife Atlas). This data is used by Port Stephens Council, Ecologists and Consultants when considering development applications. **We want to protect koala habitat, so we need your help to record live sightings too.**

You can email the details to data@portstephenskoalas.com.au. Make sure you provide the date, an accurate address, GPS coordinates if possible, the sighter's name and phone number or address and any comments about the gender or health of the koala.



Seen a koala today?

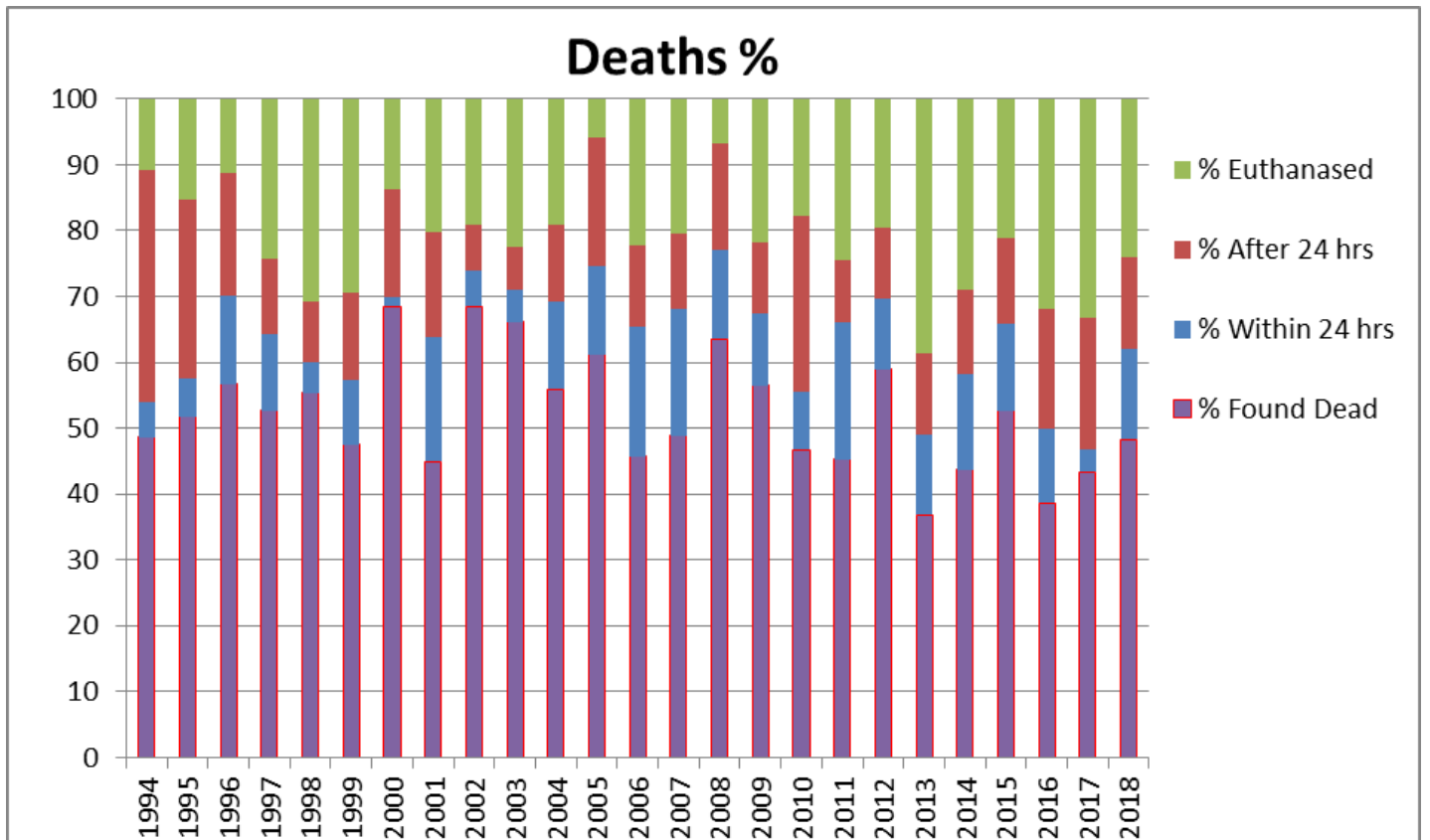
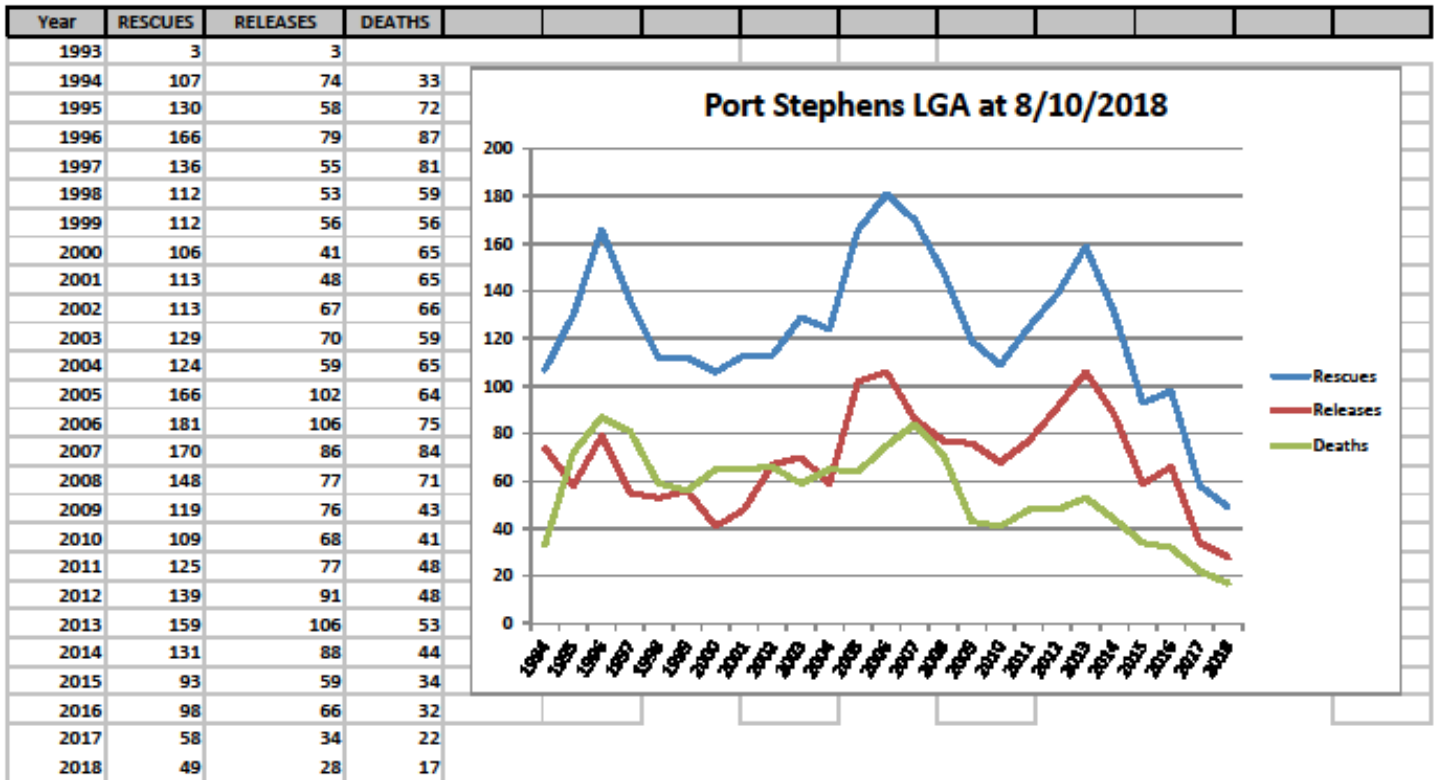


