



Media Release

Wednesday 11 November 2009

Gold Coast koala populations in need of help

The combination of ongoing habitat loss and fragmentation, road fatalities, dog attacks, and Chlamydial disease means that koala populations in South East Queensland and northern NSW, already listed as 'vulnerable', are in real danger of collapse. The Gold Coast koala population could play a very significant role in efforts to sustain koala populations in South East Queensland. However, they need our help.

John Callaghan, Gold Coast City Council's (GCCC) Koala Conservation Project Manager, will discuss a number of local koala conservation initiatives at Gecko's monthly guest speaker night at Gecko House, 139 Duringan St, Currumbin at 6:30pm on Wednesday November 25. All are welcome to attend.

"A city-wide koala conservation plan will be developed together with suburb-specific koala management strategies in priority areas where GCCC will be seeking community involvement and assistance", said Mr Callaghan.

Current efforts are being focused on the conservation of koalas in the rapidly expanding East Coomera urban area, in accordance with a Scientific Purposes Permit issued by the Queensland Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM).

"A koala monitoring and translocation program in East Coomera is well underway, so I will be able to discuss some of our early results and future plans", said Mr Callaghan.

Several hundred koalas are believed to occur at East Coomera and Pimpama, within an area of around 3,640 hectares. About 1,000 hectares of this area will be developed in association with the new Coomera urban area to provide a new Town centre with accommodation, facilities and services for new residents. However, this development will also have serious impacts on the local koala population.

The East Coomera Koala Conservation Project involves a number of initiatives, including:

- relocation of the most at-risk koalas from areas where habitat will be cleared to other areas of secure habitat in Gold Coast City
- a monitoring program for East Coomera koalas and for koalas that are relocated to other areas
- a community and schools education program, and
- involvement of landowners, residents and the broader community

The overall koala conservation plan will guide measures to offset loss of koala habitat, by securing and restoring other parts of the City away from the urban footprint

The koala is listed as 'vulnerable' throughout the South East Queensland Bioregion under the Nature Conservation Act 1992, in response to significant threatening processes and evidence of significant declines in koala numbers in the region. A 2009 DERM report estimated a 64% decline in koala abundance for the Koala Coast population (Redland City, Logan City and Brisbane City) over the period 1996 to 1999.

Gecko presents a free guest speaker night on the 4th Wednesday of each month on topical environmental issues. A gold coin donation is requested per glass of wine and nibbles. For catering purposes and to prevent waste, RSVP by 3pm on the day before the event to speakers@gecko.org.au or call 5534 1412.

ENDS

Information for media:

Guest Speaker	John Callaghan	07 5582 8024
Gecko Secretary	Lois Levy	0412 724 222