

A collection of newspaper clippings

(1988 - 1999)

by

DR Robert L. Close

***Featuring the campaign to save the Wedderburn koalas
following the fight from its onset to its conclusion***

Also

***On the research of koalas and
the environment in the Macarthur area***

Compiled by

Lynn Bowden and Stephen Fellenberg 2017

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Two folders with an array of newspaper clipping and documents on the koala and the environment collected by Dr Robert L. Close

Folder **ONE** has two sections:

- National Parks Association documents on the fight to save the Wedderburn koala colony (25 items)
- Newspaper clippings following the campaign to save Wedderburn koala colony between 1988 to 1999 (219 items)

Folder **TWO** has two sections:

- Newspaper clipping outside the Macarthur region (86 items)
- Newspaper clippings around the Macarthur area and relevant study areas involving Dr Robert Close between 2000 to 2016 (189 items)

The collection comprises over 400 newspaper clippings from numerous newspapers mostly on the koala, the environment and Dr Robert L Close and his research.

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Lynn Bowden and Stephen Fellenberg 2017

Newspaper clippings in the Macarthur area (1988 - 1999)

Date	Newspaper/ magazine/ reports	Title	Author
	Macarthur Advertiser	Mayor awaits study outcome	
	Macarthur Advertiser	Marking out koala areas	Jane Hammond
01-06-88	Macarthur Advertiser	Save The Koala	Jane Hammond
08-06-88	Macarthur Advertiser	Koalas Saved	Jane Hammond
20-07-88	Macarthur Advertiser	Colony koalas betrayed?	Jane Hammond
27-07-88	Macarthur Advertiser	Koala removal long term possibility	Jane Hammond
03-08-88	Macarthur Advertiser	Save our koalas!	Jane Hammond
17-08-88	Macarthur Advertiser	Union promise: No bulldozing	Jane Hammond
10-08-88	Macarthur Advertiser	Protesting at Rally	Jane Hammond
10-08-88	Sydney Morning Herald	Green Ban on Wedderburn	Jane Hammond
17-08-88	Macarthur Advertiser	Wedderburn words war!	
24-08-88	Macarthur Advertiser	Koala land under probe	Jane Hammond
07-09-88	Macarthur Advertiser	Koala protest'	Jane Hammond
31-08-88	Macarthur Advertiser	Legal action threat	
	Macarthur Advertiser	Koala land fund set up	Jane Hammond
	The Sun Herald	The dying koala	Jane Hammond
		Nick Greiner Martin Place protest	
10-10-88	Sydney Morning Herald	Koala colony danger	Marcus Casey
18-10-88	The Leader	Letters to the editor- Buy the land for koalas	Daniela Ongaro
26-10-88	Daily Mirror	Koala Colony 'At Risk'	J Wunsch
20/20/1988	Sydney Morning Herald	Council rezoning to protect koalas	
22-11-88	The Chronicle	Study bid on	Paul Bailey
17-01-89	The Chronicle	Koala ranks reinforced	
31-01-89	The Chronicle	Decision date set (Homes plan at koala colony)	
01-02-89	Macarthur Advertiser	Fight for koalas	Allan Cleaver
11-04-89	Macarthur Advertiser	Letters to the editor- Proposal is hogwash/ Rally together	Sue Dobson
17-05-89	Macarthur Advertiser	Letters to the editor- Rezoning land/ saving koalas	
06-06-89	The Chronicle	Koalas export plan hit	
12-07-89	Macarthur Advertiser	Koala groups vow to fight	David Burley
19-07-89	Macarthur Advertiser	Hay hits back in koala row	Jeff McGill
19-07-89	Macarthur Advertiser	Optimistic start/ government turnaround	Jeff McGill
19-07-89	Macarthur Advertiser	Letters to the editor-Decimating bushland/Mythical closure/Koala concern	
26-06-89	Macarthur Advertiser	The story so far	Larry Whippen/Mr Stan Knowles
26-06-89	Macarthur Advertiser	The story so far	Jeff McGill
	Macarthur Advertiser	Koalas V housing Developers battle with conservationists	Jeff McGill
02-08-89	Macarthur Advertiser	Letters to the editor- Koalas need friends	
08-08-89	The Chronicle	Save koalas plan	Miss R Colebrough
16-08-89	Macarthur Advertiser	Letters to the editor- Koala slaughter	Bon Wrightson
08-09-89	Daily Telegraph	The Hotline -re: the editorial on koala colony protection protest (DT September 6)	Sue Dobson
26-11-89	Sun Herald	More Sydney bush earmarked for sale	Sue Dobson
1989-1990	UWS Macarthur Research Report	Distribution, population size and dispersal of koalas at Wedderburn NSW	Alex Mitchell
22-05-89	The Chronicle	Homes before koalas	Dr Robert Close
23-05-90	Macarthur Advertiser	New battle for koalas	Allan Cleaver
23-05-90	Macarthur Advertiser	New battle for koalas-Against	Jeff McGill
23-05-90	Macarthur Advertiser	New battle for koalas- For	Jeff McGill
31-10-90	Macarthur Advertiser	Wilderness move causes concern	Jeff McGill
31-10-90	Macarthur Advertiser	Uni orders koala study	Pauline Rae
01-01-91	The Chronicle	Homes in danger as flames spread	Pauline Rae
07-12-90	The Daily Telegraph	Koalas in the west	Roma Curtis
22-11-90	The Chronicle	Koala summit 'cynical' move	Rachel Browne
29-08-90	Macarthur Advertiser	Banks join koala crusade	
30-01-90	Telegraph	Residents battle to save koala sanctuary	
	The Courier Mail	Activist lie down for koalas	
10-01-91	Macarthur Advertiser	Sound fire management and luck save Wedderburn koalas	
08-01-91	The Chronicle	Fires: Bush devastated	
09-01-91	Macarthur Advertiser	Greenban fail at Wedderburn	Mandy Perrin
16-01-91	The Sydney Morning Herald	Koala supporters fail to stop the earthmovers	Jeff McGill
16-01-91	Macarthur Advertiser	Defeat in final battle for koalas	Col Allison
16-01-91	Macarthur Advertiser	Letters to the editor-Eying Wedderburn for development/man & nature cut koala range	Jeff McGill
19-01-91	The Sydney Morning Herald	Tax office moves to wind up Yap Yan Pin	Larry Whippen/Linda Reid
		Koala impasse (Hay suggests colony study)	Col Allison
		Concern long last	
23-01-91	Macarthur Advertiser	Tax man may save koalas	
30-01-91	Macarthur Advertiser	Koala ranger station	Jeff McGill
01-02-91	UWS Macarthur	Koalas survive Campbelltown burn out	
28-03-91	Macarthur Advertiser	New rescue plan for koala colony	Dr Robert Close
15-05-91	Macarthur Advertiser	Fears for koalas	Jeff McGill
02-10-91	Macarthur Advertiser	Koalas in study	Jeff McGill
08-10-91	The Chronicle	Health of district koala under spotlight	
25-04-92	Illawarra Mercury	Clinging on for Dear Life	
25-04-92	Illawarra Mercury	The quest to save our koalas	Dennis Green
01-Jul-92	Macarthur Advertiser	No cuddles for this koala	Dennis Green
01-Jul-92	Macarthur Advertiser	Comeback trail for 60 koalas	Jeff McGill
30-Jun-92	The Chronicle	SURVIVAL THREAT -Housing advance on koala habitat	Jeff McGill
	UWS Macarthur	Study vital to urban koala colony (Volume 4 1992)	Susan Briggs
07-Oct-92	Macarthur Advertiser	Koala Row / Wedderburn koala dispute re-ignited	
07-Oct-92	Macarthur Advertiser	Letters written to the editor in have your say (Big threat to koala country)	Jeff McGill
01-01-93	Macarthur Advertiser	New estate threat to koalas	
27-01-93	Macarthur Advertiser	Koalas in peril, Green fears	Jeff McGill
02-03-93	The Chronicle	How Wedderburn battle was won	Jeff McGill
02-03-93	The Chronicle	Prospect inaction slammed Prospect cops blast/ Turn on power	Eric Kontos
24-03-93	Macarthur Advertiser	New MP gives support pledge for embattled koalas	Eric Kontos
			Jeff McGill

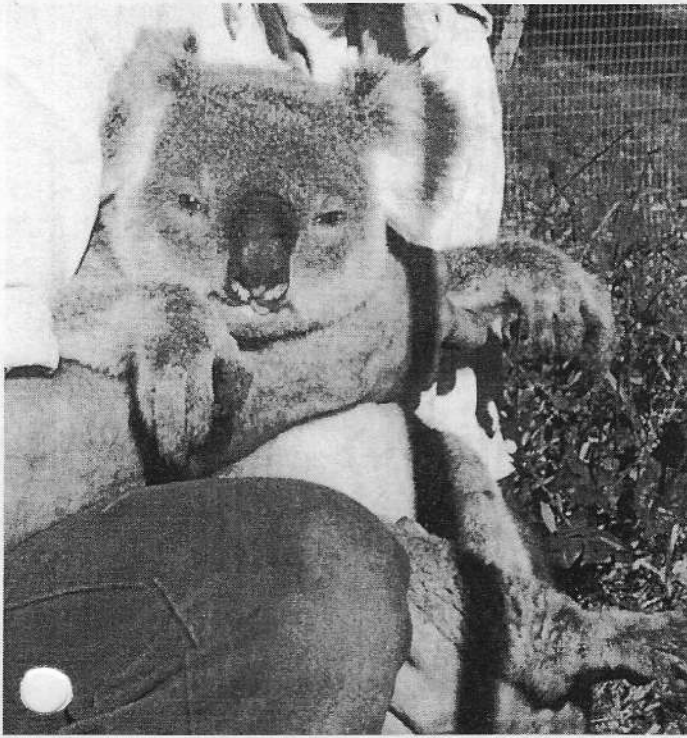
Newspaper clippings in the Macarthur area (1988 - 1999)

Date	Newspaper/ magazine/ reports	Title	Author
07-04-93	Macarthur Advertiser	Wedderburn bid to get power flowing	Jeff McGill
01-08-93	National Parks Journal August 1993	Campbelltown's koalas: what is their future	Robert L Close
19-05-93	Macarthur Advertiser	Great gift boosts Wedderburn koala research	
19-10-93	The Chronicle	Koalas in the garden	
03-11-93	The Chronicle	Counting koalas	
03-11-93	Macarthur Advertiser	Keep an eye out for koalas this Sunday	Carlotta McIntosh
24-11-93	Macarthur Advertiser	Koala colony found in Kentlyn region	Carlotta McIntosh
01-12-93		Managing the koala	Ronald Strahan
15-12-93	Macarthur Advertiser	Kentlyn koala's odyssey	Carlotta McIntosh
19-01-94	Macarthur Advertiser	Last koala refuge here	Carlotta McIntosh
07-04-94	Sydney Morning Herald	Wayne Foster (photo)	Troy Howe
07-04-94	Sydney Morning Herald	Satellites help preserve space for koala families	Kaye Southam
26-04-94	The Chronicle	Unions in work ban- land plan a koala threat	Lynda Fallon
04-05-94	Macarthur Advertiser	Carr vows to swap land to save koala	Carlotta McIntosh
04-05-94	Macarthur Advertiser	Photo Bob Carr	Robert Pozo
14-10-94	Macarthur Advertiser	Letters written to the editor in have your say (Where are the koalas?)	B&S Scattergood
13-05-94	Telegraph- Mirror	Koala numbers at 'chronic level'	Rod Allen
13-05-94	Sydney Morning Herald	Only 100 Sydney koalas left-and they may not last long	Marc Llewellyn
07-06-94	The Daily Telegraph Mirror	High-tech Molly keeps scientists in touch	
07-06-94	The Daily Telegraph Mirror	Habitats disappear	
07-06-94	The Chronicle	Mapping out koalas' future	Jess Taylor
03-07-94	Sun Herald	Scheme to save koalas	Heath Gilmore
21-06-94	Macarthur Advertiser	Kids make a wallaby welcome (reward for raising money for koala research)	Carlotta McIntosh
03-08-94	Macarthur Advertiser	Koala reprieve! Govt plan to buy land	Carlotta McIntosh
12-08-94	Sydney Morning Herald	Koala colony's future brighter	Col Allison
15-08-94	Sydney Morning Herald	Wedderburn Koalas	Robert L Close
17-08-94	Macarthur Advertiser	Carr slams koala sale	Carlotta McIntosh
24-08-94	Sydney Morning Herald	Creek gets clean up to help river	James Woodford
04-10-94	The Chronicle	Koala colony put in peril	
04-10-94	The Chronicle	Wedderburn fire	
	The Chronicle	Ruling cuts coal option	
14-09-94	Macarthur Advertiser	Fresh water mussel power tests river system health	Andrew Hunter
23-08-94	The Chronicle	Landcom to spring clean lake	Lynda Fallon
05-10-94	Macarthur Advertiser	Wedderburn knows all about natures' wiles -bushfires are no novelty here	Verlie fowler and Jeff Mc Gill
12-10-94	The Chronicle	Save our rivers	
12-10-94	Macarthur Advertiser	A Hidden tourist mecca	Jeff McGill
07-12-94	Macarthur Advertiser	After years of turmoil koalas get their habitat	Duncan Lay
09-12-94	The Chronicle	Koala land to be saved	Lynda Fallon
13-12-94	The Chronicle	Row over future of Dharawal bushland	
12-10-94	Macarthur Advertiser	The last hurdle cleared	Duncan Lay
25-01-95	Macarthur Advertiser	Koala 'rescue' just lasted victory in long campaign	
08-02-95	Macarthur Advertiser	Koala protection in doubt	Andrew Hunter
20-02-95	Macarthur Advertiser	Policy puts habitat at risk/ Sanctuary for koalas	
22-02-95	Macarthur Advertiser	Koala study	
22-02-95	Macarthur Advertiser	A sanctuary for koalas	
28-02-95	The Chronicle	Pledge on koala habitat	
14-11-95	The Chronicle	Speed up koala map	
15-11-95	Macarthur Advertiser	Letters written to the editor in have your say (Thanks for caring)	Verlie fowler
03-10-95	The Chronicle	Koalas 'in peril'	Sarah Champness
18-10-95	Macarthur Advertiser	Koala Club to help local colony of 60	
31-10-95	UWS Macarthur (MACH2)	Local newspaper helps UWS koala research	
01-11-95	Macarthur Advertiser	You can help in study of koalas	
25-10-95	Macarthur Advertiser	Koalas: What to Do	Steven Ward/ Robert Close
08-11-95	Macarthur Advertiser	Molly's Story	Steven Ward/ Robert Close
15-11-95	Macarthur Advertiser	Koala Research	Steven Ward/ Robert Close
22-11-95	Macarthur Advertiser	Koala trees	Steven Ward/ Robert Close
29-11-95	Macarthur Advertiser	Koala Myths	Steven Ward/ Robert Close
06-12-95	Macarthur Advertiser	Koala and their Relations	Steven Ward/ Robert Close
20-12-95	Macarthur Advertiser	Koalas: The community response	Steven Ward/ Robert Close
31-01-96	Macarthur Advertiser	Mac's Koala club: What's it for?	Steven Ward/ Robert Close
07-02-96	Macarthur Advertiser	Lyn the koala drops in	Daniel De Nardi
07-02-96	Macarthur Advertiser	Lyn the koala drops in (continued)	Daniel De Nardi
02-04-96	The Chronicle	Threat of extinction	
02-04-96	The Chronicle	Betrayal ' letter to editor	
29-05-96	Macarthur Advertiser	Koala club column is a top read (letter to editor by Verlie Fowler)	
14-01-96	Macarthur Advertiser	How many are there?	Steven Ward/ Robert Close
14-01-96	Macarthur Advertiser	In the bag -a pair of Happy Koalas	Steven Ward/ Robert Close
14-01-96	Macarthur Advertiser	Letters- Sisters write to club	Kristy and Sharlene McDonald
21-02-96	Macarthur Advertiser	New home may be the answer	Steven Ward/ Robert Close
20-03-96	Macarthur Advertiser	Tiny bacteria help to digest food	Steven Ward/ Robert Close
03-04-96	Macarthur Advertiser	Grim picture of area's koalas	
03-04-96	Macarthur Advertiser	Parkway's growing habitat	Linda Mc Sweeney
10-04-96	Macarthur Advertiser	Hey kids	
14-05-96	The Chronicle	Killer dogs threat	Jennifer Loicht
29-05-96	Macarthur Advertiser	Koala expert fears for hidden colonies	Jeff McGill
12-06-96	Macarthur Advertiser	Tracking koalas	Steven Ward/ Robert Close
03-06-96	Liverpool Leader	Airport threat to local koalas alarms experts	
05-06-96	Liverpool Champion	Mac the koala on a rescue mission	
11-06-96	The Chronicle Macarthur	Airport risk to koalas	Peter Trute
20-06-96	Daily Telegraph	Rangers allowed to shoot koalas	
21-06-96	Daily Telegraph	Koala cull not on, says Minister	
19-06-96	Macarthur Advertiser	Our Mac's a winner	Clare Devenish

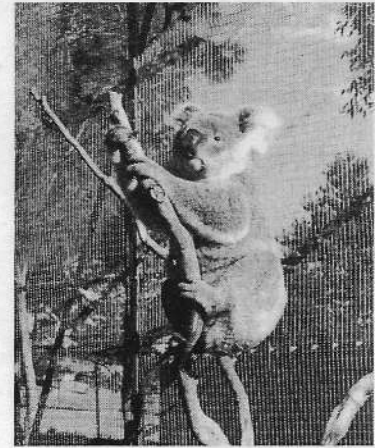
Newspaper clippings in the Macarthur area (1988 - 1999)

Date	Newspaper/ magazine/ reports	Title	Author
26-06-96	The Chronicle	Koala watch	Steven Ward/ Robert Close
26-06-96	Macarthur Advertiser	Well done	John Hennessey
25-09-96	Macarthur Advertiser	More on koalas	
09-10-96	USA TODAY	Airport to disturb koalas, symbol of Australia (Letters to the Editor)	Robert L Close
16-10-96	Macarthur Advertiser	Koala Club celebrates 1st Birthday	
16-10-96	Macarthur Advertiser	keep a watch on koalas	Steven Ward/ Robert Close
23-10-96	Macarthur Advertiser	Mac's great party	Steven Ward/ Robert Close
15-01-97	Macarthur Advertiser	Lights, camera, cue koala	Daniel De Nardi
11-02-97	The Chronicle	Govt moves to protect koala home	Michelle Burrell
11-02-97	Daily Telegraph	Koalas saved as minister stops homes	Simon Benson
01-02-97	MacScience magazine	Campbelltown koalas may star in video	
01-03-97	Daily Telegraph	Island koalas to be moved	
30-07-97	Macarthur Advertiser	Creek koala hunt	Steven Ward/ Robert Close
09-04-97	Macarthur Advertiser	Scientists holds fear for koalas	
26-04-97	The Sydney Morning Herald	Battle against second airport takes to the trees	Murray Hogarth
26-04-97	The Sydney Morning Herald	Battle against second airport takes to the trees	Murray Hogarth
30-04-97	Macarthur Advertiser	Your Letters (Airport poses a new threat to koalas)	
17-07-97	Macarthur Advertiser	Sightings of koalas are very important	Steven Ward/ Robert Close
01-06-97	Open Road Magazine	Spotted any koalas lately?	Steven Ward/ Robert Close
01-06-97	Fund for animals newsletter vol.8 no1	Koala survival hangs in the balance at Wedderburn site	
01-06-97	UWS Macarthur Communique vol 27	University joins airport protest	
14-08-97	Leader	Where, oh where, is Wilhelmina?	Jenny Stokes
09-07-97	Sydney Morning Herald	Koalas set for death row,	
10-09-97	Macarthur Advertiser	Mum and cub safe	Steven Ward/ Robert Close
17-09-97	Macarthur Advertiser	Closer than we think	Steven Ward/ Robert Close
04-06-97	Macarthur Chronicle	Health risk for homes under flight paths	
07-05-97	Macarthur Advertiser	Environmental plea	
30-07-97	Macarthur Advertiser	Honestly, Mr Fahey	Robert Close
25-08-97	Sydney Morning Herald	Chemical dump	
16-09-97	Sydney Morning Herald	Carr 'cowardly for Badgerys backdown	Linda Morris
29-07-97	Macarthur Chronicle	People power	Michelle Burrell
21-10-97	Sutherland-Menai Express	Have you seen any koalas lately?	
29-10-97	Macarthur Advertiser	Koala party	
22-04-98	The Chronicle	Koala power push	
17-06-98	Macarthur Advertiser	Expert shares koala research	
02-07-98	Sydney Morning Herald	Koala decline	
29-07-98	Macarthur Advertiser	Greater protection needed	
24-09-98	Sutherland Shire Leader	Be on the look-out for elusive koala	Merryn Porter
07-10-98	Macarthur Advertiser	Queries on native issues	John Bricknell
25-11-98	Blue Mts Gazette	Koala find	
13-01-99	Macarthur Advertiser	Wary Eric proves to be a big nipper	Steven Ward/ Robert Close
26-01-99	Daily Telegraph	Operation koala-but Clancy is bidding time	
17-02-99	Macarthur Advertiser	Mac and mates pitch in	
10-03-99	Macarthur Advertiser	Sanctuary for koalas	Lesya Moroz and Jeff McGill
24-03-99	Macarthur Advertiser	Koala threat	
30-03-99	The Chronicle	Koalas homes on hold	Graeme Webber
02-06-99	Macarthur Advertiser	Road closure angers council	Lesya Moroz
15-06-99	The Chronicle	Koala sightings on the increase	Graeme Webber
28-07-99	Daily Telegraph	Koala lose will to eat and die	
31-07-99	Macarthur Advertiser	Six koalas seized	
11-08-99	Daily Telegraph	Rescued theme park koala dies	
22-09-99	Macarthur Advertiser	Tracking koalas (video on research out soon)	
28-09-99	The Chronicle	Koala copes with city	Graeme Webber
06-10-99	Macarthur Advertiser	Video on our koalas is out	
01-09-99	Wires newsletter (Live Wires Spring '99)	Koala Rescue in Blue Mountains	Vickii Lett

Vickii Lett, WIRES Blue Mountains



Norman the Koala receives some attention.