PSK data shows the decreasing koala population in Port Stephens LGA through a reduction in rescues. The simple answer for the decline in population is loss of habitat.

The largest category of reasons for rescue is Environmental—meaning the koala is in an Unsuitable Environment: “when a koala is in danger from any natural or man-made structure (roads, building, ocean), human or dog behaviour or no food or shelter available”. Chlamydia is the most serious disease. The most efficient killer of koalas is Motor Vehicles, but this is not clearly shown in these graphs.

Of the koalas that are rescued, but do not survive, around half of them were Found Dead and another 10% or so die within 24 hours of being rescued due to severe injuries. Euthanasia is a last resort, used only when all other medical alternatives have been exhausted to prevent further suffering. We do our best.

Rescues, Releases and Deaths 1994-2018



PORT STEPHENS KOALAS



PO Box 60
Anna Bay NSW 2316
Australia
ABN 27 614 265 833
NPWS Licence MWL000100291

portstephenskoalas@gmail.com
www.portstephenskoalas.com.au

VISION STATEMENT - Port Stephens Koalas aims to provide the world best practice standards of care to sick, injured and orphaned koalas to give them the best opportunity to be returned to the wild, while supporting research and collaboration to preserve their habitat to ensure that future generations may continue to enjoy seeing wildlife in their natural setting.

Follow our koalas in care on social media!

www.facebook.com/portstephenskoalas Instagram YouTube and Twitter: PortStephensKoalas

KOALA IN DANGER — RESCUE INFORMATION

Sick Koalas come to the ground or stay low in trees. They may have brown dirty bottoms or crusty weepy eyes.

Cars are the biggest killer of koalas. Be aware at dusk and dawn, a popular time for their movements. It's not a crime to hit a koala, but please report it by calling our rescue number. If it is safe to do so, move the koala to the side of the road, there may be a live joey inside the mother's pouch. Joeys have been saved by this action.

Attacks from dogs are too common. Just one small bite can become infected and kill a koala. Keep your dog on a lead in parks and restrained away from gum trees at night.

Rescue number: 0418 628 483. Store it in your phone. Call us if you are in any doubt of a koala's well being. We are available 24/7. Call us immediately, any time of day or night. Quick action saves lives.

Suitable environment may be questionable. On or near busy roads. No apparent gum trees in the vicinity. Vulnerable to other hazards such as dogs and swimming pools.

Ideally, restraining a koala should be done without handling, avoiding injury to yourself. You may end up with **scars** if you try to handle koalas. A plastic laundry basket or a large towel or blanket can be used to place over the koala to keep it calm, and if possible put it in a quiet place away from pets (dogs especially) and noisy children or machinery.

Some of our wonderful Sponsors



Arteke Salon Collective
Plant Concrete & Civil
Kate Washington MP
Hoselink
Advanced Finance Solutions
Kountable
Marquis Bathroom Products P/L

