

5 THINGS TO CONSIDER

1 Friendly or playful dogs can react to koalas unexpectedly due to "Fight or Flight" instinct

Even if out of character, any dog can attack a koala if surprised by a koala in the yard, especially if a first-time encounter.

2 Allowing dogs to roam is an offence and increases potential for harm

Not only is it an offence to allow your dog to roam, it also increases the risk of harm to your dog due to vehicles, wild dog/s, baiting and other traps for pest animals. At night seems to be the most common time for dogs to roam, which is when our koalas are also most active.

3 Your yard may form part of a koala's territory

Koalas know their food trees and territory intimately. Young males especially seek territory in a landscape of highly fragmented habitat. As excellent climbers, koalas will single-mindedly pursue a destination making them difficult to exclude with normal fencing.

4 The smallest nip of a dog's teeth can be fatal

Did you know that your dog's mouth contains large amounts of bad bacteria and even the smallest amount on a koala's skin can cause extensive damage resulting in a slow and painful death? Most of the time, you can't see the damage until it is too late.

5 How to manage a dog-koala incident

Sometimes despite prevention attempts, an encounter, bite or worse can occur. If so, secure your dog inside and immediately call for help or advice:

Friends of the Koala 24hr Koala Rescue (02) 6622 1233
Koalas might seem unharmed, dazed or even race up a tree, but past cases show they are likely to need care.

DID YOU KNOW? Koalas are listed as vulnerable under state and federal laws. Across Australia, koalas are under severe pressure from habitat loss, car strikes, domestic dog attacks and disease.



Image: Koala Action Group Qld Inc. - Redlands



DID YOU KNOW? An urban koala may travel 20kms in a week between trees and buildings, across backyards and roads in search of food, a mate or territory.



Artist's impression of koala movements based on tracking study credited to Koala Action Group Qld Inc. - Redlands

Keeping Koalas in our landscape

A proactive approach for Dog Owners



Friends of the Koala is a licensed, volunteer group that rescues, rehabilitates and releases koalas in Northern Rivers NSW.
www.friendsofthekoala.org



Office of Environment & Heritage

Brochure produced by Byron Shire Council with support of the NSW Office of Environment & Heritage.

© 2018 Byron Shire Council

Byron Shire Council thanks you for reading this brochure and any efforts to support the safe coexistence of dogs and koalas in Byron Shire. www.byron.nsw.gov.au (02) 6626 7000

Byron Shire
Home to iconic koalas



Where are koalas?

Across Byron Shire, koalas are often seen in the urbanised areas of Byron Bay, Bangalow, Suffolk Park, Federal, Possum Creek and Ewingsdale. Koalas are also commonly seen in the rural areas of Mullumbimby Creek, Tyagarah, Brunswick Heads and Broken Head.

In these areas, koalas are often in their favourite food trees such as Tallowwood, Swamp Mahogany, Grey Gum and Forest Red Gum. Mothers will train their young to return to the same tree for feeding.

This long term pattern of mothers showing their young where to feed has been impacted by urban development and subsequently a rise in domestic dogs.

KOALA HABITAT IN BYRON SHIRE

The potential koala habitat in Byron Shire shown below does not mean koalas are present. Habitat quality, fire, heat, highways, roads and infrastructure can all influence koala presence. Bushfires have affected numbers in the shire's north and more koalas are present in the south around Bangalow.



Why is a safe coexistence important?

Dog and koala encounters can place dogs at risk of wounds that may require immediate vet care. In contrast, these same encounters often result in koala fatality. Reducing the potential for conflict and harm between dogs and koalas means a safer co-existence for both.

Koalas regularly traverse wide expanses of ground between feed trees, especially at night. While dog owners are required to practice responsible dog ownership and control their dogs, koala conservation is everyone's responsibility so koalas may remain in our landscape for generations to come.

DID YOU KNOW? On average, over 70% of koalas die after being attacked by dogs in the Northern Rivers. At least 115 koalas have suffered from dog attacks in the region since 2009 and only 22 were released according to Friends of the Koala. You can help by following the strategies herein and by saving 24hr Koala Rescue (02) 6622 1233 to your phone to seek help for koalas at risk.



Koalas have strong defences

Koalas have very strong and surprisingly sharp claws to provide gravity-defying grip in support of their body weight when climbing trees, and obstacles.

If feeling threatened, they will use their claws which can cause serious wounds requiring stitches. With long front teeth, they can also bite deeply with startling agility.



Roxy escaped after being bitten and cornered by a surprised dog. She was rescued and released nine months later after an operation.

Local rescue and rehabilitation group, Friends of the Koala frequently respond to calls for help from dog owners. From deep gash wounds to an unnoticeable skin puncture or internal injury - all can be fatal to koalas. Bacterial infection can set-in rapidly after the smallest nip from a dog's teeth. Roxy was bitten by a dog acting on instinct to a possible territorial threat, but she was saved from a slow and painful death.

3 Management Strategies

- 1 Bring your dog inside with you at night, or enclose your veranda with a gate, or create a secure dog run.
- 2 Ensure you have exercised dog owner responsibility - see council website byron.nsw.gov.au/Community/Pets/Responsible-dog-ownership
- 3 Place koala escape poles, climbing routes and trees near fences. Ask if your neighbours will do similar.