Norman the Koala

A young male koala was rescued in the Lapstone area of the lower Blue Mountains in September last year. WIRES Blue Mountains member, Sonya Stanvic, picked it up after it was found sitting in a Jacaranda tree in a suburban backyard. This animal was in poor condition, showing signs of spending time on the ground walking, and was not passing pellets at the time of rescue.

Blue Mountains WIRES had blood tests run in order to check for disease. The first set of tests came showing an abnormality in his blood, but no apparent disease. After some time on good quality leaves, later blood tests came back as normal.

Clancy, as the koala was named, was the first confirmed koala seen in the lower mountains in 30 years. There was some suspicion as to the origin of the animal: one theory was that he was an escapee from a fauna park;

another, that he had been picked up from an unknown area outside the mountains as an injured animal, and let go in the mountains by persons unknown.

DNA tests were organised: the results came back in early January confirming that Clancy was a NSW koala from an unknown

colony, but with genetic relationships to western NSW animals, Maitland Port Stephens animals and Campbelltown animals.

This led to the belief that Clancy was a Blue Mountains koala, as the Mountains are bounded by these other areas. He was fitted with a radio-tracking collar supplied by NPWS and released in the Glenbrook section of Blue Mountains National Park.

Clancy moved about 4kms

from his release, setting up residence in Shale Sandstone Transition Forest (this vegetation community is also listed on the Threatened Species list as an endangered plant community). Clancy's collar had a weak link built into it, and that broke in September this year some distance from where Clancy had spent all of his time up until then. But breeding season had arrived.

On 11 September 1999, another koala was found in the Springwood area and picked up by WIRES. He was sitting in a photinia hedge on a residential property. This male animal is middle aged and in good condition; blood tests have revealed that he is disease free, and DNA shows he is not only related to Clancy, but also both Clancy and Norman (as he has been named) are related to Colo Heights koalas.

This supports the idea that we have a recovering colony in the area.

Norman was released on Sunday 24 October, close to the initial point of contact. There will be no radio tracking, but perhaps some population surveys will be funded very soon.

Both of the koalas were ear tagged and micro-chipped. Koalas are a threatened species for a number of reasons - with a major problem being habitat loss. Keeping all of this in mind, we should be aware that one of our responsibilities is to assist in maintaining the balance in our bushland.

That is, we can not underestimate the importance of the more common species of native animals, and their role in maintaining the health of the remnant bushland. As WIRES carers we must act responsibly when releasing

species - in other words: where are they released, how many are released etc - into these valuable bushland areas.

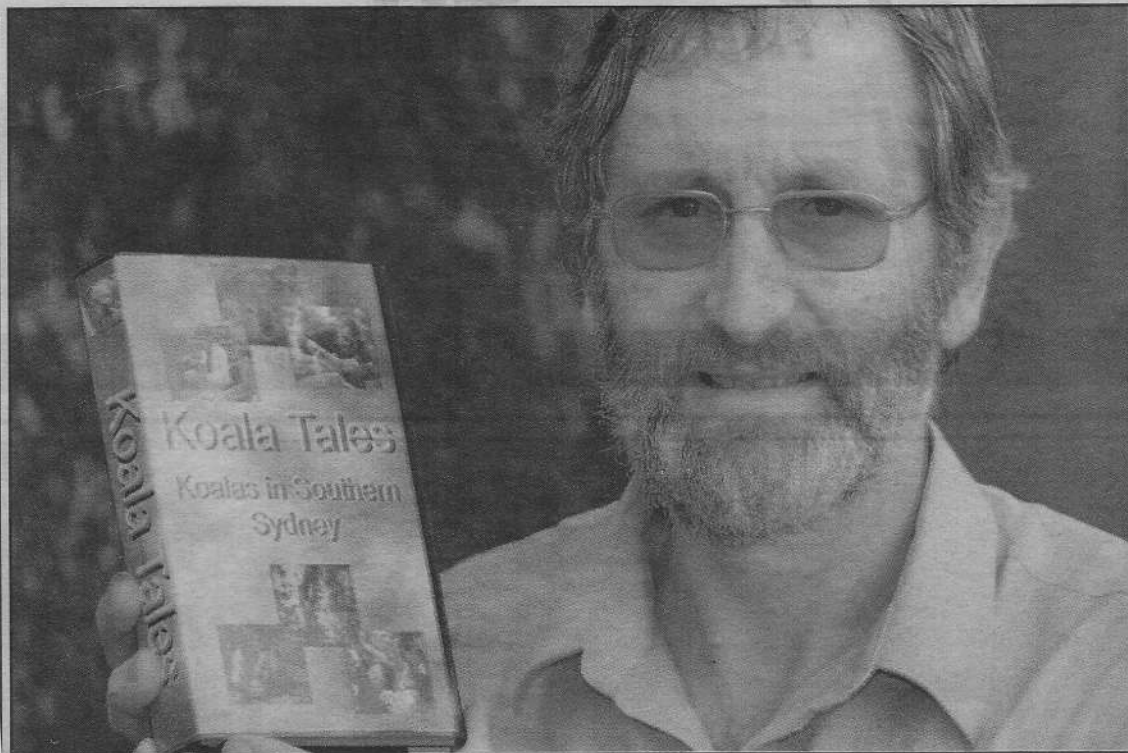
Powerful Owl also on the Threatened Species List...

A female Powerful Owl was taken off a barbed wire fence at Little Hartley, Blue Mountains. The poor owl had suffered damage under her wing legs and seer on her beak. And there was more: her brood patch showed she probably had young.

After three weeks in care she has made a full recovery. She was released in late October, back at Little Hartley. We can only hope that the babies were old enough for the male to continue feeding whilst she was in care.

And the story's message: barbed wire poses a real threat to much of Australia's wildlife.

"Clancy, as the koala was named, was the first confirmed koala seen in the lower mountains in 30 years."



■ KOALAS are featured on Koala Tales, a video highlighting the work of koala researchers Robert Close (pictured) and Steven Ward.
Photo: ROBERT GRUJICIC

Video on our koalas is out

KOALA researchers Steve Ward and Robert Close will celebrate a small victory this week when they launch their video, Koala Tales – Koalas in Southern Sydney.

It is a project that has had the pair trekking through bushland, climbing trees and battling feisty grey creatures for years now, in an effort to study local koala colonies.

While the video is not the final step in their research, it will ensure that their hard work is put to good use educating local residents about what they have learned so far.

The video was prepared by the educational media services department of the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur.

It will be officially launched by Campbelltown councillor, Verlie Fowler, on Wednesday, October 6, at UWS Macarthur.

The function begins at 8.10pm. Anyone is welcome to attend.

Copies of the video may be bought at the launch, or at the offices of the Macarthur Advertiser (Queen Street, Campbelltown), Camden-Wollondilly Advertiser, Liverpool Champion or Fairfield Champion for \$20.

The other option is to send a request with a \$24 cheque (covering postage), to Robert Close at UWS Macarthur, PO Box 555, Campbelltown 2560.

Macarthur Advertiser, Wednesday, October 6, 1999

Koala copes with city

A YOUNG koala named Dan — spotted at Ruse 18 months ago — wandered into Jenkins St, Douglas Park but was moved to safer trees.

Dan was spotted 12 months ago crossing busy Appin Rd, south of Rosemeadow, and he has managed to survive cars and the dangers of suburbia.

University of Western Sydney Macarthur Campbelltown campus koala studies supervisor Rob Close said Dan had put on 5kg since he was first eartagged.

“It’s our first report of a live

by **GRAEME WEBBER**

koala from Douglas Park, we did have a report of a road kill near Maldon about three years ago,” Mr Close said.

“This is a classic case of a male dispersing. Hopefully people will report his travels.”

Dan was caught at the cnr of Jenkins and Durham Sts at Douglas Park on September 13.

Koalas are weighed and they

receive a health check by a vet before being released back into the wild.

Koala sightings can be reported by phoning 9962 9996.

Campbelltown councillor Verlie Fowler has again called on her colleagues to release the koala plan of management because natural habitat is constantly shrinking under urban development.

“Anyone believing that our koalas have been saved is sadly deluded,” Mrs Fowler said.

Tracking koalas

Video on research out soon

AFTER years of tracking, catching and studying koalas, local researchers Steven Ward and Rob Close are soon to launch their own video.

Koala Tales - Koalas in Southern Sydney is the product of years of dedicated work, as the pair attempted to discover as much as possible about the koala colony in the Macarthur area.

Working from the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur, Mr Ward and Mr Close are the brains behind the Advertiser's weekly koala column.

Their video is a major landmark in their research, which has also resulted in a number of science papers being printed.

Mr Ward said that local residents have been a vital link in the research process.

"The central problem has been finding them (the koalas), because they're low in density," Mr Ward said.

"They're just so incredibly hard to spot... a koala's just a grey lump on a grey trunk with lots of leaves."

"We estimate the density in breeding areas is one (koala) per 10 hectares... which isn't a lot.

"What I've ended up doing is using the community to help locate animals. The column is extremely useful because (readers) tell us where koalas area.

"If they call up soon after seeing one, we'll try and go out and catch it



KOALA research is hands-on work: Steven Ward was pictured releasing one of his furry friends recently in the Minto Heights area.

straight away."

After being caught, koalas are taken to the Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute and to Canley Vale Veterinary Hospital for identification, health checks and blood sampling.

Some of the koalas have been fitted with radio collars.

There are still four being tracked - koalas named Shirley, Lyn, Sarah, and Francesca, Sarah's mother.

"We're basically putting together as much information as we can get on all different

aspects," Mr Ward said.

"At the moment I'm trying my best to write up the data we've collected and set up a data base...try to nut out what's happening with the koalas."

Mr Ward said he hoped to have his PhD finished next year.

The Koala Tales video was funded by a Sydney couple who wished to remain anonymous.

It is being launched on Wednesday, October 6, from 8.10 to 9pm, at the Campbelltown campus of UWS Macarthur.

The function will be

held in lecture theatre 5, building 21. A map and details are on display at the Macarthur Advertiser office.

Copies of the video may be purchased for \$20 either at the launch or at the offices of the Macarthur Advertiser, Camden Wollondilly Advertiser, Liverpool Leader or Fairfield Champion.

They may also be obtained by sending a request to Robert Close at UWS Macarthur, PO Box 555, Campbelltown 2560, with a cheque to cover \$20 per video and \$4 postage total.

Koala sightings on the increase

RESEARCHERS say at least 120 koalas are living in the Georges River catchment — and they don't mind feeding in house yards which border bushland.

Associate Professor Rob Close from the University of Western Sydney Macarthur, Campbelltown campus said koalas might even be prospering on eucalyptus trees which were watered and fertilised in house gardens.

But urban predators are still a major concern with two recent koala deaths caused by a dog and car strike.

A number of ear tagged koalas have been spotted roaming around Ruse, St Helens Park and Minto Heights.

"The established ones seem to know their area pretty well and are showing signs of a healthy and contented

by **GRAEME WEBBER**

existence on the outskirts of the town," Professor Close said.

The research unit at UWS has tagged 45 koalas and about every second animal caught is new to the study team.

The number of koala sightings increase during the mating season from August to March when spottings will average one a week.

Professor Close said people could help the koalas by driving carefully around Kentlyn and Minto Heights and residents of those suburbs could plant eucalyptus nicholli, grey gums and stringybarks for koala food.

Koala sightings can be reported to a research hotline on 9962 9996 any time of the day or night.

Operation koala — but Clancy is biding his time

HE WAS meant to lead wildlife experts back to an undiscovered colony of koalas still hiding somewhere in the Blue Mountains.

Instead the koala — christened Clancy and equipped with a radio tracking device — has moved no more than 100m in eight days.

At present he seems more content with his new surroundings than in his important mission.

Released after being discovered last year, Clancy was recently confirmed as being from an unknown genetic population of koalas in the lower Blue Mountains.

He was the first seen in the area for 30 years and gave hope that a new colony might be discovered.

On January 17, 12 volunteers prepared for what was expected to be a 72-hour race through the bush as they tracked Clancy back to his habitat.

Instead, Clancy refused to move after he was released up a Sydney bluegum at Glenbrook.

The Chronicle 30th March 1999

Koalas' 'homes' on hold

A 200-LOT residential subdivision at St Helen's Park is on hold until reports of koala scats and scratchings have been investigated.

Landcom, the State Government's land developer, sought permission from Campbelltown Council to clear scrub from part of the 36ha site last Tuesday night but Councillor Verlie Fowler called for protection of the koala habitat.

Mrs Fowler said she had personally documented evidence of koalas in the St Helens Park area and a koala was sighted in the suburb last October.

Council supported her call for a threatened species impact statement to investigate possible harm to other animals such as bandicoots.

Mrs Fowler said a letter from koala researcher Dr Rob Close of the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur Campbelltown campus warned the development site "may well include parts of the home ranges of one or more female koalas".

Councillor James Winter supported the deferral because the report put to council was "full of holes".

"I still get the feeling that this council is not fair linkum about protecting

koala habitat," Mr Winter said.

"It's not just koalas but birds and bandicoots; if there are threatened species in an area then the proper studies have to be done."

Council will also place the stormwater management plan on public exhibition to ensure controls are in place to protect the Georges River from sediment and urban runoff.

"The soils are highly erodible and we have already seen the disastrous impact of runoff into Spring Creek," Mrs Fowler said.

by GRAEME WEBBER

Koala sightings on the increase

by GRAEME WEBBER

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A number of ear tagged koalas have been spotted roaming around Ruse, St Helens Park and Minto Heights.

"The established ones seem to know their area pretty well and are showing signs of a healthy and contented

The Chronicle 15th June 1999



Clancy the Koala . . . origin remains a mystery

Koala find

It's not every day you find a koala in your backyard, especially if you live in Lapstone.

Koalas have not been spotted in the Glenbrook/Lapstone area since about 1967, but the startling discovery by one resident in September has led a frantic search by National Parks and Wildlife and the Wildlife Information and Rescue Service (WIRES) volunteers.

WIRES were called to Lapstone on September 19 after a resident spotted a koala in the backyard. Having been used to many similar calls — people usually mistakenly report brusht possums as koalas — WIRES volunteers attend the call with an amount of disbelief.

But sure enough, a small, underweight koala-shaped form was curled up in a jacaranda tree, and was brought to earth by two WIRES volunteers.

Dubbed "Clancy", WIRES placed the mysterious marsupial into the care of Kurrajong resident Audrey Jeffreys and he has not looked back.

Although anaemic and with no nails to grip trees, Clancy has made a rapid recovery and will be due for release in a few weeks' time.

The only problem is that no one knows where he comes from, as koalas have not lived in colonies in the Lower Mountains for more than 30 years and are virtually unknown in the whole region.

Audrey, a volunteer carer for WIRES for the past four years, said Clancy's voracious (and fussy) appetite and night-time bellowing to the opposite sex has indicated that he is almost ready for release.

"He is about two to three years old and just maturing. Normally (in the wild) it would have been time for him to leave his birth colony and find one of his own," she said.

"The National Parks and Wildlife Service want the public to help search for where he may have come from. If something was found in the Glenbrook area we would be very excited."

Audrey said that NPWS must deal with Clancy's release when it comes time to return him to the wild, and have the unenviable task of finding a suitable spot for him to be released.

There are several known koala haunts in the Upper Colo district, but Clancy's origin still remains a mystery.

NPWS is urging anyone who spots a koala anywhere in the Mountains — whether in near bushland or remote walking tracks — to contact them via a letter and including a rough map of the area in which the animal was seen.

Letters should be sent to the Richmond office NPWS, PO Box 198, Richmond 2753.

Those who may find an injured native animal — including snakes — should contact WIRES on 4754-2946.

DT28-7-99.

Daily Telegraph 28th July 1999

Koalas lose will to eat and die

ST LOUIS: The star attractions at St Louis Zoo — a pair of female koalas — have died after refusing to eat.

Maddy, a three-year-old, and Ada, 18 months, suffered kidney failure, zoo director Charlie Hoessle said yesterday.

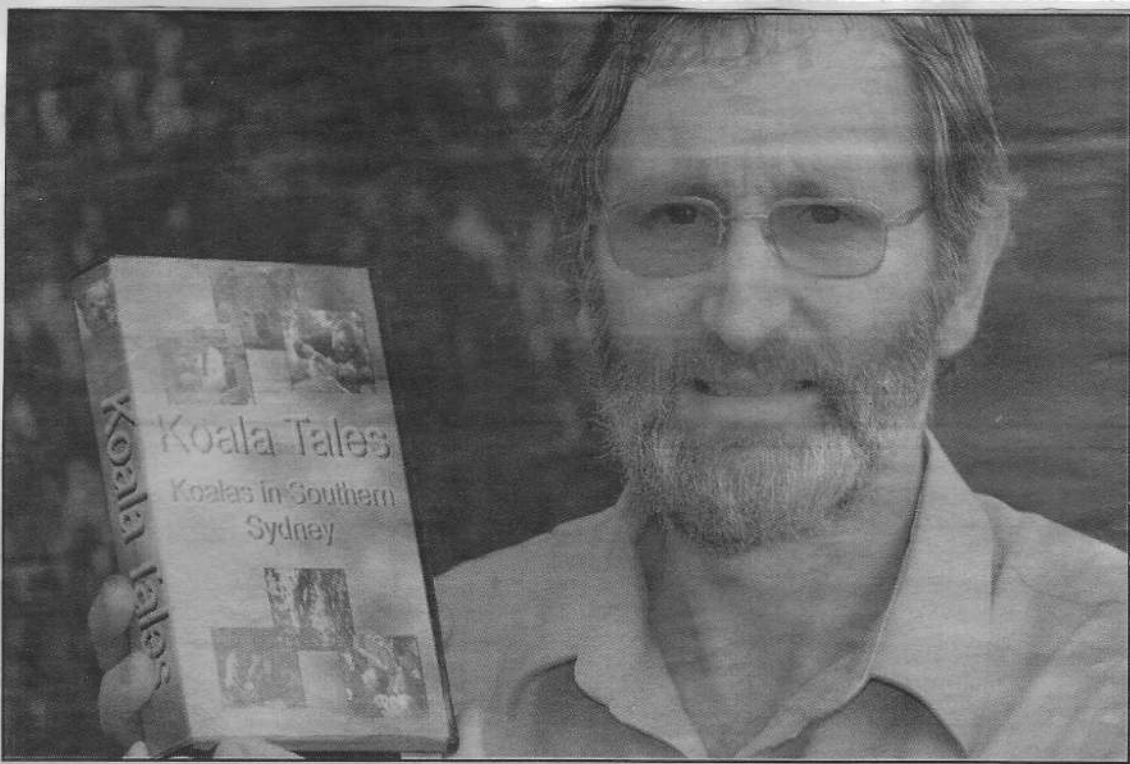
"The staff is devastated," he said. "Our keepers and veterinary staff have made heroic efforts in round-the-clock shifts to save the two koalas."

St Louis joined only a handful of zoos in the US to have koalas as permanent residents when Maddy and Ada arrived on April 16.

But the pair snubbed eucalyptus shipped from Florida and Arizona and began to lose weight. So the zoo sought leave from San Diego, and finally Australia, but Maddy and Ada showed little interest.

Maddy died on July 6 and Ada 14 days later.

Mr Hoessle said the zoo was working with Australia to replace the pair.



■ KOALAS are featured on Koala Tales, a video highlighting the work of koala researchers Robert Close (pictured) and Steven Ward. Macarthur Advertiser 6th October 1999

Video on our koalas is out

The function begins at 8.10pm. Anyone is welcome to attend.

Copies of the video may be bought at the launch, or at the offices of the Macarthur Advertiser (Queen Street, Campbelltown), Camden-Wollondilly Advertiser, Liverpool

McAd 6/10/99



One of the koalas yesterday.

Macarthur Advertiser

31st July 1999

"We've been out there three times and these animals' conditions have deteriorated over that period."

An adult male was suffering from such extreme emaciation it was transported immediately to a local veterinarian and koala specialist, he said. The remaining koalas were taken to Featherdale Wildlife Park where they would undergo treatment and tests.

Nick Leys

Six koalas seized

Six koalas were seized from the El Caballo Blanco Animal Park yesterday in a joint operation between the NSW Department of Agriculture and the RSPCA.

