

# FOLKLAW NEWS

JUNE, 1997.

NEWSLETTER NO. 6

Hi to all FOLKLAW Members and Friends,

Well this year is moving along quickly. Last Newsletter I mentioned that our 1st Annual General Meeting was coming up and we have now fixed a date for this important event. So everyone put aside in your diary -

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** - Sunday 22nd June, 1997 commencing 2.00 p.m. at the Somers Hall, R. W. Stone Reserve, Camp Hill Road, Somers. We have Brian Thomas, Parks Victoria, Ranger in Charge of Coolart Wetlands & Homestead and Alan Pullen DNRE Ranger at French Island as Guest Speakers. besides elections, afternoon tea and a video on translocation of koalas. Come along reminiscence about how we commenced and what we have achieved.

There is a nomination form attached to this newsletter and if you wish to nominate to be on the Committee and take a more active role with the group. We would like to see some fresh new faces and enthusiastic ideas. Even if you do not wish to join the committee please still come and enjoy listening to our speakers.

## EDUCATION & COMMUNITY AWARENESS.

Interested in growing plants for local wildlife? Somers Primary School has a project underway and invites community members to join in. Contact Judy Jack on 5983-1034.

## SAVE KOALA DAY - FRIDAY 25TH JULY, 1997.

We require helpers to participate at local schools with activities and selling Save Koala Day stickers, tattoos and badges. Please contact Alison on (03) 59-838634 if you can help.

## KOALA RESERVE UPDATE.

Habitat Days are held on the last Sunday of the Month from 9.30 to 11.30 a.m.

Habitat Days for the year are:- 29th June, 27th July, 24th August, 28th September, 26th October, 30th November, 28th December.

The Shire's Conservation Officer, Ron Musker has completed our Management Plan for the Koala Reserve and we expect to be busy tree planting shortly.

Next working bee will be preparation for planting so bring your gloves, spades and secateurs.

Brent Hall a member of FOLKLAW has been observing the local wildlife at the Koala Reserve and has listed the following birdlife that resides or visits regularly at the reserve.

Thanks Brent for your contribution. Any member is welcome to send contributions to the newsletter, please send to Newsletter Co-ordinator, C/o Post Office, Somers, 3927.

Residents - White-faced Heron, Sacred Ibis, Australian Hobby, Spure-winged Plover, Silver Gull, Galah, Eastern Rosella, Skylark, Welcome Swallow, Black-Faced Cuckoo Shrike, Blackbird, Willy Wagtail, Red Wattlebird, Little Wattlebird, White-Eared Honeyeater, Spotted Pardalote, Magpie Lark, Butcherbird, Raven, Magpie and (Introduced) birds, Blackbird, Gold Finch, Starling and Mynah.

Visitors - Straw-necked Ibis, Marsh Harrier, Australian Kestrel, Snipe (Japanese Latham's), Spine-tailed Swift (Neddetail), Sisticola, (Fantailed Warbler).



### WILDLIFE CORRIDORS

Mari Q a consultant employed by Lord Somers Camp under a Coast Action Grant for to develop a strategy to improve the water quality and address erosion issues on Merricks Creek, came to talk to the Committee about our contribution to the local area, wetlands, creeks and wildlife habitat. She was very impressed with the work FOLKLAW are doing at the Koala Reserve and she considers this area to be a important link in the creation of wildlife corridors in the region. Well, What is a Wildlife Corridor? A corridor is the area which facilitates the movement of native fauna between other areas.

This is a very exciting project and fits well within the aims of FOLKLAW. If you would like to find out more about the Merricks Creek Project Consulting Group a meeting will be held at Lord Somers Camp on 29th June, 1997 at 1.45 - 4.45 p.m. Please ring Mari Q on (03) 9509-3890 if plan to attend.

### HMAS CERBERUS REPORT

On Saturday 31st May a group of Cerberus personnel together with Angus Walsh from RAN Sloops, Gordon Jameison, Noel from the Lions Club and Judy & Peter Jack replaced trees at HMAS Cerberus lost during the long, hot, dry summer which were planted by the local school children last year. Many thanks Judy for organising this day.

### WILDLIFE CARER'S REPORT by Jenny Bryant.

I was called out one night around midnight to Coolart Road, Bittern, where a women had hit a koala at 100 kph (hard enough to cause damage to her car). Fortunately a police car had been travelling behind her and they protected the injured koala, who was in the middle of the road, by parking in front of her with lights flashing and directing traffic until I got there. The koala, a large adult female was X-rayed and found to have extensive damage to one side of her pelvis so she had to be put down. The woman who had hit the koala kept in touch with me about the incident with much concern and she was shocked when I told her that most people hit these beautiful animals and choose to simply drive away.

The next evening an adult male was seen sitting on Frankston-Flinders Road, Balnarring with a very swollen and badly injured face. The person who had found him pushed him over to a nearby tree. When I got there he was half way up the gum tree which I immediately climbed and captured him in a hessian bag. He fought and growled all the way. After a few days of anti-inflammatory injections and the certainty his jaw was not injured, I released him.

Next night an elderly female was mauled by a dog in a Balnarring backyard. She was very shocked and bleeding from the hind legs. I sedated her and cleaned the wounds but her age was against her and the indescribable trauma she has endured ended her life hours later.

Footnote - We thank Jenny very much for her contribution to the newsletters as it is stressful for her to relive and put her emotions into words.

Some areas locally where wildlife have been killed recently are:-

South Beach Road heading into Somers - wallabies from Cerberus. There has been approximately six wallabies killed along this road in the past 4 months. This section seems to be a speed strip.

Coolart Road all parts - possums and koalas.