The koalas, males and females, are believed to be suffering from urinary infections and low body weight.

The RSPCA chief inspector, Mr Steve Coleman, said complaints were first received about the animals two weeks ago.

Rescued theme park koala dies

A SICK koala which was seized from Sydney animal park El Caballo Blanco has died in the care of a vet, the RSPCA said yesterday.

The male koala was one of six adults and babies removed from the Narellan theme park 12 days ago after complaints over the animals' condition.

RSPCA Deputy Chief Inspector Brett Bell said yesterday the koala died on Saturday night. The cause of death had yet to be determined, he said.

"A post-mortem has been conducted by the vet but at this stage we are still waiting for the results," Insp Bell said. "It was extremely sick and underweight when it was seized."

The owners of El Caballo Blanco, which was sold two years ago, face fines of up to \$11,000 or two years in jail under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act.

The RSPCA and Department of Agriculture swooped on the sprawling property on July 30.

Daily Telegraph 11th August 1999

Koala copes with city

by GRAEME WEBBER

A YOUNG koala named Dan — spotted at Ruse 18 months ago — wandered into Jenkins St, Douglas Park but was moved to safer trees.

Dan was spotted 12 months ago crossing busy Appin Rd, south of Rosemeadow, and he has managed to survive cars and the dangers of suburbia.

University of Western Sydney Macarthur Campbelltown campus koala studies supervisor Rob Close said Dan had put on 5kg since he was first cartaged.

koala from Douglas Park, we did have a report of a road kill near Maldon about three years ago," Mr Close said.

"This is a classic case of a male dispersing. Hopefully people will report his travels."

Dan was caught at the cnr of Jenkins and Durham Sts at Douglas Park on September 13.

receive a health check by a vet before being released back into the wild.

Koala sightings can be reported by phoning 9962 9996.

Campbelltown councillor Verlie Fowler has again called on her colleagues to release the koala plan of management because natural habitat is constantly shrinking under urban development.

"Anyone believing that our koalas have been saved is sadly

The Chronicle 28th September 1999

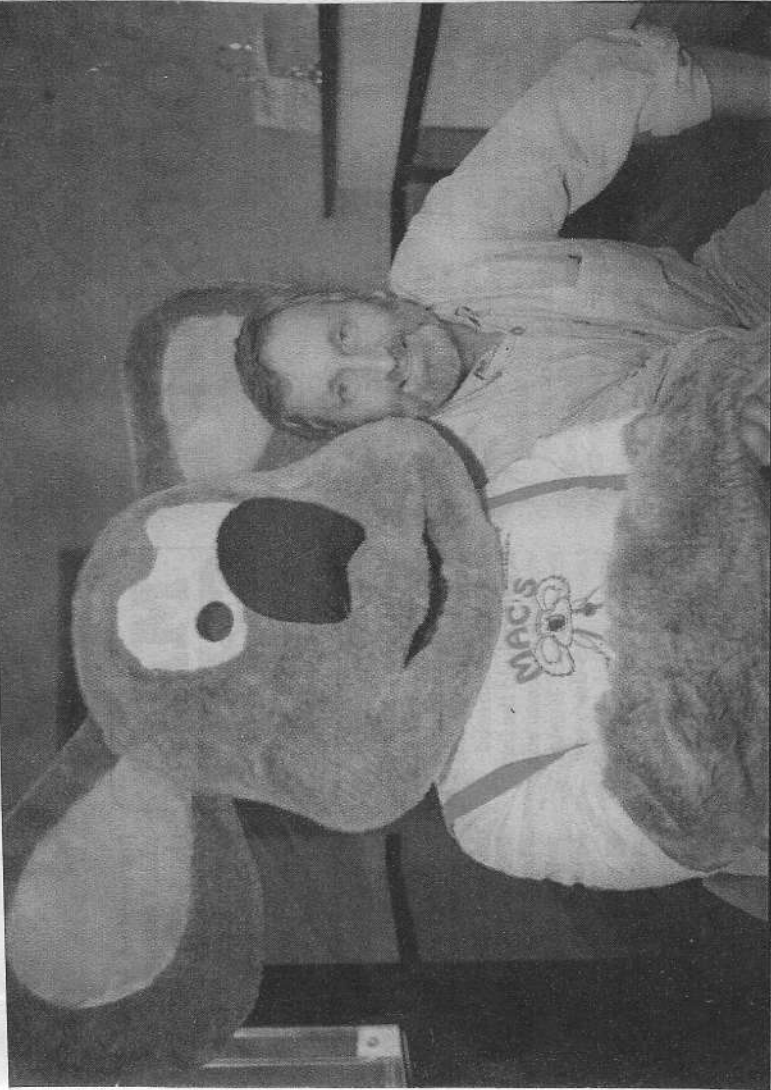
KOALA researchers Steve Ward and Robert Close will celebrate a small victory this week when they launch their video, Koala Tales — Koalas in Southern Sydney.

It is a project that has had the pair trekking through bushland, climbing trees and battling feisty grey creatures for years now, in an effort to study local koala colonies.

While the video is not the final step in their research, it will ensure that their hard work is put to good use educating local residents about what they have learned so far.

The video was prepared by the educational media services department of the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur.

It will be officially launched by Campbelltown councillor, Verlie Fowler, on Wednesday, October 6, at UWS Macarthur.



■ MAC Koala, on behalf of his many koala cousins, thanked Dr Robert Close (pictured) for the work that he and PhD student Steven Ward have done to help koalas survive in the local area.

Mac and mates pitch in

LOCAL koalas will benefit from the Macarthur Advertiser's latest contribution to koala research.

The Advertiser has pledged a further \$3500 towards the work of UWS Macarthur PhD student Steven Ward, who is researching koala colonies in the local area.

This funding is on top of \$20,000 given by the Advertiser over the past four years, and it will be used to help Mr Ward finish his PhD, now in its final stages.

Dr Robert Close who is

assisting Mr Ward, said the research has resulted in some major breakthroughs in zoological knowledge.

"The major part of Steven's work has been reporting community sightings [of koalas]," Dr Close said.

"Prior to 1988 there were only two or three official records of koalas south of Sydney.

"Now we know there are colonies breeding from Minto Heights all along the Georges River and O'Hares Creek, to Wedderburn."

In the late 1980s and early

1990s residents and politicians successfully campaigned to stop development threatening the koalas at Wedderburn.

The research now being carried out will help the council plan wisely to protect the animals, if any development takes place at all.

"[It will show] how they're moving, what corridors are to be protected, what trees are to be protected," Dr Close said.

The koala's movements have been recorded in the Advertiser's weekly column, Mac's Koola Club.

Sanctuary for koalas

By LESYA MOROZ
and JEFF MCGILL

AFTER a decade of hope, Campbelltown looks set to finally get its own koala sanctuary.

Last week, Campbelltown Council unanimously supported a proposal by Councillor Verlie Fowler to offer 268 hectares in Wedderburn to the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) as part of a proposed koala sanctuary.

The land parcel was the scene of years of protests and legal action in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when developers tried to create a prestige housing estate amid the famous local koala colony habitat.

Cr Fowler was "thrilled" and said the land should also be recognised for its support of diverse flora and fauna.

She said the council decision had come at an opportune moment.

"The Georges River Catchment Management Committee has organised a tour of the Georges River on March 13, and this land will also be visited," she said.

"I was hoping we could make an announcement on the day, and I am glad council did come to an agreement last week."

The battle for the Wed-

derburn koalas started in 1988, when an Indonesian company tried to build prestige housing on land where koalas had been discovered.

Council joined the community in opposing the development in a series of protests, rallies and petitions, but the State Government refused to intervene.

After the developer took council to court and won, the union movement came to the fight announcing green bans on the site.

In 1991, the developer responded by using police to clear protesters to build a road into the site. But within weeks the company fell into receiver-ship.

Green bans and picket lines were reinstated against the mortgage-in-possession, and investigations by Dr Robert Close of UWS Macarthur indicated the colony was more extensive than first thought.

In 1994, after a visit to the site by opposition leader Bob Carr, Premier John Fahey stepped in and resumed the proposed housing lots, while council retained 268 hectares already dedicated as open space - the land now offered to the NPWS.

Koala threat

LANDCOM has applied to Campbelltown Council for a housing estate at St Helens Park which is koala habitat.

Councillor Verlie Fowler said she has evidence of male and female koalas in the area, with the most recent sighting last October.

Part of the site has already been cleared.

About 18 hectares of Cumberland Plain woodland and about 2.5 ha of forest, which have been declared endangered ecological communities under the Threatened Species Conservation Act, will also be cleared for the development.

Cr Fowler said she has requested a species impact statement for the development and has asked for a stormwater management plan to go on public exhibition to protect the Georges River.

"The soils are highly erodible and we have already seen the disastrous impact of runoff into Spring Creek," Cr Fowler said.

Wary Eric proves to be a big nipper

ALTHOUGH our major interest is in Campbelltown koalas, we still like to hear of koala sightings all through the southern Sydney region.

So when a koala was reported at Woronora, just south of River Road and only 200 metres east of the Woronora River, we were keen to capture it.

The koala wasn't keen to co-operate, though, watching the proceedings from the top of a tall grey gum in a resident's front garden. With residents watching the show, we strung up both our 10m wire ladders and Rob climbed the huge tree.

mac's koala club

When he reached a fork close to the koala it started to cry.

This is a sound which sounds very similar to a baby's cry.

Because a baby's cry is designed to evoke a response in parents those watching a koala catch can sometimes find it quite distressing. However, we believe the koala cries to communicate to another koala, that "I am not a threat".

When koalas fight they can be very vicious, and can even lead to fatal wounds.

So if a koala surrenders to the dominant individual, it may avoid a fight and possible injury.

A similar behaviour would be when a dog rolls on to its back, exposing its underbelly to indicate submission to another dog.

Rob flagged the koala to come towards him and when close enough was able to grab it and wrestle it into a catching bag.

However, the koala retaliated by

chomping down hard and long upon Rob's leg.

Fortunately, the koala tried to take too big a bite and so was unable to puncture the skin.

Once the koala was lowered to the ground Steven, gave the onlookers a closer look at their visitor.

Unsatisfied with the poor result on Rob's leg, the koala bit through the bag and Steven's jeans, leaving a bruise on Steven's leg.

The feisty young koala, nicknamed Eric, was a 7.6kg male in good condition. After having ear-tags fitted and a veterinary inspection at

Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute, Eric was released into Prince Edward Park, close to the capture location.

We hope to hear of further sightings of Eric.

These will provide fascinating insights into how he moves through the area.

It will be particularly interesting to know if he will use the bush along Woronora River as a corridor.

- STEVEN WARD
and ROBERT CLOSE

Road closure angers council

By LESYA MOROZ

A "SECRET" meeting to discuss the future of Wedderburn's Lysaght Road which excluded Campbelltown Council, has infuriated councillors.

The meeting was held between the Department of Land and Water Conservation, Westcliff Colliery and Wollondilly Shire Council to discuss strategies to close the road - a fire trail - to traffic before the financial year is up.

Councillor Rudi Kolkman, who has been fighting for over a year to keep the road open, said any decision to close the road was untenable.

He raised issue as a matter of urgent business at last week's meeting of Campbelltown council.

He said, "Their strategy seems to be bringing in bulldozers, but that is completely unacceptable.

"This road needs to remain because it is an emergency escape route for Wedderburn

residents. Without it, in a bushfire, residents would be trapped."

Cr Kolkman called for urgent intervention by the Minister for Land and Water Conservation, Richard Amery.

Cr Kolkman said the Minister should to be informed of Campbelltown Council's exclusion from the recent meeting and its opposition of proposals to close Lysaght Road.

He said, "It is unbelievable gross stupidity, what Wollondilly Council wants to do.

"Not only residents but the Rural Fire Service uses the road as an emergency access route."

Wollondilly Council was keen to close the road because of constant rubbish dumping and for fear of being sued by road users because of the road's condition.

Campbelltown Council offered to pay \$10,000 annually to keep the road open, but Wollondilly Council refused the offer.

Cr Kolkman said, "I know Wollondilly Shire and the Department of Land and Water Conservation are concerned about being sued but if we accept responsibility for road maintenance I would expect that we are also acknowledging a preparedness to share that burden too."

Wollondilly Council's director of works, Peter Cassilles, said a meetings was held between the mentioned parties, but denied that it was a "covert operation".

Mr Cassilles said, "Campbelltown Council knew the Department would close the road if the two councils could not reach an agreement.

"The department called for that meeting to be held and invited Wollondilly Council and the Colliery because we would be discussing the closure of the fire trail."

"The reason why Campbelltown Council wasn't invited is up to the department and it is not up to us to inform Campbelltown of the department's decision."

Queries on native issues

MoAd 7/10/98

I HAVE some questions about Cumberland Woodland once it has been identified:

- Who maintains the area?
- Will an Environmental Police Force be employed to enforce legislation?
- Under whose direction and control will the Environmental Police Force be?
- Who will pay the Police Force?
- What are the legal implications of an Environmental Police Force?

Areas declared as Cumberland Plain Woodland which is owned by ratepayers, leave many unanswered questions:

- Will the rate payer be compensated for loss of potential income earning capacity?
- Will the Council decrease the rates payable by the owner in accordance with the area declared Cumberland Plain Woodland?
- Who pays the surveyor to measure the

area to be set aside?

- Who pays for the fencing to stop degradation by stock, vehicles, etc?
- Will fencing exclude native animals?
- Who advises the Valuer General's Department of the change in status of that block of land, which has now effectively been devalued for the owner?
- Would Council or the State Government be required to purchase that area of Cumberland Plain Woodland from the owner?
- If so, the above questions would become more significant.
- Access by the Environmental Police Force would become a contentious issue.
- What will be the rights of the owner?
- Will an easement be required by the Council (or body responsible) to gain access

in areas where the owner's property is to be traversed?

- If so, who pays for the registration of the easement?
- Will the Environmental Police Force be able to enter a property for inspection at any time, or will an appointment be made with the owner?
- If the area catches fire, who is responsible to put out the fire, given the perceived sensitivity of the area?
- Will the general public agree to this precedent of invasive investigation and control of private land?

One's home will no longer be one's castle.

JOHN BICKNELL,
Chairman,

Orchard Industry Action Group.

Be on look-out for elusive koala

By MERRYLYN PORTER

WORONORA residents are being asked to keep a look out for a koala which was sighted in bushland recently.

A resident contacted authorities after she spotted the koala near Woronora cemetery.

Now researchers are asking Sutherland Shire residents to report any other koala sightings.

Steven Ward, a koala researcher based at the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur, said the Woronora find was very exciting as it was the first in the area.

He said that while the koala had disappeared before researchers arrived, they did find evidence to support the find.

"We found pellets underneath the tree so we at least confirmed there was a sighting," he said.

"We expect it was a male because at the moment we don't have any evidence that there are koalas breeding in Sutherland Shire."

Mr Ward said such sightings were invaluable to researchers.

"What my research is about is finding out where they are, population, how well they are breeding, what threats there are and if they have any health problems," Mr Ward said.

"We actually don't know very much about the Sutherland side of the army range and there is some habitat out here that looks really good."

As part of this research, koalas are usually caught to allow a vet to check the animal over.

Colour coded tags are then inserted into the animals ears before they are released back into

the wild. This allows researchers to keep track of the koala and often uncovers some interesting information about the migratory patterns of koalas.

Mr Ward said a young male koala dubbed Bill was found near Campbelltown and eartagged.

The eartags allowed researchers to positively identify Bill when he turned up a year later at Alfords Point.

He had travelled 19km through the army range and across busy Heathcote Road.

"Males in particular will move long distances," Mr Ward said.

He said researchers now believed young males migrated to avoid in-breeding.

But he said there was still so much to learn, and that was where the community comes in.

"We are trying to get people to report sightings to us because there is so much bushland out there that finding them is the number one problem," he said.

Mr Ward said members of the public were asked to report sightings as soon as possible by ringing a special pager service which had been set up and stating exactly where they had seen the koala.

The public can also help by looking out for the eartags and taking note of what colour they were. He said this would allow the koala to be identified even if it had moved on by the time researchers arrived.

He said information was also welcome about past sightings, no matter how long ago they occurred. To report sightings phone 9962 9996.



■ BILL: One of the many inhabitants of Wedderburn's thriving koala colony.

Photo: ROBERT GRUJICIC

Greater protection needed

McAd 29/7/98

CAMPBELLTOWN readers of the Sydney daily newspapers may have been disturbed by recent articles in which Steve Phillips from the Australia Koala Foundation (AKF) predicted that koalas are in danger of extinction within 10 to 15 years unless governments give them greater protection.

How does the future of Campbelltown koalas fit Mr Phillips prediction? As July is koala and July 31 is Koala Day, we will summarise what we think the future holds for our koalas.

First, the good news — that we have examined and are radio tracking and they are in good condition and are breeding regularly and successfully. We have only found one sick mature female, and she died of problems associated with faulty kidneys.

Most of the young born in our area seem to be surviving to the stage of weaning, and some of those have made impressive journeys across the Holsworthy firing range or towards Appin Road.

Despite the problems of cars and dogs, some of our koalas have established home ranges on the edge of

■ JULY, the month of the koala, has been clouded with predictions our national mascots could be extinct in 10 years. But experts Dr ROBERT CLOSE and STEVEN WARD say the future looks bright for local koalas.

Campbelltown and visit many suburban back yards, although some residents may not realise it unless they look carefully beneath their trees for the distinctive faecal pellets which are 2cm-3cm long, brown to black and an olive shape.

Our top male koalas roam over huge areas (200ha) on the fringe of the city and appear to have developed special habits of behaviour to keep dogs at bay.

This is an excellent report card for our koalas and suggest that our koalas will still be healthy and thriving in Campbelltown in 10 to 15 years.

We have also been able to show that koalas live at Wilton and in the Bagro catchment, and we have sightings reported all the way to Bowral and beyond.

So it seems that the AKF's gloomy predictions

sweep North-South along the Georges River and O'Hares Creek, we could easily lose both populations.

If there are no other surviving local populations, then the areas may never be re-colonised. We hope that our young koalas which have gone wandering will meet and form additional breeding populations. Offspring from these populations could then restock the Wedderburn and Kentlyn colonies if they were destroyed by fire.

The only other known sources of animals to restock Ketlyn and Wedderburn colonies would be from Wilton and the Avondam areas to the south.

Their access would be via bushland beside the Georges River and Appin Road or beside the Nepean River.

Successful movements by koalas would require that these bushland corridors be retained. Unfortunately, these bushland cor-

ridors are threatened by the spread of domestic housing, roads and other urban development.

So, in summary, we can say that Campbelltown koalas appear to be surviving and thriving and spreading their offspring along the Georges River and tributaries in the Holsworthy Range to the east and hopefully along the Nepean River to the west.

It is possible that in time koalas will be seen regularly in many areas of bushland south of Sydney.

If you would like to learn more about our local koalas, we will shortly release a video which can be available for schools and community groups. The video shows details of local koalas and outlines how the community can help retain koalas.

To report a koala sighting, call the University of Western Sydney hotline on (02) 9962 9996. To hear a male bellowing, call 4620 3200.

Security VERTICAL BLINDS VENETIAN

Koala power push

KOALAS in the Georges River catchment area could become a feature tourist attraction to rival the legend of Fisher's Ghost and Campbelltown's colonial history.

Campbelltown Council has called for a report on the feasibility of a koala research centre on the outskirts of the city which could open to tourists.

A departmental report to council said Campbelltown's koala colonies were visited by bushwalkers but the public had poor access.

"Unlike a zoo or a native animal park, these koalas are in their natural habitat so no guarantees of sightings can be made," the report said.

"If Campbelltown was to seek recognition as The Home of Sydney's Koalas, it would be necessary to provide permanent access to koalas, their habitat and to parts of the research facility."

An exhibition of Campbelltown's koala population will be held at Quondong from July 13-26 to promote Save The Koala Day on July 25.

The display has been organised by the University of Western Sydney Macarthur's koala research team, National Parks Association Macarthur division and the Australian Koala Foundation.

Expert shares koala research

THE Mt Annan Botanic Gardens is holding a discussion about Campbelltown koalas this Saturday.

Associate Professor Robert Close of the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur will talk to the Friends of the Gardens about the famous Campbelltown koalas.

Mr Close will discuss the history of koalas in the region, a description of early research findings in what was effectively a

part-time project from 1990 to 1994.

The talk will also describe the major leap forward that the project took in 1995 when BSC honors graduate Steven Ward received a Macarthur Advertiser scholarship to commence a PhD project.

As a result of Steven's studies, the university now knows a great deal more about the way koalas live and die in the region.

They also know more about the genetics and movements of the koalas.

The weekly column in the Macarthur Advertiser, which has described some of Steven's findings, has allowed local people to share in the study and play a major part in its success by reporting koalas from all over the district.

The talk begins at 11am in the Education Centre.

Koala decline

Koala numbers had declined dramatically to between 45,000 and 80,000 from several million since the turn of the century, the Australian Koala Foundation said yesterday. A foundation spokeswoman said protection of koala habitats had to become a priority for governments, developers and forest workers.

Sydney Morning Herald
ass. 2nd July 1999



Koala party

MORE than 150 children and adults basked in the sunshine at Simmo's Beach, Macquarie Fields, last Friday to help celebrate the second birthday of Mac's Koala Club.

The celebrations were in fine style, with a jumping castle, sausage sizzle and nature walks keeping kids busy.

The National Parks Association lent a hand and UWS Macarthur student and koala researcher Steven Ward kept the children informed.

A huge cake was cut by the birthday star, Mac, Koala and everyone looks forward to next year's event.

Sponsors of the day included Willis Cakes, Foley's Butchers, Coca-Cola, Raymor Sports, McDonald's and the National Parks Association.



■ LOCAL identity Mac Koala celebrates his second birthday bash with some of his young friends last week

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Vol 4, No 19

SUTHERLAND-MENAI

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Have you seen any koalas lately?

RESIDENTS are being urged to look out for koalas in the Sutherland Shire, as it is believed a considerable number could be living in the region.

While a small team at the University of Western Sydney Macarthur has been researching the distribution of koalas in southern Sydney since 1991, a lack of resources prevents them from doing much work in the shire.

That's where the community comes in, says one of the group's members, PhD student Wayne Foster.

Mr Foster said that, because there were no vegetation maps of the shire, it was impossible to say how many koalas were calling it home without the Campbelltown-based group physically walking through the area's huge national parks and checking.

"We think more koalas live in the shire than we actually know about because there are some phenomenally large bush areas we haven't really been able to investigate," he said.

These include Holsworthy army base, Woronora catchment and Heathcote National Park.

He said: "Koalas are extremely hard to spot in the bush so community sightings provide invaluable data."

"One has been sighted at Waterfall, another across from Menai clay shoot range, two at Deadman's Creek, some road kill — and we believe ANSTO has a resident koala."

Mr Foster said one theory was that koalas were making the reasonably brief trek from Campbelltown where two colonies are known to exist — to Menai because room was running out and making the typically territorial males tetchy.

He said trees to watch for when koala-spotting included the grey gum, thin-leaved stringy bark and smooth barked apple.

"Look for scratches — koalas leave a big curved S-shape as they move up a tree and their claws rotate across the bark."

Koala sightings — alive or dead, recent and past — can be reported 24 hours a day on pager 9962 9996 (leave your name and number).

● The National Parks Association presents Koalas In The Backyard, a free discussion, and recent shire sightings at 8pm on November 19.

Venue is Sutherland Multi Purpose Centre, 123 Flora St.
Details: 9233 4660.



KOALAS: Airport would be bad for them, too.

Carr 'cowardly' for Badgerys backdown

By LINDA MORRIS
Transport Writer

The Federal Minister for Transport, Mr Sharp, has launched a scathing public attack on the Premier, Mr Carr, branding his sudden opposition to an airport at Badgerys Creek as "cowardly".

Speaking at an airport privatisation conference in Sydney yesterday, Mr Sharp said the State Government put at risk 63,000 jobs in western Sydney and stood in the way of millions of dollars in freeway improvements and a new high-speed rail link which could loop into the main western line.

The enduring legacy of Mr Carr's "apparent backflip" would be increased aircraft noise for Labor's inner-city constituents and the possibility of a fourth runway and 24-hour operations at Kingsford Smith, Mr Sharp said.

"If he [Mr Carr] now opposes the construction of an airport anywhere in the Sydney Basin, then he should explain to all

those voters in Labor's inner-city heartland that this is code for lifting the curfew, and lifting the cap of 80 movements per hour.

"It means building a four-lane runway. It means squeezing more than 40 million passengers into Sydney Airport - doing what it handles today."

On September 3, the Federal Government eliminated the Holsworthy Army Base as a site for a second airport on environmental grounds, leaving three sites at Badgerys Creek as the only alternatives.

A spokesman for the State Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning, Mr Knowles, accused Mr Sharp of playing the "biggest con trick on the people of western Sydney".

"His claim that this proposal is the same airport proposal as the one put forward by the previous [Labor] Government is a bold-faced lie," the spokesman said. "It is up to three times as big with the potential to expand to five runways. He knows it won't work. We know it won't work."

Sydney Morning Herald 16th September 1997

Environmental plea

THE proposed Holsworthy airport is a perfect way to spend \$1.2 billion on environmental destruction.

So says Dr Don Neely of the Business and Technology Faculty of the University of Western Sydney.

Dr Neely said the site of the southern Holsworthy option for Sydney's second airport was an almost "pristine wilderness area" with 80-100m gullies.

He said it supported fascinating flora and fauna and contained some of the most beautiful, unspoilt landscapes and waterways in the Sydney region.

To develop this area for use as an airport, he said, would require either the levelling of the site or a massive program of bridge building, or some combination of the two.

Dr Neely said: "The area required for two main runways, a cross runway, taxi lanes and tarmac around terminal building is about 2000 hectares.

"To level the site, engineers would have to cut the tops off the ridges which cover about half of the area and dump this into the other half which comprises the valleys."

Senior UWS Macarthur lecturer Robert Close said the gullies and

waterways were a perfect habitat for koalas and that any change to that environment could be devastating.

He said an airport would mean natural vegetation would have to be kept down, possibly by burning off.

"A fire would not only kill the koalas but would also change the vegetation of the area," Mr Close said.

"There will also be the demolition of gullies, which will destroy important refuge areas for koalas.

"Wedderburn colony is right at the end of the east/west runway, which means planes going overhead will create a lot of noise.

"Koalas rely on bellowing calls by the males to mate so we can only imagine the disastrous effects on their reproduction.

"The Wedderburn/Kentlyn area is the only koala habitat with breeding males."

Mr Close said other things to consider included the destruction of the dispersal routes taken by koalas if a highway were built to cross Rosemeadow.

The level of diesel fuel in the area might also affect the gum leaves.

Health risk for homes under flight paths

A CAMPBELLTOWN Council report has recommended the health effects of jet aircraft on residents living under flightpaths be considered as part of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) into Sydney's second major airport. The report followed media reports earlier this year which suggested aviation fuel may increase the incidence of a cancer type known as Myeloma (tumour of the bone marrow).

It said the health effects on residents living under flight paths, particularly in relation to the increased exposure to carcinogenic substances, be considered as part of the Environmental Impact Statement.

Macarthur Chronicle 4th June 1997

Chemical dump

THE Environment Protection Authority is investigating the dumping of seven, 200-litre drums of toxic chemicals in bushland near a waterway last week.

Police and chemical specialists from the fire brigade were called to the Appin Rd site near the Wedderburn Rd turn-off at 6pm on Thursday to clear the hazard.

The Sydney Morning Herald 25th August 1997

Macarthur Advertiser 7th May 1997

Honestly, Mr Fahey

A PAGE of an old Macarthur Advertiser turned up recently in a friend's cat box dated February 7, that is, just before the last Federal election.

Two adjacent articles described firstly John Fahey's campaign focus "Families, enterprise and honesty" and cited Fahey's concerns as including the local environment (EIS for Badgerys Creek), and secondly, the Howard Government's plan to hold an independent inquiry into air pollution.

Mr Fahey noted: "This initiative outstrips Labor's empty environmental promises. This vision means Macarthur residents will face a healthier future".

No sooner was the election won than Howard's government announced that

an EIS would be conducted only for Badgerys Creek and Holsworthy.

Both sites are in the Sydney basin where Mr Fahey observed "Campbelltown, Narellan and Penrith were the areas air pollution collected" and where asthma was "in almost epidemic proportions".

Where is your famous honesty now Mr Fahey? You cannot expect us to believe that you did not know the Holsworthy plan prior to the election.

If you were so concerned about the air pollution, why did you not insist that alternative sites outside the south-west were considered?

ROBERT CLOSE,
Ambarvale.

Macarthur Advertiser 30th July 1997

PEOPLE POWER

by MICHELLE BURRELL

MORE than 20,000 south western Sydney residents had an unmistakable message for the Federal Government at a major rally on the weekend — no airport at Holsworthy.

The peaceful but determined protesters, including many family groups, formed a giant human "no" to clearly inform Prime Minister John Howard of their feelings.

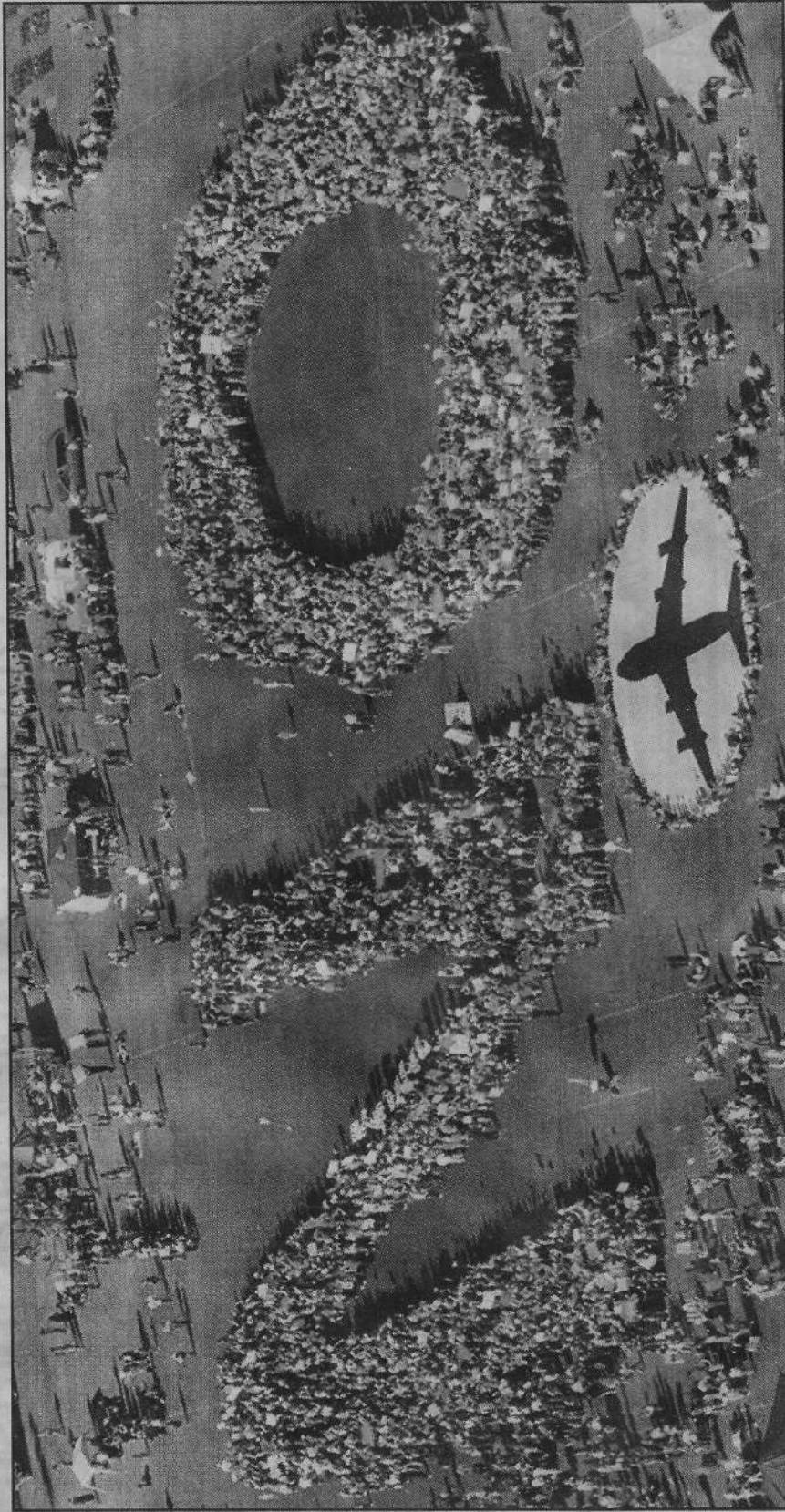
Traffic was jammed from the F5 Freeway to Hammondville Oval as residents, carrying placards and picnic lunches, flocked to the site for the Holsworthy airport day of protest.

Speakers including State Urban Affairs and Planning Minister Craig Knowles and South West Sydney Community Alliance chairman Jim McGoldrick emphasised the effects of an airport and the importance of community unity in fighting the proposal.

Mr Knowles, also the Member for Moorebank, told the rally the Environmental Impact State-ment process was a "sham".

"From the little bit of information that we have got, the noise impact alone shows us that Holsworthy should have been scrapped months ago," he told the rally. "Macquarie Fields, Ingleburn... St Helens Park, if you live in any of the suburbs which surround Holsworthy you will have to put up with noise levels between 80 and 90 decibels."

The CRASH (Councils and Residents Against the Selection of Holsworthy) organised event



Show of strength... protesters make their point at the rally on Sunday

He held only weeks before the expected release of the draft EIS into both the Holsworthy and Badgerys Creek airport options. National Trust of Australia president Barry O'Keefe pledged the organisation's support of the cause saying the proposal amounted to heritage and environmental vandalism.

After the rally, Mr McGoldrick said the event had sent a clear message to Federal Government. "They will be in

trouble if they select Holsworthy as an airport site," he said.

Campbelltown Anti Airport Group co-ordinator Leon Warren said thousands of Campbelltown residents had attended Sunday's rally.

"I'm absolutely tickled pink with the response and the support from the people, especially

the people of Campbelltown. They made a great effort," he said. "We sent a clear message that Holsworthy is not on."

Campbelltown Mayor Russell Matheson, who also attended the rally, said he is proud of the Campbelltown residents who had supported the cause. But, he was concerned the

mayors from the seven councils which supported CRASH were not asked to speak at the rally.

"It appears that behind the scenes there's a number of lobbyists fighting Holsworthy, but pushing for Badgerys Creek, I'm genuinely worried about that."

● Holsworthy's heritage recognised: page 2

Mum and cub safe

By ROBERT CLOSE
and STEVEN WARD

AT 10pm one night last week Amanda Harris noticed a moving shape on Junction Road beside Leumeah High School.

Thinking it was a cat she slowed right down and was amazed to watch a koala with a back young walk onto the road in front of her.

She tried to ring us, but found that the pager number was "out of service".

Amanda persisted, leaving a message for us via the University and eventually made contact.

We went out to investigate and found the mother and cub in a tree about four metres away from Junction Road and caught them both just as the High School dismissal bell rang.

A veterinary inspection at Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute showed that both were in good health.

They were then ear-tagged, mum had a radio collar fitted and they were released together not too far from the capture point. Mum, now nicknamed Amanda, weighed 7kg, and the cub, now nicknamed Andrew, weighed 800gm.

mac's koala club

The pager company had cut off the service on August 12 due to a paper-work error.

We were unaware of the problem until Amanda found another way to contact us.

The hotline number is now operating again and we apologise for any inconvenience.

If anyone else tried to call us between August 12 and August 30 please try again now. It is important

that we record all sightings, especially during this busy time of year for koalas.

Special thanks to Amanda for her persistence in reporting this valuable find.

■ To report a koala sighting please call the University of Western Sydney Macarthur hotline on (02) 9962 9996.

■ To hear a male koala bellowing call (02) 4620 3200.

The sighting of a breeding female at Leumeah was particularly interesting.

Although we have had three sightings reported on or near Peter Meadows Road we thought they were young males on the move.

We have never previously thought that koalas might be breeding along Peter Meadows Creek, so we will be following Amanda's movements with interest.

All students and staff at Leumeah High School should therefore keep their eyes open. They may occasionally have koala visitors!

Macarthur Advertiser 10th September 1997

Closer than we think

With STEVEN WARD
and ROBERT CLOSE

LAST week we discussed the capture of a new female koala called Amanda and her cub Andrew.

They were both caught beside Junction Road close to Leumeah High School.

Because we were concerned that they might be hit by a car we moved both koalas away from the road when we released them.

Since then Steven has tracked Amanda and Andrew from the signals emitted by Amanda's recently-fitted radio-collar.

From this work we know that they have travelled over a kilometre and are now close to Old Kent Rd, Kentlyn.

This is quite a long movement

mac's koala club

for a female koala with a cub riding on her back.

There are two likely explanations why they have moved so far.

The first is that our moving them away from Junction Rd may have disorientated Amanda so she is now searching for her new home.

Second is that Amanda may have moved out of her normal home range when we captured her

and has now moved back to that area.

This last possibility seems more likely as Steven has observed old koala pellets by Old Kent Rd indicating past use by koalas of habitat in that area.

The really exciting implication from these observations is that koalas may be breeding closer to Campbelltown than we thought.

These koalas will be doing it tough though because of dogs (which can kill koalas), traffic and trees being cleared.

So remember to keep your eyes open and tell us of any koala sightings.

■ To report a koala sighting please call the UWS Macarthur hotline on (02) 9962 9996. To hear a male koala bellowing call (02) 4620 3200.

Macarthur Advertiser

17th September 1997

SMH 9-7-97

Koalas set for death row

IT is unlikely the koala population will survive in the Holsworthy region, even if the proposed second airport is built just north of their sites.

So says Associate Professor Robert Close, Chair of Biological Sciences at the University of Western Sydney.

Dr Close, who has been

studying koalas in the Macarthur region, said even if Holsworthy Option A (approximately 3km to 4km north of the koala site) was chosen as the preferred option, it could still have an adverse effect on koalas.

"Noise is going to have an effect on the calling between koalas", he said, in reference to

the possible problems of mating calls being heard. *

On the question of whether these stresses could even lead to a chlamydia outbreak (which has been known to occur elsewhere) among koalas, Dr Close said: "I don't even think they would survive long enough to get to that stage".

The Sydney Morning Herald 9th July, 1997

Where, oh where, is Wilhemena?

UNIVERSITY of Western Sydney researchers conducting a koala census have asked local residents to report any sightings.

By JENNY STOKES

IN 1992, a koala called Wilhemena left her colony near Campbelltown on an epic trek to Sutherland Shire.

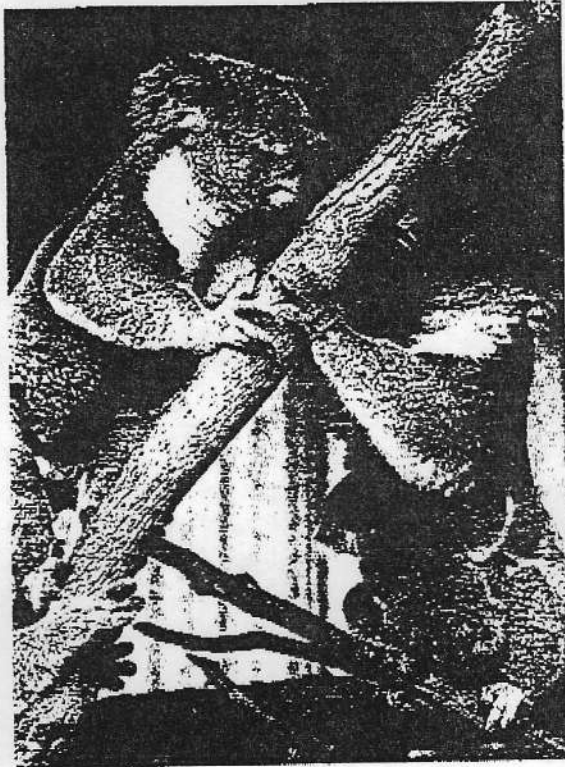
The journey took her on tiny paws from Kentlyn, where she was tagged by researchers in early 1992, and across the Holsworthy Military Range to Engadine, where she was last spotted in the Heathcote National Park by bushwalkers in 1994.

The tagging of Wilhemena was done by students taking part in a research project at the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur.

The researchers are now conducting a "koala census" and are desperate for news of the elusive Wilhemena.

PhD student Steven Ward said the seven-year-old project was designed to find out the exact range, habitats and health of koala populations in southern Sydney.

"Previously we've concentrated fairly much on the area west of the army base," Mr Ward said, "but now we're looking at the



RESIDENT koalas at Symbio Animal Park.

area to the north and east, which is Sutherland Shire."

The researchers estimate there could be anywhere between 50 and 500 koalas living in the "general Holsworthy area", including Heathcote and Royal national parks and the Woronora Dam catchment area.

"Trying to spot a koala is like looking for a grey furry lump stuck on a grey trunk often high up in a clump of leaves," Mr Ward said.

"And because they are

the military site. "But without more information, we just don't know the full extent of the population," Mr Ward said.

"That is why we would like to hear from anyone who may have seen a koala recently. Even historical information about sightings many years ago is important to our work.

"Even dead animals can be useful to researchers because we can still collect genetic information and figure out the age, size or even health of the animal at the time."

According to Mr Ward, the UWS researchers believed koalas from the only remaining breeding colonies in the area - at Wedderburn and Kentlyn - could also be breeding in the nearby Holsworthy Military Range.

Mr Ward said any remaining koala habitats on the base would be almost wiped out if the airport went ahead.

He said a southern runway option would back on to the Wedderburn koala colony, while runway lights would interfere with the tracking of animals and new roads would further threaten any remaining koalas, who have "little or no road sense", Mr Ward said.

Sightings can be reported 24 hours to 0062 9996. Leave a name and number so that researchers can verify the sightings and locations.

in such low densities, locating them is a huge problem."

The last sighting in Sutherland Shire was at Audley in January.

Mr Ward said information gathered so far suggested that, like Wilhemena, koalas could be using Holsworthy as a corridor to reach Heathcote and Royal national parks.