Frankston-Flinders Road, Balnarring - koalas & possums.

FOLKLAW has recently submitted a report regarding wildlife signs to the Shire. Letters or phone calls to the Shire regarding this matter may speed the process up.



### FRIENDS GROUP CONFERENCE.

Roger Richards and Alison Kain attend the Friends Group's Conference at the Lord Somers Camp on 19th & 20th April, 1997. Alison presented a report about our group and Roger acted as a Workshop Leader on the Sunday taking a group to our Koala Reserve. Thank you to both Alison and Roger for participating and creating community awareness of FOLKLAW. Roger's report follows.

FOLKLAW was invited to escort a group of delegates of the Friends Group Conference around the Koala Reserve and other nearby areas of interest. On the Sunday I took a group around the reserve where we were fortunate to find a koala in residence. We followed this with a walk around the Promenade, Foreshore and the Coolart Wetlands. They were most impressed with the work carried out to date by FOLKLAW and the Friends of the Promenade and a letter of appreciation was received from Marion Taylor of the Friends Committee. Roger Richards.

### MELBOURNE KOALA FORUM

Copyright Philip Wright 1997.

Wearing my hat of "photojournalist" I was privileged to attend a unique meeting of Australia's foremost koala scientists and wildlife managers which took place at the Melbourne Zoo on April 21 & 22, 1997. An initiative of, and sponsored in full by, the Australian Koala Foundation (AKF), the aim of the Koala Forum was to crystallize opinion within the scientific community and with key koala managers about the best options for dealing with overpopulation issues within key island and isolated mainland koala populations in Victoria and South Australia. It was thought that a united scientific front would be able to influence policy makers into making more informed management decisions in regard to these issues and to land-use issues generally.

Interestingly, while the emotive issue of how to deal with the high-profile Kangaroo Island problems headed the agenda, none of the invitees from South Australia made it to the forum. Nor did certain of the usually outspoken proponents of controversial koala management strategies such as culling. However the great majority of those invited did see fit to attend, and this included delegates from NSW, Queensland and from many parts of Victoria.

The two days were spent in discussing various issues and input was received from all the attendees and from most of the official observers. While there was agreement on many issues, the gathering failed to agree on the critical matters of the urgency of the problems faced by different koala populations in South Eastern Australia, and on a variety of ethical issues - the most controversial being that raised by the notion of managing populations by introducing chlamydia into otherwise healthy isolated populations.

The objective of consensus, then, eluded the forum as no common scientific front was forged. Despite the worthy attempts of the AKF's Deborah Tabart to inject some passion into the debate, there was a marked reluctance among the delegates to commit to anything other than some fairly generalized and cautious resolutions about what is already known and, to a lesser extent, about what still needs to be known. However Ms Tabart did indicate that the AKF would support the many continuing and further research projects identified, most of which were to do with following up the effects of translocated chlamydia-free island or isolate animals to chlamydia-positive areas and to identify the effect the resultant exposure to chlamydia has on those animals.

Perhaps, on reflection, it was a little ambitious - naive even - to expect that those attending, all of whom are employed in some way or means by governments, would be willing to appear in any way critical of current policies regarding koalas and their habitat. This is obviously the fertile ground of independent organizations like the AKF and FOLKLAW who are able to do without being muzzled. Science is, after all, the handmaiden of ecological responsibility, not its white knight.



## INTERNET

Visit the following internet sites:

### FOLKLAW

<http://www.vicnet.net.au/~folklaw/>

Koala Preservation Society of Qld.

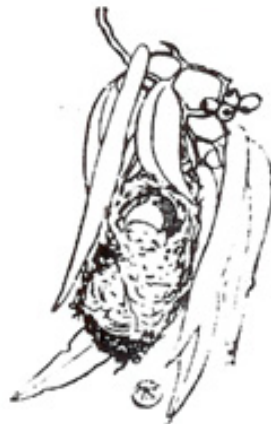
<http://www.ecn.net.au/~davej/koala/kn296/kn296pr.htm>

Australian Koala Foundation.

<http://www.gil.com.au/~akfkoala>

Australian Nature Conservation Agency

<http://www.anca.gov.au>



## DATES TO REMEMBER

AGM - sUnDaY 22nd June, 1997 At Somers Hall, R. W. Stone Reserve, Camp Hill Road, Somers commencing at 2.00 p.m.

Habitat Days Last Sunday of each month at Koala Reserve (Melways 193 K9) 9.30 - 11.30 a.m.  
29th June 27th July, 24th August, 28th September, 26th October, 30th,  
November, 28th December.

National Save Koala Day

Friday - 25th July, 1997.

Committee Meetings - 2nd Friday evening of each month. If you wish to attend ring either Judy Jack on 5983-1034 or Alison Kain on 5983-8634 for venue.

Coast Action Weed Workshop - Sunday 20th July, 1997 commencing 11.00 a.m.  
Starts at Lord Somers Camp, then The Promenade Creek. BBQ Lunch Lord Somers Camps.  
Details Michelle Lauder (03) 9296-4525.

We have available for interested people a newsletter from Greening Australia in relation to Community Training Programs for 1997. If anyone is interested in any of the following seminars please contact Alison Kain on 5983-8634 for details.

- |   |                   |
|---|-------------------|
| T4. Basic propagation of local native plants. | Sunday 15/6/97.   |
| T5. Expanding your propagation skills.        | Saturday 19/7/97. |
| T6. Project Management.                       | Thursday 24/7/97. |
| T7. Interpreting the presence of fauna.       | Sunday 3/8/97.    |
| T8. Monitoring your revegetation project.     | Thursday 21/8/97. |

Hope you remember World Environment Day - Thursday 5th June, 1997.