Such a corridor would be cut off if the Federal Government went ahead with plans to build an international airport on

To Steven Ward
P.S. Leader 14/8/97

university joins airport protest

UWS Macarthur Communique 1st June 1997

*Communique
Vol 22
Winter 1997
ISSN 1038-0611*

UWS Macarthur has added its voice to the growing opposition to the Holsworthy airport proposal, maintaining that both the northern and southern options would place the very future of the institution in jeopardy. The northern option would affect the Bankstown campus, while the southern option would have an even greater negative impact on the Campbelltown campus.

"UWS Macarthur attracts more than ten thousand students, staff and visitors to its sites each day," said the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and UWS Macarthur President, Professor David Barr. "They would be subjected to excess noise every ninety seconds from the second airport.

"We are certain that it would be necessary for us to soundproof all our buildings, in order to go about our core business of teaching and research. The cost would run into millions, and the University would expect the Commonwealth government to fund and complete this work before the opening of the airport."



Rob Close; koalas under threat from airport proposal

Professor Barr said that in addition, the Campbelltown campus had been architecturally designed to encourage "out of doors" activity by students. "No soundproofing could prevent a severe loss of quality of student life due to aircraft noise if the southern Holsworthy option proceeds. Certainly a major building program would be needed to accommodate students who are not attending lectures," he said.

"The frequent excessive noise, coupled with the current uncertain climate for universities, would ultimately threaten our very viability in this new era of competitiveness for universities. Who would want to pay to attend a university where your concentration is interrupted every ninety seconds by an aircraft?"

The University has urged the government to also consider major factors such as the uniqueness and fragility of the flora and fauna of south west Sydney, the destruction of Aboriginal sites and the proximity of the proposed site to the Lucas Heights nuclear facility.

The issue of potential destruction of wildlife is close to the heart of UWS Macarthur researchers Associate Professor Rob Close and Stephen Ward, who have studied the breeding and movement of koalas in the south west Sydney area.

"Of the 304 vertebrate species recorded or expected to occur there, 47 are mammals and nine of these are of conservation significance.



Too close for comfort; UWS Macarthur joins the anti-airport campaign

The koala is the best known among this group, and would be seriously threatened by the airport's construction," Associate Professor Close said. "The two east-west runways of the southern option will be so close to the gorge where my colleagues and I have been studying koalas since 1990, that beacons for the runway approaches will have to be strung across the gorge itself. This gorge is the only area where we have found breeding koalas immediately south of Sydney."

The effect on the south west Sydney koalas would not be confined to the physical destruction of the gorge; hazard-reduction burning of surrounding bushland, establishment of major road and rail links, pollution of waterways, increased access for feral predators and the noise factor would combine to spell destruction. As well, the airport and its associated infrastructure would inhibit movement between koala populations in the south west. "Such movement is vital for maintaining

genetic health and recolonisation after local extinction," Associate Professor Close said. "Not only would the airport directly kill many koalas, but koala populations a long distance away could be isolated and eventually decline."

"Specifically, the planned eight-lane highway access to the southern airport will separate from each other the two populations at Kentlyn and Wedderburn (the only known breeding areas within 65 kilometres south of Sydney) and will prevent dispersal from both populations to remaining habitat east of the Georges River and into the Nepean River system."

Associate Professor Close has appealed to the community to take up the protest. "I appeal to everyone who is concerned at the potential loss of a significant breeding population of koalas and the destruction of a priceless and pristine environment to write to the Prime Minister and demand that the Holsworthy airport proposal be rejected," he said.

Koala survival hangs in the balance at Wedderburn site

Green bans imposed by the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemans Association and the Building Trades Group of the Labor Council of NSW are still holding developers out of the Wedderburn site in Campbelltown. Survival of Sydney's last urban koala colony depends on this temporary ban.

Just to recap, Yap Yan Pin Pty Ltd is planning to develop the site which will contain 22 houses, each two hectares in size. Including roads and other amenities, the total amount of land to be cleared is around 250ha.

Not only will the initial clearing and construction be detrimental to the koalas' livelihood, imagine the effects of domestic animals (on all the wildlife), pollution from sewage and urban runoff, illegal rubbish dumping and weed invasion.

Bushfire threat

The proposed developed area is elevated and sandwiched between two parcels of crown land teeming with native flora and fauna. Because of its location, bush fires would be a great threat to the homes, and protection such as back burning and fire breaks would be put in place. All these aspects will take effect once people inhabit the area and will continually encroach on the surrounding natural environment.

Dr Close, Chairman of the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur, has recently conducted studies and found that the area proposed for development is regularly used by the koalas and other native wildlife as a

corridor to reach prime feeding grounds.

Fund for Animals would like to start a letter-writing campaign where YOU, our valued supporter, can express the grave concerns you have for the Wedderburn koalas.

Protection of this area is crucial. It is important to act immediately. All letters to Council should be addressed to: Campbelltown Council, Queen Street, Campbelltown NSW 2560.

IMPORTANT: In your letter you should ask that a copy be given to every Alderman on the Council.

When you receive a reply, the Fund for Animals would greatly appreciate you making a copy of both it and your own letter. Sending this to us would be most helpful for our files. Remember, always keep a copy yourself.

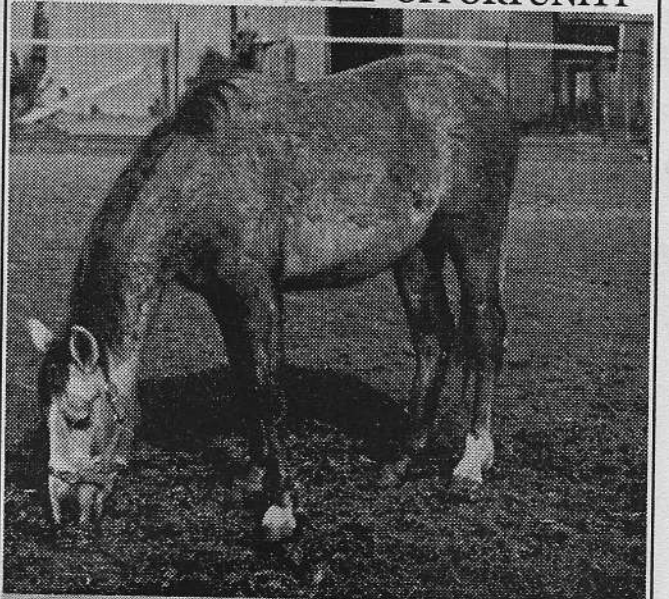
Letters to local papers to be addressed to:

- The Editor, *The Macarthur Advertiser*, 263 Queen St, Campbelltown NSW 2560.
- The Editor, *Macarthur Chronicle*, The Mall, Queen Street, Campbelltown NSW 2560.

If you can contribute financially to the plight of the Wedderburn koala colony or if you just need more information contact: Campbelltown Koala Association, PO Box 59, Campbelltown NSW 2560. Ph (046) 258 8212.



HORSE SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITY



Juliette, a youngster in the horse flock, is looking for sponsorship.

It has been decided that she will remain at the Sanctuary until she starts her under saddle training. Juliette has been given some basic education, and will happily greet anyone who brings her carrots, enjoying a brush and quiet conversation.

She spends her days in the paddock with the other horses, and is stabled at night.

Horse sponsorship involves a monthly contribution to cover feed bills, veterinary expenses and training. We will regularly dispatch to Juliette's sponsors photos and letters keeping sponsors informed of her progress.

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Macarthur Advertiser 17th July, 1997

Sightings of koalas are very important

CAMPBELLTOWN koalas are famous!

We think that the sightings of Koalas which Macarthur Advertiser readers have reported to us are so important, that last week Steven Ward displayed a poster based on these sightings at two scientific conferences.

Scientific conferences are very important for the exchange of information so that scientists can find out about the latest developments in their field.

This exchange of information can allow for all sorts of new innovations.

The two conferences at which Steven's poster was displayed were run by the Australian Mammalogy Society and the Ecology Society of Australia and were attended by experts in mammals (animals with fur) and ecology (the interaction of plants and animals) from all over Australia.

This means the sightings which you have provided us with are famous Australia wide.

We would also like to thank the Macarthur Advertiser for their fantastic support. Prior to the

mac's koala club

publication of the koala column there were seven to eight sightings reported every year.

In the eight months since the publication of the koala column we have had at least 16 sightings.

This is an increase of more than three times in the rate of sightings being reported.

However, we still lack much basic data about our koala population. If you see a koala and report it you will be contributing greatly to what about the koalas, where they are, which areas they prefer and maybe even a rough idea of how many koalas are out there.

So thank you for all the koala sightings, but we definitely still want to hear from you if you see koala.

If you sight a koala please contact Robert Close on (046) 203 203 (voice-mail) or after hours on (046) 268 679.

Steven Ward and Robert Close.

Spotted any koalas lately?

We (Ph.D student Steven Ward and Associate Professor Robert Close from the University of Western Sydney Macarthur) are keen to learn of any koala sightings in the southwest Sydney region (south of Sydney down to Mittagong).

We are trying to determine koala numbers, distribution, health status and the way they use their habitat. The information we collect helps to estimate the impact of proposed developments.

If you find or see a koala, dead or alive, please telephone (02) 9962 9996 as soon as possible.

S Ward & R Close

University of Western Sydney

Open Road May/June 97

NRMA Open Road May/June 1997

Airport poses a new threat to koalas

ON returning home from a council meeting two weeks ago I had maybe my 13th look at the "airport master plans" prepared by Campbelltown's second-best friends, Rust PPK.

Maybe it was just that my mind was in neutral, but for the first time since I started looking at those plans I became aware that the southern option for the Holsworthy site identified "approach lights" for the southern runway as being on land at Wedderburn and in the Woronora Dam Catchment area that was not owned by the Federal Government.

Inquiries I made of Campbelltown Council staff revealed the land at Wedderburn, upon which the Federal Government is seeking to place "landing lights", is actually owned by Campbelltown City Council but its history shows that it has considerably more than just a passing importance to all the people of Campbelltown.

That land was transferred to the ownership of the council by the Land and Environment Court of NSW after the Yap Yan Pin case.

Longer-term residents of Campbelltown will recall that a company named Yap Yan Pin had sought to develop that particular piece of Wedderburn real estate.

The Land and Environment Court decided that the needs of the Wedderburn koala colony, which called that, and quite a lot more of Wedderburn including Holsworthy Military area, home, were quite superior to the greed of a bunch of out-of-town real estate developers.

Now we have a Federal Government which is seeking to resurrect the destruction of the Wedderburn koala country.

The plans they have for the land owned by the Campbelltown Council will see 'the koalas' habitat bulldozed flat to make way for the uninterrupted flight line of sight that is necessary for the airport. And the hell with the koalas.

I have a view that a Government that wilfully destroys the environment and native species is morally and ethically corrupt.

I also have a view that any consultants claiming to

have even a smidgin of professional expertise who manage to come up with a "master plan" that has to destroy koala habitat to even have a chance of success are professionally and ethically challenged.

I fought long and hard to preserve Wedderburn as part of the Campbelltown heritage during the recent attempts by a majority of Campbelltown councillors to turn the area over to the chainsaws.

Now that we have won that first skirmish I am not about to roll over for a Government of North Shore nerds and National Party bushrangers of doubtful environmental integrity.

For the record I have asked Campbelltown Council to investigate all the possible legal and strategic measures that we may take to prevent the Federal Government using Campbelltown Council's land at Wedderburn.

What has happened so far on this airport issue is only an early brief encounter compared to what is yet to come.

Watch this space.

Cr RON OWERS, Ingleburn.

THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD
SATURDAY, APRIL 26, 1997

Scientist holds fears for koalas

A HOLSWORTH Airport would spell disaster for Campbelltown's famous koala colony.

So fears leading expert, Dr Robert Close from the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur (pictured left).

The gullies and waterways earmarked for giant runways presently provide a perfect habitat for koalas and any change to that environment could be devastating, he told the *Advertiser*.

An airport would mean natural

vegetation being kept down, possibly burning off, not to mention the massive demolition of gullies which will destroy important refuge areas.

"Wedgeburn colony is right at the end of the east/west runway which means planes going overhead will create a lot of noise," Dr Close said.

"Koalas rely on bellowing calls by the males to mate so we can only imagine disastrous affects on their reproduction."

9/4/97



Out on a limb . . . 18-month-old Sarah is one of four koalas being tracked. Below, Mr Ward uses monitoring equipment high above the Georges River.

Photographs by PETER RAE

The Sydney Morning Herald 26th April 1997

Battle against second airport takes to the trees

By **MURRAY HOGARTH**
Environment Writer

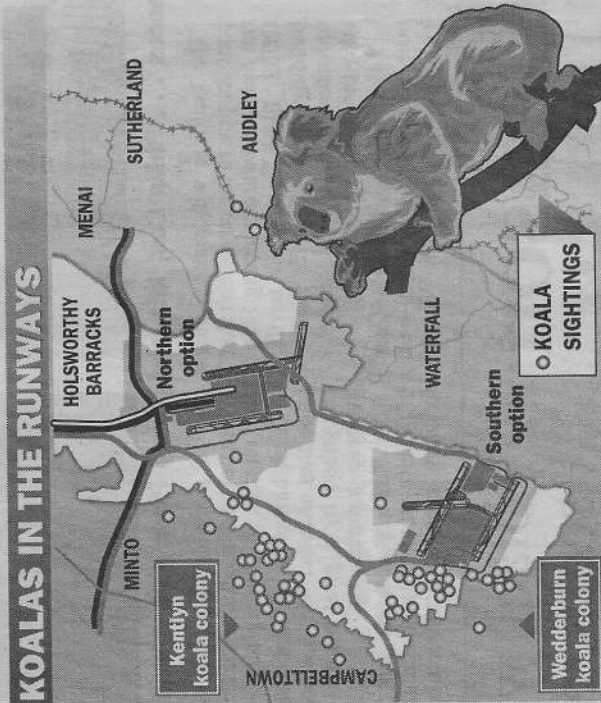
Threatened koalas in two small colonies are to be promoted as wildlife icons in an international campaign against Holsworthy airport base becoming the site of Sydney's massive 24-hour second airport.

Environmentalists fear that the Federal Government has secretly discarded Badgerys Creek in favour of the sprawling wilds of Holsworthy, in Sydney's south, with northern or southern airport alternatives.

Researchers who are tracking koalas in the area say both Holsworthy options are a "great threat" to the animals, which can be highly mobile, and would directly kill many and dangerously isolate others.

"It's quite ironic," said Mr Steven Ward, from the University of Western Sydney's Macarthur campus. "They might put an airport in supposedly for a lot of tourists to come in, and wipe out a lot of koalas which is the main reason for tourists to come."

From today, the Councils



and Residents Against the Selection of Holsworthy (CRASH) group is starting to promote the potential plight of the koalas to major overseas media outlets, and is planning to give them star billing on the Internet.

The chairwoman of CRASH, Councillor Lorraine Rodden from Sutherland Shire, said yesterday that the Holsworthy proposal would quickly become an international embarrassment for the Government.

"I wonder how our interna-

Kentlyn, east of Campbelltown, and on the sparsely populated Wedderburn Plateau further south have become recognised as the most important in the Sydney basin.

The university researchers, who are supported by the Australian Koala Foundation (AKF), estimate there are about 60 koalas in each colony, but say the number across Holsworthy is a "great unknown".

It is understood that environmental assessment now under way on behalf of the Federal Department of Transport has found koalas on Holsworthy. However, neither the main consultants, Rust PPK, nor wildlife returned the *Herald's* calls.

The AKF's executive director, Ms Deborah Tabart, said a koala habitat atlas for the whole area was needed before any decisions on an airport were made, but she doubted that the environmental assessment of the airport alternatives would be sufficiently rigorous.

The AKF has already mapped the habitat of the Wedderburn

koalas, which have emerged victorious from stoushes over two residential developments.

But now koalas like 18-month-old Sarah, one of four being tracked using expensive radio-transmitting collars, face their greatest challenge.

The two main runways of the southern Holsworthy option point directly at the main Wedderburn koala colony, which lives beside and in the 140-metre deep O'Hares Creek gorge. Plans released as part of the environmental assessment process show that runway approach lights would stretch across the gorge and into koala habitat.

The researchers also fear that road and rail access would have a dramatic impact on the koalas, which move from the colonies across the vast Holsworthy range, into the Woronora catchment area and the Heathcote and Royal national parks. Of 26 new sightings of koalas last year, five had been killed on roads and another 10 were seen crossing roads. An airport would add an eight-lane motorway and a rail link to the area.



tional visitors will feel knowing that they are landing on what will be the remnants of Sydney's most significant koala nursery," she said.

Since their discovery in the late 1980s, the koala breeding colonies near the suburb of

Creek koala haunt?

mac's koala club

A GREEN and tree-filled part of Campbelltown in which we're hoping to find koalas is the Smiths Creek Reserve.

Smiths Creek runs through masses of vegetation, rock crevices and past hollow logs and dense piles of leaf litter.

Local reptilian land agents describe it as a top class area and say it is in high demand from a variety of lizards, snakes, tortoises and frogs.

Phillip Teschke, a graduating science/teaching student from the University of Western Sydney Macarthur, is fascinated by the reserve and has just completed a reptile and frog survey of the area for the Friends of Smiths Creek.

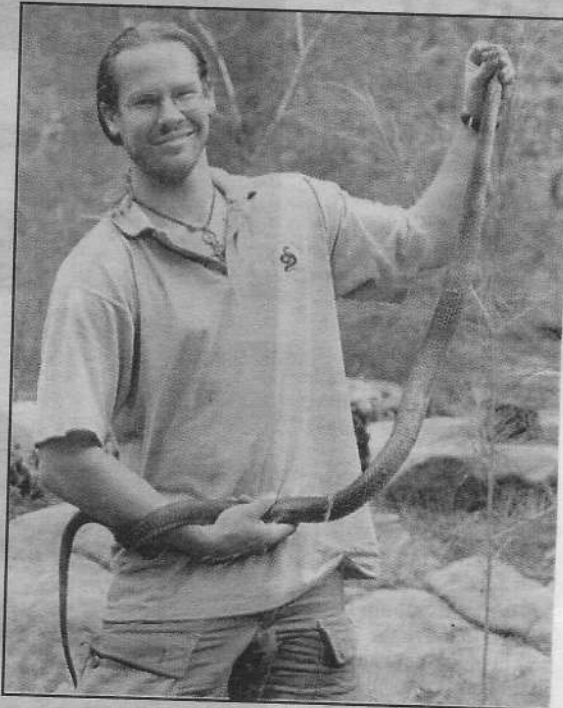
He found more than 30 reptile and frog species, although he had to look hard to find some.

Phillip is highly trained and only began handling snakes after much experience. He warns not to try and catch or kill brown snakes because they are highly poisonous and can be aggressive. Furthermore, all snakes are protected by law.

Phillip says that in addition to his large brown friend, he was dismayed to also see a large number of piles of rubbish by adjoining property back fences in the Smiths Creek Reserve.

This rubbish shelters the introduced mouse and rat, which are a favourite food for snakes. Composting piles of lawn clippings also provide heat for the snakes and their eggs and a sheltered approach to fences.

So if you live near Smiths Creek, please think twice before dumping rubbish over your back fence. Protecting the natural environment of the Smiths



■ PHILLIP Teschke and an eastern brown snake at Smiths Creek Reserve.

Creek reserve will protect all the animals, including koalas.

To report a koala sighting, please call the University of Western Sydney Macarthur hotline on (02) 9962 9996. To hear a male koala bellowing call (046) 20 3200.

■ Phillip Teschke, Steven Ward and Robert Close.

MCAD 30-7-97

Macarthur Advertiser 30th July 1997



CAMPBELLTOWN KOALAS MAY STAR IN VIDEO

UWS Macarthur's koala expert, Associate Professor Rob Close, is hoping to raise enough funds to make a video of Campbelltown's colony in an attempt to promote awareness and highlight the threats that face these lovable creatures.

The video will be based around questions from students at Kentlyn Primary School, who are all now fairly familiar with the colony after a female koala ('Lyn') dropped into the school earlier this year.

It's hoped that the video will be distributed to schools, special interest groups and among the general public.

"If people are more aware of these local koalas and the dangers facing the colony, they may be willing to let us know of sightings and other information," says Rob.

The video will show a map of the area where koalas have been seen and where little is known about the koala population, as well as views over the wild and largely inaccessible O'Hare's Creek area, heart of the Wedderburn colony.

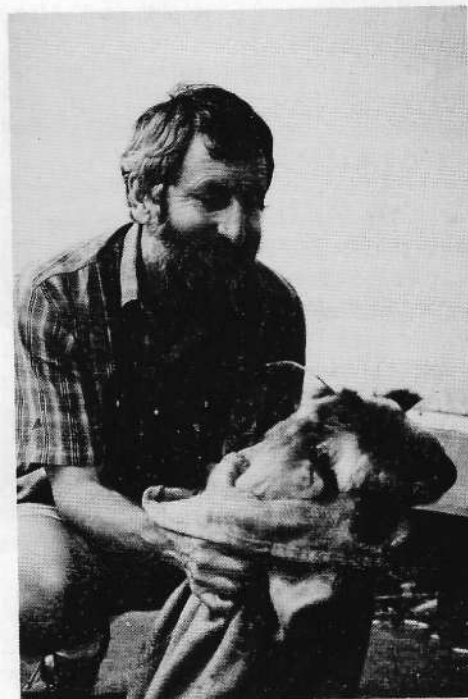
"We'll talk about how we catch and tag koalas so we can keep a track of them," says Rob. "The film will show the fitting of ear-tags and radio collars as well as weighing koalas and determining sex."

How many koalas are there at Wedderburn? "We don't know," says Rob, "but it is estimated that there is one koala per ten hectares, compared to about one to five koalas per hectare in Victoria."

Sometimes the koalas stray into the suburbs. Rob says this could either be because the koalas are dispersing or they are being pushed out from their territories.

In Campbelltown, there are particular dangers from unleashed dogs, clearing of habitat, old age and dehydration. The clearing of bush can have a major effect, leaving corridors too narrow for koalas to disperse without coming into contact with urban areas.

* You can contact Rob on (046) 203 302



Rob is an experienced koala handler. He warns members of the public to avoid such close encounters among the wild population - koalas are strong and can inflict nasty bites and scratches.

Your koala fact sheet

- * Koalas 'squeak', except if they are a mature male in mating season and then it is closer to the grunt of a wild pig.
- * Koalas eat gum leaves - but we can't be sure of the species of gum. Sometimes they sit in a tree but won't eat the leaf of that tree.
- * In NSW the koala is classed as endangered.
- * Koalas live up to 10 years in this area, but in Victoria, where the population is greater, the lifetime is closer to 15 years.
- * UWS Macarthur has a koala club. By joining it you can take an active role in protecting these animals.
- * You can also help protect koalas by restraining dogs, planting koala food trees (ask at local nurseries, Mount Annan Botanic Gardens and Wirrimbirra Sanctuary) and by supporting the Australian Koala Foundation.

MacScience is a collaborative project between the Faculty of Business & Technology and the Office of Development and External Relations.

Enquiries: Carol Oliver, ODER,
UWS Macarthur, PO Box 555
Campbelltown NSW 2560
Tel: (046) 203 488
Fax: (046) 281 493
Email: c.oliver@uws.edu.au

WIN! AN ELECTRONIC ORGANISER

1. What is the most deadly spider in Australia? _____ Name: _____
2. What does this symbol mean? ☰ _____
3. If you place a sample of copper oxide in a bunsen flame, what colour will the flame be? _____ Address: _____
4. What is the name of the rock discovered in Antarctica that suggests primitive life may have existed on Mars 3.6 billion years ago? _____ Phone number: _____
School _____

*You may photocopy this form if you don't wish to cut your copy of MacScience.

Send your entry to Carol Oliver, ODER, UWS Macarthur, PO Box 555, Campbelltown 2560. First correct entry out of the hat wins. Closing date is February 14, 1997.

Govt moves to protect koala home

Chron 11-2-97

by MICHELLE BURRELL

RURAL residential development will not go ahead in Wedderburn after the State Government refused to approve a plan which would allow the suburb's subdivision.

State Planning and Urban Affairs Minister Craig Knowles announced the decision yesterday (Monday) as the *Macarthur Chronicle* went to press.

Campbelltown Council approved the controversial Local Environment Plan 127, which would have permitted the subdivision of Wedderburn into two hectare lots in October last year. Mr Knowles said the Wedderburn plateau was "too precious to risk".

"Ultimately the LEP would have led to a doubling of the existing population on the plateau," he said.

"The plateau is one of the most significant remaining areas of koala habitat in the metropolitan region.

"It is also rich in rare plant species and threatened fauna, with 22 threatened species of fauna and eight known rare plant species." Council's LEP 127 was prepared more than four years ago to identify land in Wedderburn which could sustain two hectare development. It had been deferred pending flora and fauna reports, an agriculture report and a koala mapping survey.

Councillors had rejected a council staff recommendation to prepare a new LEP which would include information from the recent reports.

Mayor Russell Matheson, who is among councillors Jim Kremmer, Cindy Cagney, Ron Owers and Verlie Fowler in opposing the subdivision, said the minister had come to a "common sense" decision. "Wedderburn will be saved," he said.

Strays' fate

CAMDEN Council has renewed a contract to supply live impounded dogs and cats to universities for animal research.

An agreement with Sydney University has been replaced by a new deal with the Combined Universities Laboratory Animals Services.

Unidentified animals will be collected from council's pound if owners fail to collect them within a week.

Koalas saved as minister stops homes

DT 11/2/97

By SIMON BENSON
Environment Reporter

A PLAN for a major residential development on the site of one of the most significant remaining urban koala populations in Sydney has been rejected by the State Government.

The area has also been found to contain 22 species of threatened fauna and eight known rare plants species.

Planning Minister Craig Knowles has rejected a proposal from Campbelltown Council which would have allowed at least 150 new homes at Wedderburn Plateau, 50km south-west of Sydney.

"This area is too precious to risk," said Mr Knowles.

"The plateau is one of

the most significant remaining areas of koala habitat in the metropolitan area."

Environmentalists claimed the decision as a victory.

But some conservationists said the State Government's claim to be saving it for koalas was hypocritical when it allowed others in Port Stephens to suffer at the hands of development.

Campbelltown Council submitted a draft Local Environment Plan to the State Government to rezone 1040ha on the sensitive plateau against the advice of its own reports recommending the development was environmentally unsound and highlighting the delicate nature of the area.

The LEP and subsequent development would have resulted in a

doubling of the population of the area.

"The plateau's environmental and agricultural significance would be threatened by increased human settlement," Mr Knowles said.

"Instead of approving the plan I have asked Campbelltown Council to work with Government agencies and the community to prepare a suite of environmental protection measures for the long-term protection of the plateau's unique environmentally preferable qualities."

Mr Knowles' decision was supported by the recommendations of the independently commissioned report, originally rejected by the council, which concluded that more housing would harm the environment.

DT 1-3-97

The Daily Telegraph 1st March 1997

Island koalas to be moved

SUCCESSFUL trials to sterilise female koalas will allow a fertility control and relocation program for the animals on Kangaroo Island to begin next week, it was announced yesterday.

The first relocation of koalas from the island to the south-east of South Australia would take place on Tuesday as part of a plan to move about 2000 of the marsupials.

The plan followed concerns last year that Kangaroo Island could no longer sustain the 5000 koalas living there.

The SA Government rejected suggestions to



LYN the koala .t.t. set to make her debut in a special video.

Lights, camera, cue koalas

By DANIEL DE NARDI

A VIDEO promoting Campbelltown's natural beauty is on the cutting board at UWS Macarthur – and the main stars work for nothing more than a few gum leaves and a little peace and quiet.

Koalas Molly and Lyn will be the star attractions on the video, being put together by the university's koala experts Rob Close and Steven Ward, co-ordinators of the highly successful Mac's Koala Club.

The two koalas were tagged and released back into the Wedderburn area last year.

"The purpose of the video will be to educate the general public, special-interest groups and school students about our local koala colony and hopefully we can gain more feedback from the community about their encounters with koalas," Mr Close said.

"We also want to raise awareness about Campbelltown's bushland, promoting the natural beauty –

flora and fauna – that is in our own backyards."

Two videos are being prepared, one for adult viewing and the other to be distributed among schools.

"The school video will be very educational but produced on an easy understanding basis to allow information to sink in," Mr Close said.

The video is based around questions from Kentlyn Public School students who witnessed the tagging of Lyn at their school last March. It will include a map of the koala colony and views of the wild and largely inaccessible O'Hare's Creek.

The video will also explain and demonstrate the researchers role in helping the koala community and Campbelltown's development to co-exist.

Mr Close said the only hold-up on final preparations of the video is a lack of funds for editing and post production.



Koala Club celebrates 1st birthday

MAC'S Koala Club celebrated its first birthday last week, with a picnic day on the banks of the Georges River.

More than 200 members from the Macarthur Advertiser, District Times, Liverpool City Champion and Fairfield City Champion attended the birthday bash, held at the popular Simmos Beach picnic spot, Macquarie Fields.

With nature walks, courtesy of the National Parks Association; a display of koala tracking methods from Steven Ward, of UWS Macarthur (pictured right with club members); and a jumping castle to keep the youngsters busy, there was no shortage of activities.

After lunch, the birthday boy himself, Mac the koala, (pictured above) joined the party and cut the cake.

Local businesses supporting the day included Raynor Sports, McDonalds, Foleys Butchery, Willis Cakes, Nepean Distributors and the National Parks Association.



MC AD
16-10-96



Keep a watch on koalas

FIRE plays an important role in the regeneration of the Australian bush, but it can have a negative effect on koala colonies.

At worst, koalas will be burnt to death or suffocated.

To escape the smoke and flames, koalas climb higher in the trees — but may survive only to starve.

If the koalas are lucky, the eucalypts start to sprout a few days after a fire, and the fresh leaves provide sustenance.

The effects of fire on koalas is still being researched, with the temperature and size of a blaze among the factors which determine how colonies are affected.

If Campbelltown experiences a large, hot fire, re-colonisation from the nearest unaffected koala habitat may be needed.

However, if enough koalas survived in unburnt

mac's koala club

gullies re-colonisation would not be necessary.

Since the koala colony at Campbelltown was discovered in 1986, several bushfires have threatened, but the flames were stopped before they could affect wildlife.

The Campbelltown colony depends on the protection of the gullies, which would be under threat from any airport built at Holsworthy.

If you sight a koala, please contact Robert Close on (046) 203 203, or after hours on (046) 268 679.

To hear a male koala bellowing, call (046) 203 200. STEVE WARD and ROBERT CLOSE

Macarthur Advertiser 16th October 1996

Mac's great party

mac's koala club

YOU may have seen the pictures of Mac's first birthday in last week's paper.

We hope that all Mac Club members who attended had a good time and thank you to all those who donated to the day: Raynor Sports, McDonald's, Foleys Butchers, Willis Cakes, Nepean Distributors and the National Parks Association.

If you would like to go bushwalking you might want to consider joining the National Parks Association (you can find them in the phone book) as they have an excellent walks program.

The Macarthur Advertiser also did a fantastic job of organising the Mac's birthday party.

On a different note, an unusual call came in on our phone last week.

David Mollard had found what he at first thought was a mouse, in the gully of a suburban street in Ruse. On closer inspection he noticed the tail was coiled like a possum's.

Sure enough, the tiny animal was a pygmy possum (pictured here); body length was 6 cm.

These beautiful marsupials (the females have a pouch) share the Campbelltown bushland with koalas and several other native animals, but being small and nocturnal (active at night) they are seldom seen.

Pygmy possums have a special brush-like tongue for eating nectar from flowers (as do lorikeets, a native bird) but also eat insects.

They nest in small hollows in old trees; females may have two litters of four or five young each year between



spring and autumn.

Unfortunately, pygmy possums are easy catches for cats, and this one may have been in trouble if David had not been so sharp-eyed.

So please examine any mouse-like animals that your cats bring home — it could be a pygmy possum, an antechinus (as described in a previous column, antechinus are native marsupials mice with long pointed snouts), or even a feather-tailed glider.

If in doubt give us a call, and strongly consider training your cat to live indoors.

If you sight a koala please contact Robert Close on (046) 203 203 (voice mail) or after hours on (046) 268 679. To hear a male koala bellowing ring (046) 203 200.

STEVEN WARD and ROBERT CLOSE.

MC AD
23-10-96

Macarthur Advertiser 23rd October 1996

"USA TODAY hopes to serve as a forum for better understanding and unity to help make the USA truly one nation."

—Allen H. Neuharth
Founder, Sept. 15, 1982



David Mazarella
Editor
Karen Jurgensen
Editor of the
Editorial Page
Thomas Curley
President and Publisher

LETTERS

Airport to disturb koalas, symbol of Australia

The site where the Australian government proposes to build a 24-hour international airport is home to one of the few healthy, major colonies of koalas in Sydney, home of the 2000 Summer Olympics.

These beautiful animals quickly succumb to stress. So even if they were able to survive the bulldozers, it's doubtful they would survive airport construction and operations.

The koalas' bushland must be preserved. It is not reasonable to plunk an airport in the middle of their corridor and hope they survive.

Nor is it feasible to move this colony. If moved to another location, the stress would kill the majority. Noise also is a known stressor that causes disease in koalas. The threshold of animal pain to noise is substantially lower than that of humans.

The irony is wonderful. This creature has been used at international events to promote Australia's unique wildlife. The koala is universally recognized as

Australian. Koalas receive constant attention from local and overseas visitors at zoos here and are keenly sought after by zoos around the world.

Now the Australian government wantonly considers concreting the habitat of one of the few remaining disease-free colonies of 1,000 koalas that inhabit or traverse the area in New South Wales.

Sydney residents are angry about the risk to these unique creatures.

Tourism agencies should be alerted to the threat.

If you have access, by Internet or phone, to friends or colleagues with influence in the tourism industry, let them know and seek their support.

We need your help.

Write: The Honorable John Howard, MP, prime minister, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600, Australia and ask the government to protect the koalas.

Prof. Rob Close
University of Western Sydney
New South Wales
Australia



San Diego Zoological Society

Stressed out: Opponents say airport would endanger koalas.

nize them by the same standards as the... with the... bath and

To comment . . .

If you would like to comment on editorials, columns or other topics in USA TODAY, or on any subjects important to you: Send e-mail for letters to the editor only to editor@usatoday.com. Fax 1-703-247-3108. Mail Letters to the Editor to 1000 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, Va. 22229. Please include address and day and night phone numbers so letters may be verified. Letters and articles submitted to USA TODAY may be published or distributed in print, electronic or other forms.

Macarthur Chronicle 26th June, 1996

Koala watch

WE would like to clarify some statements in a column that ran in the Macarthur Chronicle of June 11 which was titled "Airport risk to koalas".

The article stated that "... studies had counted 80 koalas at Wedderburn".

This was referring to studies conducted by the university from 1990 to the present. While we estimate that there are probably 60 to 80 koalas in the Wedderburn area we have actually only captured and ear-tagged 13 koalas to date.

The article also stated: "Surveys had shown the animals were scattered across the military reserve, from Wedderburn to Woronora Dam in the south and Lucas Heights in the east..."

This latter two localities refer to sightings of three koalas.

We can also add sightings at Deadman's Creek (Heathcote Road) and Voyager Point Road (near Heathcote Road).

However, the range has not been surveyed in detail for koalas and it is likely that they are using habitat throughout the range.

Thirdly, the article stated that "... the type of eucalypt eaten by koalas grew only in the deep ravines..."

Koalas eat more than one type of eucalypt in this area and while these probably do not occur on the ridgetops in much of army range, there are plateau areas on the range where feed trees are plentiful.

Finally, we would like to comment that we agree with the basic thrust of the article, which was that koalas will be affected by the proposed airport plan, particularly if the gullies are filled in or exposed to erosion and siltation.

However, in the absence of basic survey information in this area, it is impossible to judge how many koalas would be killed or become isolated and unable to breed.

The proposed plan would not only affect koalas, of course, but would compromise or destroy the army range sandstone community which we are fortunate to have largely intact at present.

STEVEN WARD and ROBERT CLOSE,

More on koalas

THE last surviving koala colony in Sydney (outside national parks) is in Wedderburn, on the outskirts of Campbelltown.

Discovered in the thick bushlands of this area, the largely disease-free colony had been somewhat of a mystery for many years.

In 1992, a new method was devised to study the elusive koalas more closely than ever.

Small radio transmitter collars were fitted to koalas selected at random, enabling Dr Robert Close, of University of Western Sydney, Macarthur, to accurately track their movements.

It is usually said that for every koala a person sees in the wild, 20 will remain hidden.

But with Dr Close's sophisticated tracking equipment, he quickly found it easy to locate the animals, feeding on gum trees, throughout the region.

He has been working to confirm claims about their eating patterns, habitat and corridors of travel.

Well done

AS a proud member of Mac's Koala Club watching my delightful koala food gum tree growing, I would sincerely like to congratulate the Macarthur Advertiser for winning a coveted award from the Australian Suburban Newspapers Association for its very successful Mac's Koala Club that aims to raise both awareness and funds for koala research.

Better than that, you put your money where your mouth is: \$20,000 to help with the preservation and research of our own Wedderburn colony by Professor Robert Close and his UWS Macarthur student Steven Ward.

The Macarthur Advertiser put to rest, once and for all, the political hysteria that surrounded this special koala colony for a long time.

I urge parents and non-parents alike, churches and community groups to sponsor a child, so children can join this wonderful Mac's Club so as to help and preserve one of Australia's best loved icons, the koala.

**JOHN HENNESSEY,
Campbelltown.**

Macarthur Advertiser

25th September 1996

Our Mac's a winner

By CLARE DEVENISH

MAC the Koala is a familiar face to Macarthur residents.

And the success of Mac's Koala Club, which aims to raise both awareness and money for koala research, has earned the Macarthur advertiser a coveted Australian Suburban Newspapers' Association (ASNA) award.

With the preservation of koalas at local Wedderburn colony a big concern, late last year the Advertiser created "Mac" - a cuddly koala character who has since been a big attraction at events around town.

Mac's Koala Club already boasts a high membership of koala enthusiasts young and old, which emphasises the community's importance in the promotion's success.

UWS Macarthur student Steven Ward is also sponsored to study koalas in the local area along with professor Robert Close, with their findings published in Mac's weekly column.

The promotion was judged best of three finalists in the Best Newspaper Promotion (non-classified) category in the ASNA Northern Division.

The Macarthur Advertiser also picked up a Highly Commended in Best Suburban Newspaper (more than 40,000 circulation) category, second in the Best Editorial category and was a finalist in the Best Advertising Feature category.

The Camden & Wollondilly Times which accompanies the Advertiser in those regions) also scored a second place in Best Sports Story.

Overall, Fairfax Community Newspapers (FCN) were well represented in the awards, which were announced at a function in Sydney last week.

The Bowral-based District Times, which was established less than three years ago, won the Best Suburban Newspaper (less than 40,000 circulation).

Other FCN publications picked up awards in Best News Story, Best Editorial News Story, Best Sports Picture, Best Sports Story, Best Headline, and Best Suburban Newspaper (over 40,000 circulation).

That award went to the Advertiser's sister newspaper, the St George andutherland Shire Leader.

Macarthur Advertiser 19th June, 1996



MAC Koala celebrates his award win with some of his young fans

JUNE 19, 1996

Photo by JEFF DE PASQUALE

Rangers allowed to shoot koalas

NATIONAL Parks and Wildlife Service officers will be given authority to shoot koalas which are over-breeding under a controversial national proposal to be released tomorrow.

But night patrol squads would also be launched to capture stray domestic dogs roaming koala habitats in areas where koalas were under threat.

A draft copy of the plans, obtained by *The Daily Telegraph*, reveals dog owners in urban and rural areas would also be forced to restrain their pets at night, while in some suburbs they may be banned.

Options for chemical and physical fertility control are also being "seriously considered" for koalas that over-breed.

But the plans, co-ordinated by the Federal Government's peak conservation body, the Australian Nature Conservation Agency, has outraged the NSW Government, which claimed "it will never happen here".

It will be presented this weekend at an Environment Minister's convention in Perth as a policy for all State Governments to adopt.

ANCA and the Australian and New Zealand Environment and Conservation Council have rejected proposals to list the koala as officially endangered, claiming it was "relatively abundant and widespread" while "clearly declining in some ranges".

For this reason state and local authorities would be asked to impound roaming dogs, re-

By Environment Reporter
SIMON BENSON

strict dog numbers in areas neighbouring koala habitats and place a total ban on dogs inside koala habitat.

Environment Minister Pam Allan, while welcoming the overall plan, rejected the culling plan as "outrageous and un-Australian".

She will push for a national ban on koala culling at this weekend's convention.

The move is a direct response to the South Australian Government's plans earlier this year to destroy large numbers of koalas that had over-populated Kangaroo Island.

A spokesman for Ms Allan said while NSW National Parks and Wildlife helped co-ordinate the document, it would meet resistance from the Minister on any plans to cull koalas.

"They are a national icon, it is totally reprehensible and it sends the wrong message to the international community on how we treat our wildlife.

"It is an absolute disgrace that some States would prefer to pay the price of a bullet to slaughter koalas rather than try and effect a management strategy to ensure their survival."

Koala cull not on, says Minister

THE Howard Government yesterday wrapped Australia's most endearing symbol in a bulletproof vest by rejecting a plan for koala culling.

"There will be no shooting of koalas under this Government," Environment Minister Robert Hill said.

The decree follows a plan, revealed in yesterday's *Daily Telegraph*, to shoot koalas as a form of population control.

"Let there be no doubt that whatever the officials or scientists might advise, I am not going to endorse any suggestion

of humane destruction," Senator Hill said. "It's unnecessary and there are other, better alternatives."

He promised to ensure that the \$300 million national heritage trust, to be established from the proceeds of the partial Telstra sale, included a contribution to koala habitat revegetation.

Senator Hill's department had proposed the "humane destruction" of koalas in overbrowsed habitat in a draft policy paper to be discussed by federal, State and territory ministers this week.

Macarthur Chronicle 11th June, 1996

Airport risk to koalas

by PETER TRUTE

THE habitat of a koala colony near Holsworthy would be destroyed by the construction of an airport, a Wedderburn community representative warned at a recent anti-Holsworthy airport rally at Wattle Grove.

Bob Barnes, a member of the Wedderburn Community Group, said studies had counted 80 koalas at Wedderburn but numbers could be as high as 300.

Surveys had shown the animals were scattered across the military reserve from Wedderburn to Woronora Dam in the south and Lucas Heights in the east. Mr Barnes said the koalas would be wiped out by the construction of the airport and the resulting noise and pollution.

"Koalas [at Wedderburn] were thought to be extinct because they were shot out during the Depression," Mr Barnes said. "The re-population in Wedderburn was from the colonies in the military reserve."

MAC CHRON

11-6-96

Mr Barnes, a chemist by training who works for ANSTO (Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation) said the type of eucalypt eaten by the koalas grew only in the deep ravines which the airport plan would fill in.

Koalas that survived construction would face death through noise-induced stress illness or poisoning from polluting hydrocarbons. "Our major concern is the environmental significance of the flora and fauna in the area [which is] probably ... one of the most pristine in Australia," Mr Barnes said.

L'POOL LEADER 3/6/96

Airport threat to local koalas alarms expert

A THREE-RUNWAY airport at Holsworthy would pose a serious threat to the local koala population.

Dr Robert Close of UWS Macarthur, an expert on native animals, said it was hard to say – without any concrete proposals or accurate maps – just what the ultimate effect would be.

“But I’m very concerned,” he said, “because the koalas which inhabit the Georges River bushland seem to use the army reserve as a corridor to the Royal National Park.

“Only recently a koala tagged in Kentlyn was discovered at Heathcote.

“A lot of research has yet to be done into the exact migration patterns and habitats of the dense gullies east of the river and I’m greatly concerned about airport plans.

“If you mess up the dispersal routes, then it’s just a matter of time before fires knock out each individual colony.”

Wider environmental concerns have been raised for the river bushland itself, particularly by the National Trust and National Parks Association.

The O’Hares Creek catchment is pristine and provides a haven for wildlife.

It is also acts as lungs for



A KOALA photographed by one of Dr Close’s associates in the area

the Georges River system.

The catchment could be at immediate risk from heavily-polluted run-off from the proposed airport.

So would Punchbowl Creek, which flows directly into the Kentlyn swimming reserve known as The Basin.

Campbelltown’s Georges River Nature Reserve was set aside in the earliest days of the city’s growth as a “refuge” for relaxation and recreation.

The executive director of

the National Trust of Australia (NSW), Elsa Atkin, said studies in 1978 rejected Holsworthy as a site for a possible airport.

The studies showed that the terrain was too rugged.

Also, an enormous amount of construction would be needed.

The studies estimated that a landfill of up to 140 million cubic metres would be involved.

Ms Atkin said that development of an airport at Holsworthy would result in

land form changes at the site and at the source of landfill.

“These would lead to changes to watershed characteristics of areas and possible soil erosion, in addition to siltation and pollution of the Georges River,” she said.

“If the Federal Government considers that a further environment impact statement is required, it must address what is best for the community – not what is of short-term political expediency.”

LIVERPOOL CHAMPION 5th June 1996

Liverpool Champion 5/6/96

Mac the koala on a rescue mission

JOIN Mac and help save the Liverpool koalas from extinction – that's the message from the Liverpool Champion's newest staff member.

Mac the koala has come aboard to help locals realise it is too easy to push the cuddly marsupials out of the area.

Dr Robert Close of UWS Macarthur, an expert on native animals, said koalas that inhabit the Georges River bushland seem to use the army reserve as a corridor to the Royal National Park.

A koala tagged recently in Kentlyn had been discovered at Heathcote.

"A lot of research has yet to be done into the exact migration patterns

and habitats of the dense gullies east of the river," Dr Close said.

"If you mess up the dispersal routes, then it's

just a matter of time before fires knock out each individual colony."

Fairfax Community Newspapers has donated



\$20,000 for koala research in the area.

Join Mac's Koala Club for \$7 which entitles you to 12-month membership with the monies raised being spent on local koala research.

In return, club members receive a gum tree tube, ruler, sticker, balloon, greetings from Mac on your birthday and a regular newsletter.

Write your name and address, phone number and date of birth on an envelope, enclosing a cheque or money order for \$7 per member and send to Mac's Koala Club, PO Box 62, Liverpool, 2170, or drop the envelope at our office at 203 Northumberland St, Liverpool.

Tracing koalas

SOMETIMES research involves unusual methods to answer seemingly simple questions.

One such question is whether koalas are actually feeding from the trees we find them in.

The answer seems obvious, but koalas may shelter in a tree during the day because it is shady or comfortable, and these trees may not have tasty leaves.

At first, this question seems easy to answer – just watch the koalas.

But koalas spend about 20 hours a day resting and sleeping, so you may have to watch a koala for a long time before you would see one eat.

More importantly though, our presence may change their behaviour.

Results from other research in Queensland indicate that koalas shorten their movements between trees when they are being observed and their feeding behaviour could change too.

So how can we get around this?

Well, when a koala chews up a leaf there will be some large fragments in a koala's faecal pellets.

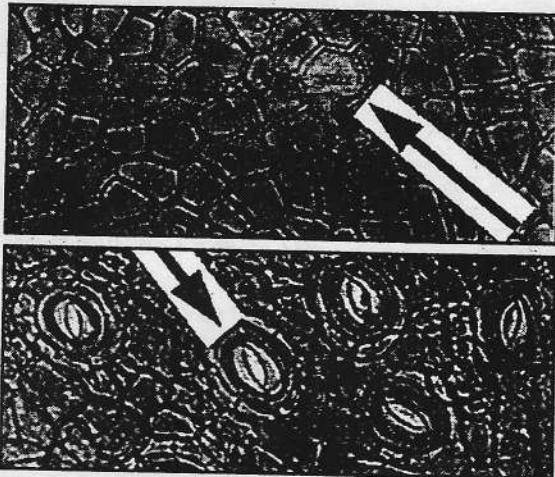
These will then enable you to discover what the koalas have been eating.

First, however, we have to be able to recognise eucalypt species, just from microscopic characteristics of their leaves.

The Australian Koala Foundation has helped by giving the university a grant to employ Beverly Hills to try to solve the problem.

Beverly has now developed a technique by which the waxy outer layer of eucalypt leaves can be examined.

As you can see from the photographs, she has found differences between the leaves of what we suspect are the two most important species for koalas in Campbelltown.



THE grey gum (*Eucalyptus punctata*, top) and stringybark (*Eucalyptus agglomerata*).

Unfortunately not all species are so distinctive and in some eucalypt species the top and bottom layers of a leaf are quite different.

Unfortunately, this will make identifying some leaf fragments more difficult.

We'll keep you informed of Beverly's progress.

A microscopic view of grey gum (*Eucalyptus punctata*, left) and stringybark (*Eucalyptus agglomerata*).

Arrows indicate stomata – essentially 'holes' in the leaf which allow the plants to breathe.

Note that stomata are smaller and a different shape.

They are more numerous in the stringybark and the surrounding patterns are also distinctive.

If you sight a koala, contact Robert Close on (046) 20 3203 (voice-mail).

The after-hours number is (046) 26 8679.

Macarthur Advertiser, Wednesday, June 12, 1996

Macarthur Advertiser 29th May, 1996

Koala expert fears for hidden colonies

CAMPBELLTOWN'S fragile koala colony could be devastated by the development of a three-runway airport at Holsworthy.

Dr Robert Close, of UWS Macarthur, an acknowledged expert on the native animals, admitted that without any concrete proposals or accurate maps it was hard to say for sure.

But on face value, he was very concerned because the koalas which inhabit the Georges River bushland seem to use the army reserve as a corridor to the Royal National Park.

Only recently a koala tagged in Kentlyn was discovered at Heathcote.

Dr Close said much research was yet to be done on the migration patterns and habitats of the dense gullies east of the river as he was greatly concerned about airport plans.

"If you mess up the dispersal routes, then it's just a matter of time until fires knock out each individual colony," Dr Close said.

a flight path," one regular bushwalker told the Advertiser.

The executive director of the National Trust of Australia (NSW), Elsa Atkin, said studies conducted as long ago as 1978 rejected Holsworthy on the grounds of rugged terrain and the magnitude of construction work needed—estimated to involve landfill of up to 140 million cubic metres.

"Development of an airport at Holsworthy would result in land form changes at the site and at the source of land fill, resulting in changes to watershed characteristics of adjacent areas and possible soil erosion, in addition to siltation and pollution of the Georges River," she said.

"If the Federal Government considers that a further EIS is required it must address what is best for the community—not what is of short-term political expediency."

By JEFF MCGILL

Wider environmental concerns have been raised for the river bushland itself, particularly by the National Trust and National Parks Association.

The O'Hares Creek catchment is pristine and provides a haven to wildlife as well as acting as "a clean set of lungs" for the Georges River system.

Yet it could be at immediate risk from heavily-polluted runoff from the proposed airport, as would Punchbowl Creek which flows directly into the popular Kentlyn swimming reserve known as The Basin.

Campbelltown's Georges River Nature Reserve was set aside in the earliest days of the city's growth to act as a "refuge" for relaxation and recreation.

"I don't think we'll get much of that under

Killer dogs threat

by JENNIFER LOICHT

DOG owners who let their pets roam the streets need to consider the possibility they are killing koalas, warns student Steven Ward.

"Dog attacks are one of the big killers, on a par with cars," Mr Ward, a PhD student who studies koalas at the University of Western Sydney Macarthur Campbelltown campus, said. "But probably the greatest threat to the koala is the clearing of its habitat."

Earlier this year, the Australian Koala Foundation issued a grim warning with its Koala Habitat Atlas map of Campbelltown, describing the situation as "localised extinction."

Koala sightings can be reported to Robert Close on (046) 20 3100 or (046) 26 8679 after hours.

● Flora and fauna fighting for survival page 2

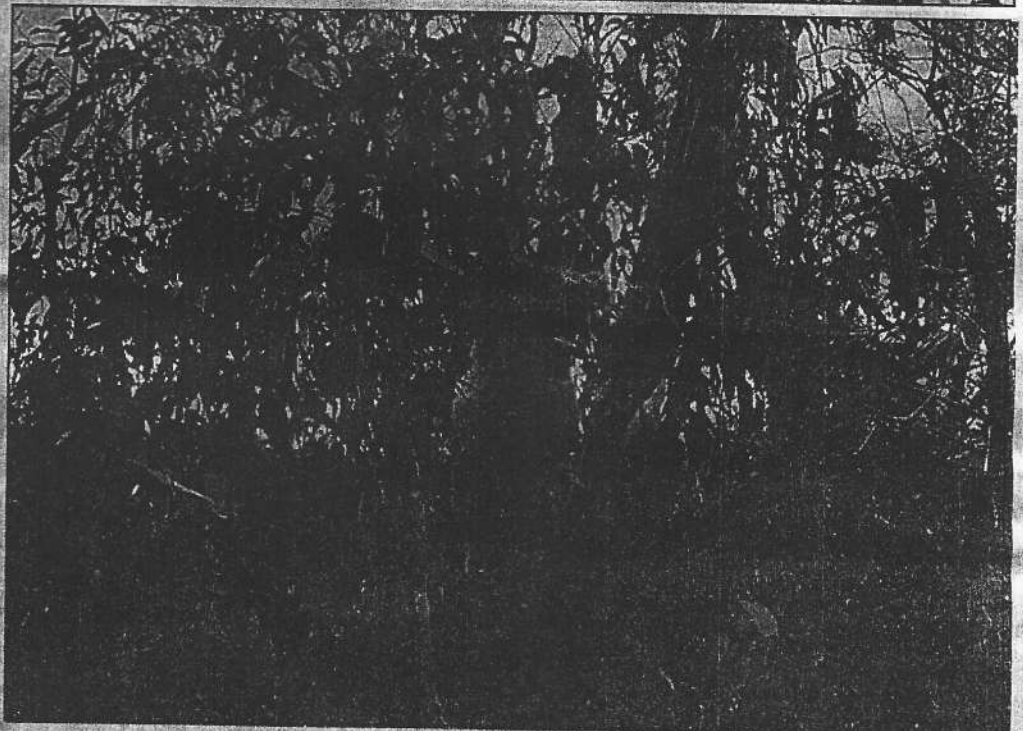
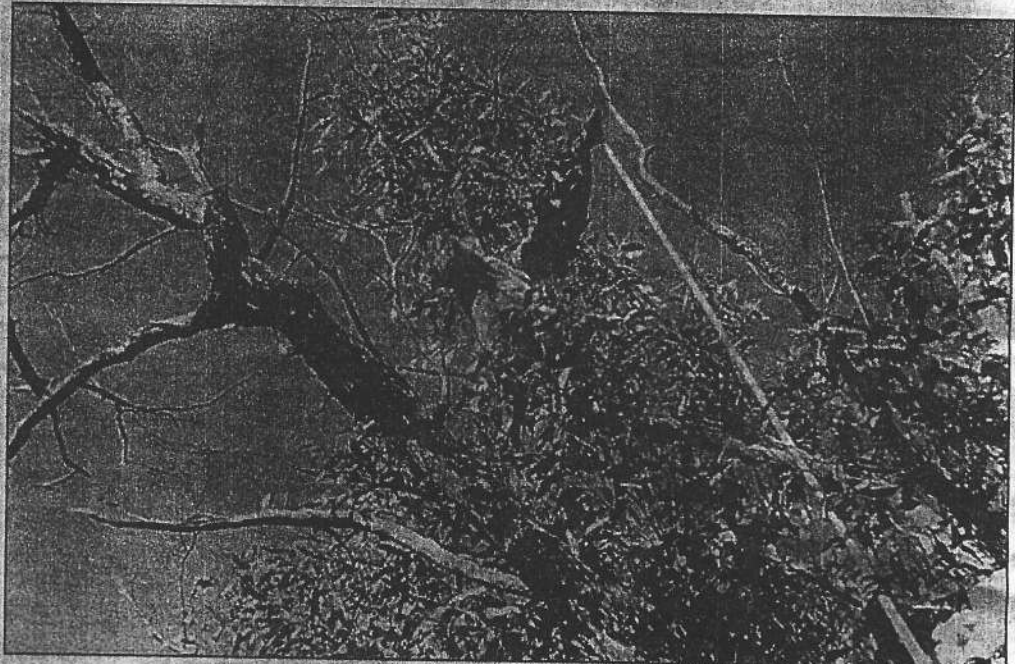


Grisly end . . . Steven Ward with a dog-ravaged koala's skull

PHOTO: Matthew Vasilescu



HEY kids: As you can see from these pictures our local area boasts quite a few koalas. But to survive they need your help. Do you want to save Campbelltown's koalas? Joining Mac's Koala Club is a great way and it's a lot of fun as well. To join, get the details on page 14 of today's paper. For an update on the club and local koalas, turn to page 30, for Mac's Koala Club column.



INDOOR NETBALL

Indoor Netball
Ladies & Mixed, Thursday
Ladies, Tues morning & night
Mixed - Sunday Evening
Contact Dot 046 28 29
61 Blaxland Rd Campbelltown

INDOOR NETBALL

130 PER TEAM/GAME
LADIES: Thurs Night • MIXED: Sunday Night
UMPIRES URGENTLY NEEDED



• First game FREE
• No rego. Comp starts soon!

(046) 28 9935

Sporties
INDOOR SPORTS WORLD

5 Watsford Rd Campbelltown (next to Pelbarn)

Grim picture of area's koalas

THE Australian Koala Foundation is painting a grim picture of the future of koalas at Campbelltown and is "scared" of what the recent Koala Habitat Atlas reveals.

And so is the Macarthur Branch of the National Parks Association.

Both groups are worried about the plight of the region's koalas and are

urging the community to sit up and pay attention.

Concern has come after the release of the Campbelltown Council initiated Koala Habitat Atlas last week.

The mapping process involved detailed fieldwork and data collection.

"There are large patches of bush

which we know from research and local anecdotal records once supported healthy koala populations,"

Principal Biologist of the AKF, Steve Phillips, said.

"We go in there now and find the bush intact but the animals long gone," Mr Phillips said.

Now he wants long term strategies

put in place to ensure planners protect koala habitat.

And with the recent announcement of a rifle range at Dharawal Nature Reserve and State Recreation Area, the problem of dwindling habitat is

even more paramount, Macarthur President of the NPA, Pat Durman, said.

"Families, the environment and gun clubs just don't mix," Mrs Durman said.

"500 ha have already been marked off for the Illawarra Rifle Club and Ian McManus is indicating the true reason for the Dharawal being dedicated as the SRA, instead of the Nature Reserve or National Park."

Parkway's growing habitat

By LINDA McSWEENEY

NEWS of a burgeoning koala habitat in Macarthur should prevent the pursuit of any plans for the Georges River Parkway, says Campbelltown Councillor Verlie Fowler.

The release of the council commissioned Koala Habitat Atlas Maps last week has also prompted two other organisations to call for more consideration to the wildlife.

The Australian Koala Foundation and the Macarthur Branch of the National Parks Association have called for a halt to development.

The maps have identified a larger than expected and growing koala population in the Wedderburn area.

And such new information has confirmed a local academic's claims of koala life to the west of the Georges River.

Healthy koala life has been found in areas such as Minto Heights, Airds and Ruse.

"We must protect it," Cr Fowler said.

"Putting a major road in would be a disaster.

"A road has been on the cards for a long time, but some of us feel it is about time to drop it.

"It's not really needed and why do it when it is going to destroy one of our greatest assets - koalas," she said.

Cr Fowler suggested funds could be placed into addressing road problems in other areas such as Pembroke Road, the F5 and a new bridge to the northern end of Queen Street, Campbelltown.

"It would be better to widen Appin Road than put a whole new road in".

Macarthur President of the National Parks Association, Pat Durman, is adamant there is no need for a new road in the area, but consideration of the obvious koala habitat.

"It's unthinkable - they wouldn't put it in.

"We want absolutely no development," Mrs Durman told The Advertiser.

"They need to be able to move right around the area so it must be 'protection protection' really".

Mrs Durman said the fauna study had vindicated local conservationists' views that Wedderburn could not sustain further development.



KOALAS: Sometimes there may be problems with translocations

Macarthur Advertiser 20th March, 1996

Tiny bacteria help cubs to digest food

LAST week we discussed how koala cubs develop their life in the pouch.

We also mentioned that at the time when they emerge from the pouch, aged six months, they consume pap produced by the mother. Pap is a dark green fluid produced by the intestine and released from the mother's anus, or bottom.

Pap is consumed over a number of days and basically consists of concentrated digested leaves.

The pap is rich with microbes (single-celled organisms also known as bacteria) which provide the koala cub with the microbes it needs to properly digest eucalyptus leaves.

This rich brew of bacteria is swallowed by the cub and goes to the caecum to help the young cub change from a milk diet to leaves.

The use of microbes in the koala to help digest eucalyptus leaves is similar to cows and many other herbivores (animal which eat plants). In fact humans

mac's koala club

also have microbes which help our digestion, but we don't need them as much as herbivores do, so we don't have so many.

The koala is unusual in that most of the microbes live in the caecum. The caecum is basically a dead end bit of tubing which is connected to the intestine. In fact, the koala has the largest caecum for its size - up to two metres long.

If you sight a koala please contact Robert Close on (046) 20 3100 or after hours on (046) 26 8679.

Steven Ward and Robert Close

New home may be the answer

Victoria's bold move

By Dr ROBERT CLOSE and STEVEN WARD

IN Victoria, most koala populations have been established by translocating animals, that is, koalas were moved from one location to another.

This was done because there was a surplus of animals at French and Phillip islands, while on the mainland of Victoria koalas were almost extinct because they were hunted for fur from the 1880s to the 1920s.

However, there are problems with translocations. If there are already koalas where the new animals are moved to, then you will be disrupting the resident koalas.

Also, if there are no koalas already at the spot where the translocation is to take place, this may be because koalas cannot survive in that area.

Other problems with translocation arise because adult koalas use a certain area (called a home range), and if they are moved from this area they will often try to return.

Another risk is that normally only a

mac's koala club

few animals are used to establish a new population problem, causing inbreeding (related koalas that mate and have babies).

Inbreeding is a problem because after a while there will be less variation in the population. Variation is important, because we cannot predict what will happen in the future.

For example, if the koalas catch a new disease and there is no variation (that is all koalas are almost identical), then they would probably all be affected because they are so similar. However, if the koalas are different, then some may be resistant to the disease.

If you sight a koala please contact Robert Close on (046) 20 3100 or after hours on (046) 26 8679.

How many are there?

By STEVEN WARD
and Dr ROBERT CLOSE

MOST readers will not be aware that there is debate between scientists over whether or not koalas are under threat of becoming extinct. Why don't the scientists agree? Well, it's essentially due to difficulty of estimating how many koalas there are.

Why is this so hard if all you have to do is go out there and count them? Unfortunately, it's not that easy. Koalas are hard to spot and the areas involved are so huge that counting all the koalas would take too much time, and cost far too much. Instead, we have to estimate numbers.

First we would count the koalas in a certain area, say in 100 hectares. Then if you know how much suitable habitat there is you multiply the number of koalas per hectare by your total area to obtain your estimated population. However, when different people use this method they come up with completely different estimates.

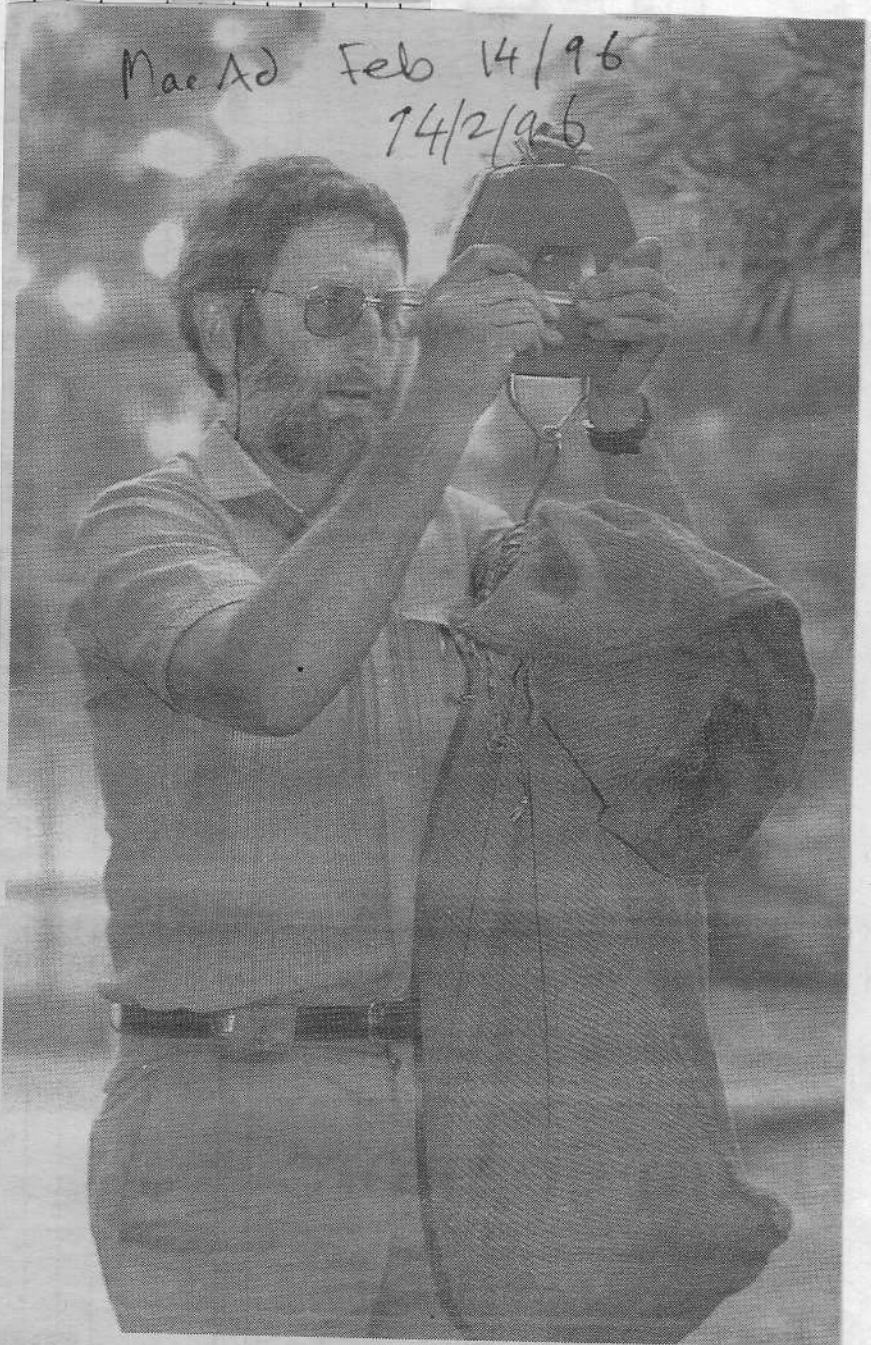
For example, the Australia Koala Foundation has estimated that there are 40,000-80,000 koalas in Australia, but other researchers believe that there are a million koalas in Victorian alone.

These estimates are very difficult because we are not sure exactly where koalas occur, and how many there are per hectare where they occur. This is because density at which koalas occur varies enormously. In Victoria five koalas per hectare may be common, whereas in Campbelltown there may only be one koala per 10 hectares.

Despite the low density of koalas in the Campbelltown region we believe the population is thriving and sending out young ones to recolonise former habitats.

To make sure our estimates of population numbers is correct we need your help to record sightings. This gives us an idea of the total area used by koalas and numbers per hectare.

If you sight a koala please contact Robert Close on (04) 20 3100 or after hours (046) 26 8679.



In the bag – a pair of happy koalas

LAST week's Macarthur Advertiser reported the capture of the koala Lyn – and her newly born baby – from Kentlyn Primary School, and showed her being weighed in a hessian bag, as pictured above.

The koala was put in the bag for two reasons: First, wild koalas are not as cuddly as they seem and can scratch and bite, and second, marsupials (animals with pouches) calm down when in the dark, perhaps bringing back comforting memories of when they were young in their mother's pouch.

Lyn certainly relaxed during her brief period of captivity at Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute, with a

local veterinarian, a former Taronga Park Zoo vet, conducting her physical examination.

The vet said Lyn's heart rate was very calm and pronounced her to be in excellent condition, with no outward sign of the disease chlamydia (which affects koalas).

After consuming a large quantity of Eucalyptus nicholli during her overnight stay at the institute, Lyn was released back into her home range sporting blue and pink ear tags and a collar with a small radio transmitter.

If you sight a koala, contact Robert Close on (046) 20 3100 or after hours on (046) 26 8679.

Sisters write to club

MAC'S Koala Club has received a lovely letter from two sisters from Thirlmere and we would like to share it with you:

DEAR Mac's Koala Club: we would like to join your very worthwhile club.

We love Australian koalas and hope that they are around forever.

We also hope our membership fee will help a little bit toward koala research.

We don't want to be combined members; we would like to be individual members please.

We only sent one coupon in the same envelope with only one money order of \$10 (\$5 each) because we only had \$1 each left to pay for the money order.

We just didn't have enough money left from Christmas to pay for two separate money orders.

We like what Steven Ward is doing for koalas and hope after three years is up he will get the title of Doctor. Good luck.

Kristy Lee McDonald, nearly 13,
Sharlene Maree McDonald, 10,
Thirlmere.

PS: It is my birthday on Saturday, can you tell me if any koalas are born on the same day? It would be so special if a baby koala is born on that day.

Macarthur Chronicle 2nd April, 1996

Threat of extinction

A KOALA Habitat Atlas map has revealed populations of the cuddly creature in the Campbelltown area are in danger of "localised extinction".

The Australian Koala Foundation (AKF) issued a grim warning when it handed over Koala Habitat Atlas maps of Campbelltown, Port Stephens and the Tweed to NSW Land and Water Conservation Minister Kim Yeadon in Sydney last Thursday.

Campbelltown Council sponsored the Koala Habitat Atlas to provide a tool for planners to establish long-term strategies which would protect koala habitat. AKF executive director Deborah Tabart said although she was

hesitant to use the words "localised extinction" in the past, the survey had revealed alarming facts.

AKF principal biologist Steve Phillips said the atlases showed koalas no longer lived in expected areas of habitation.

"There are large patches of bush which we know from research and local anecdotal records once supported healthy koala populations," Mr Phillips said.

"We go in there now and find the bush intact but the animals long gone."

Campbelltown Council environmental planning manager Keith Richardson said the atlas results were a grim picture for koalas in the Macarthur area if people didn't heed the warning.

"People have to be careful not to destroy habitat, particularly those living close to the area," Mr Richardson said.

Macarthur Chronicle 2nd April, 1996

'Betrayal'

THE report on the Dharawal Reserve in the newspaper quotes the MP for Bulli Ian McManus: "The new park will also provide a host of recreational opportunities".

This is a betrayal of the promise given by Mr Carr before the State election, to conserve this very valuable and unique natural area by dedicating it a National park. A total of 500ha has been marked off for the Lawarra Rifle Club and Ian McManus is indicating the reason of Dharawal being dedicated as a State Recreation Area, instead of national park.

Pat Durman
National Parks
Association

Macarthur Advertiser 29th May, 1996

Koala Club column is a top read

EVERY week the first article I read in the Macarthur Advertiser is Mac's Koala Club column.

Is there any chance that these columns will eventually be published in book form?

In the meantime, anyone who has not

been reading these columns by Dr Robert Close and Steve Ward should keep their eyes peeled and scissors ready.

The koala stories are a great read.

Cr VERLIE FOWLER,
Campbelltown.

Lyn the koala drops in in

From page 1

The koala was persuaded to climb down from its perch into the hands of the researchers below. Weight and dimensions were recorded on the spot.

While pondering a suitable male name for the koala, Professor Close discovered that the he was really a she. He found a two-month-old baby in the mature koala's pouch.

It was decided to name the koala Lyn (after the school where it was found).

Steve and Professor Close accompanied the koala back to their university for health examinations.

They will release her in the Georges River area later this week.

Steve Ward said he was finding his koala studies challenging. He had concentrated on identifying key marsupial issues based on habits and habitat of koalas.

The *Macarthur Advertiser* is sponsoring Steve in his studies and has set up Mac's Koala Club to aid him in his research.

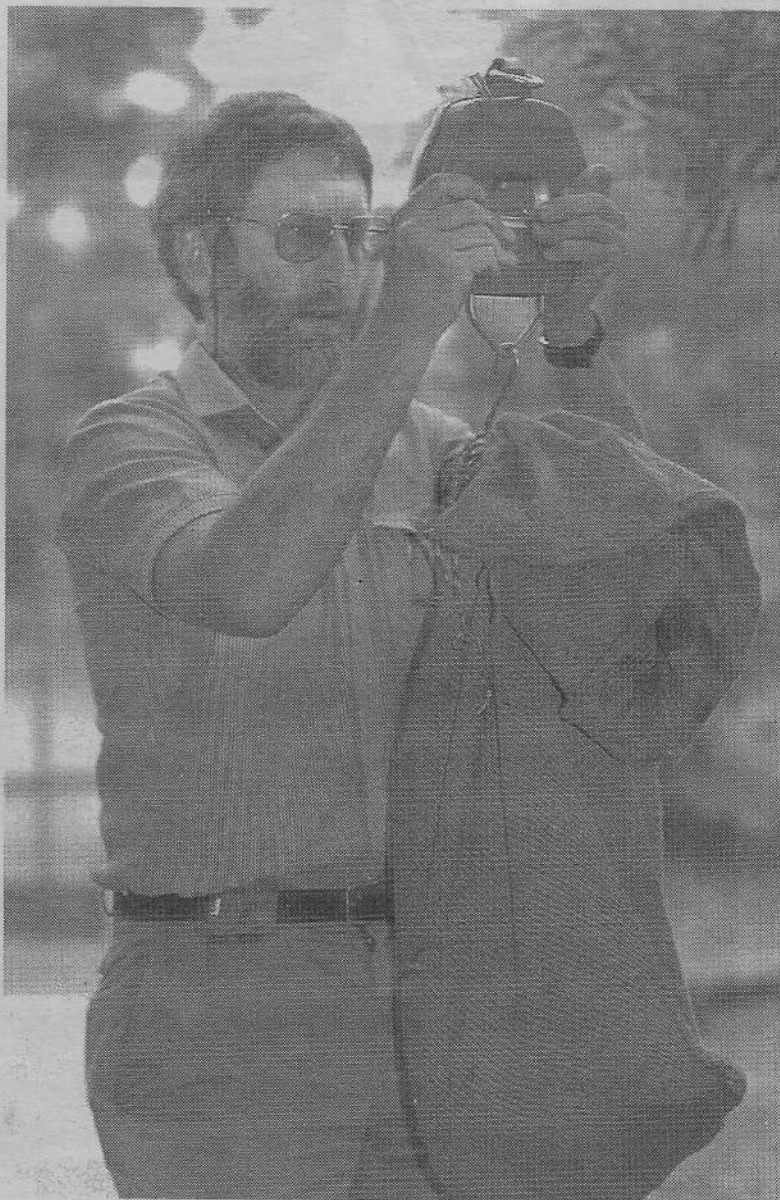
"The response to the club has been terrific and very helpful," Steve said.

"Community support is necessary to understand how our koalas live alongside us.

"I would recommend joining the club to get information on koalas and what steps to take if a koala is spotted."

If a koala – or signs of a koala (droppings, scratchings) – are spotted, contact Steve Ward or Rob Close at UWS Macarthur on (046) 20 3100 or (046) 20 3444 after hours.

Anyone interested in joining Mac's Koala Club should contact Sue Paton on (02) 602 9111.



KOALA scientist Rob Close weighs the koala visitor Lyn at Kentlyn Public School



LYN the koala at Kentlyn school on Monday: a baby koala came along for the ride
Picture by ADAM HOLLINGWORTH

Lyn the koala drops in

7/2/96

By DANIEL DE NARDI

STAFF at Kentlyn Public School were up in arms on Monday to find the latest "pupil" to attend their school was not on the roll and had no intention of turning up to class on time.

A cuddly koala visitor was spotted by Year 6 student James Watkins, who notified the principal. Koala researchers at UWS Macarthur were then called to collect the marsupial.

Steve Ward (a student studying koala research at

UWS Macarthur) and Rob Close (a university professor) responded to the call eagerly.

"Koala sightings are essential to our studies and research as we have to know where the animals are and how they are doing to be able to study their progress," Steve said.

Continued page 2

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Macarthur Advertiser 31st January, 1996

Mac's Koala Club: What's it for?

This week we thought we would explain how Mac's Koala Club will help the Campbelltown koalas. Well Mac's Koala Club is raising money to fund research. Your money will help pay for a student's scholarship (Steven Ward), which will allow him to spend 3 years studying koalas full time. What a life! The catch is that at the end of it he must write a thesis (the size of a book). His work will then be examined by 3 experts on marsupial biology. If they think that his work is not good enough then he loses his 3 years of hard work. If he passes he's awarded a Ph.D. and gains the title of "Dr". The benefit for the community is that we will know a lot more about the lives of koalas.

So how will the research help the koalas? Well at the moment we cannot say for certain how many koalas there are, even just at Wedderburn. Also we don't know what sort of habitat the koalas prefer and why. Koalas in Victoria appear to behave quite differently to koalas in the Campbelltown region. For instance in Victoria they use an area of 2-3 hectares, whereas our Campbelltown koalas use 30-50 hectares.

Quite a difference! These sort of differences mean if a development is proposed we cannot accurately predict how it will affect the koalas. However, if we find out how Campbelltown koalas behave normally then we can make much more accurate predictions. If we don't have information about the koalas then it's much more likely that we'll hurt them inadvertently.

If you sight a koala please contact Robert Close on (046) 20 3100 or after hours on (046) 20 3444.

Steven Ward and Robert Close.

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Koala Myths

A number of myths have arisen from observation of koalas. One is that koalas are always "drunk" on Eucalyptus leaves. Eucalyptus leaves contain essential oils which give eucalypts their distinctive smell, but these oils are toxic to most other mammals. Although koalas are able to detoxify (i.e. make harmless) most of the oils found in eucalyptus leaves, they are not drunk. Detoxification of the oils does take a lot of energy though. To conserve energy koalas usually move slowly and spend a lot of time sleeping. This is why some people came to the conclusion that koalas are always drunk. Another myth is that the name "koala" means "does not drink water". In fact an aboriginal name, koobor has this meaning. However koala derives from Colo an aboriginal name which comes from the Hawkesbury river district and was used to name the Colo river to the north of Sydney. "Koala" is a truly Australian name. It does not need any attachments such as "bear". Of course koalas are not bears at all and humans are more closely related to bears than koalas are. There is a strong movement now to use Australian names for species native to Australia. Examples are using bilby instead of rabbit-eared bandicoot and thylacine instead of Tasmanian tiger. So remember it's not koala bear, it's just called koala. If you sight a koala please contact Robert Close on (046) 20 3100 or after hours on (046) 20 3444.

MAC. AD
29-11-95

Macarthur Advertiser 29th November, 1995

Macarthur Advertiser 6th December, 1995

Koalas and their Relations

Koalas are unique animals. Koalas, like many Australian animals are marsupials and this means that they're mammals which have a pouch. However, what do you think their closest living relatives would be? For quite a while scientists thought koalas are most closely related to possums. More work has been done now though and it appears that the koalas closest living relative is the wombat. One of the similarities that the two species share is a backward facing pouch. This was useful when the koalas ancestors lived, like the wombats do, on the ground and dug burrows. When they shovelled earth behind them it wouldn't fill up the pouch. Now, however when mother koalas have a baby in the pouch they must have good tummy muscle control to stop the baby falling out. There was a female koala at Taronga Zoo who had poor muscle control and kept losing her babies. The problem was solved the Zoo vet put a stitch in her pouch to keep it closed. If you sight a koala please contact Robert Close on (046) 20 3100 or after hours on (046) 20 3444.

KOALAS: THE COMMUNITY RESPONSE

The community has given a great response with 10 koala sightings and we would like to thank those people who have reported them. Of particular interest was a sighting of a koala crossing the Hume Highway in Casula, at about 11pm. This location is approximately 500 metres away from the bush, so the koala would have travelled quite a distance through market gardens. This kind of information is why the community's help is such a great assistance in gathering information on koalas. There's nothing like having thousands of pairs of eyes helping out.

We hope that the community will continue to call in with sightings. There are other ways to find out if there are koalas in your area though. For instance the mating season for koalas is in full sway and the males will be calling to females and warning off other males. The call is a grunt-squeal and sounds a bit like an anguished pig.

If you are walking in the bush or even in the suburbs you can look out for koala scratches and droppings. The scratches on trees will normally be 2 or 3 parallel lines. The scratches will not show up well on trees such as stringybarks which have soft fibrous bark but can show up quite clearly on trees with smooth bark such as grey gums. Koala pellets are like large olive pips. Possum pellets may look similar but are narrower and look like tiny sausages. If you are unsure place the droppings in a sealed container for 1-2 days. Koala droppings will have a strong Eucalypt aroma. If in double seal a few pellets in a plastic container or wrapper and them to us at the University of Western Sydney.

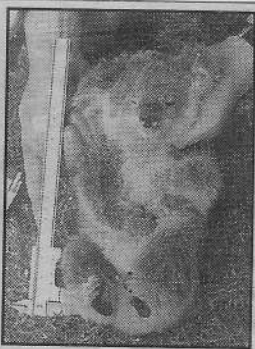
If you sight a koala please contact Robert Close on (046) 20 3100 or after hours on (046) 20 3444.

6-12-95

20-12-95

Macarthur Advertiser 20th December, 1995

KOALAS: WHAT TO DO?



So far this spring Campbelltown residents have directed us (researchers at the University of Western Sydney) to 8 koalas which we would not have found without your help. Two of these 8 were young koalas killed by dogs. The last, shown here, was found on the 19th October. This animal was 7 months old and although there are no obvious wounds, the dog caused internal

injuries severe enough to kill.

Although this is an unfortunate example of what can happen to koalas, the community has enhanced our knowledge of where koalas are and what they are doing by reported sightings. We are studying koalas in the Campbelltown area and because they are difficult to locate, the community's help is essential. All sightings of koalas, alive or dead, are valuable. Koalas have been found in many suburbs on the east of Campbelltown. A recent example is a koala caught near Airds High School four weeks ago. We have fitted some koalas with identifying ear tags. If you should see a koala with ear tags, please note down their colours as that will allow us to identify the koala.

If you find a koala that is injured or in distress we recommend that you leave it where it is and contact us as soon as possible. If it is necessary to handle the koala, cover it first with a thick blanket. Despite their cuddly appearance, male koalas, especially are strong wild animals and can inflict nasty wounds with both their claws and teeth. If you have sighted a koala please contact the University on (046) 20 3100 or after hours on (046) 20 3444.

Steven Ward and Robert Close,
Department of Biological Sciences
UWS Macarthur.

25/10/95

McA

Molly's Story



On a happier note than last week's column about dog attacks on koalas, we'd like to introduce you to Molly (shown here). She was first found in Kentlyn on the 8th May, 1994, when she came into a back garden. At that time she was 18 months old, badly dehydrated and weighed only 3.1 kilograms. She was nursed back to health by

WIRES (Wildlife Information Rescue Emergency Services) worker Gaylene Parker after 10 days of care. She was fitted with a radio collar and had an orange ear tag put in the left ear and a green one in the right. She was then released into the bush at Wedderburn and radio tracked to follow her movements. She was later captured on the 10th November 1994 and weighed 3.9 kg.

In December, unfortunately she was found in the field with a broken leg and was returned to Gaylene's care. After 6 weeks of tender loving care she was released again. When captured on the 2nd August 1995, she was in good health and weighed 5.3 kg. This means that in 15 months, despite setbacks, she had almost doubled in body weight. She is still in the bush at Wedderburn and we will give updates on her progress in future columns. We hope that she will have a baby next year, so say tuned.

Remember too if you see a koala to look out for the ear tags and to carefully note the location. Who knows it might even be Molly? If you have sighted a koala you can contact a Prof. Robert Close on (046) 20 3100 or after hours on (046) 20 3444.
Steven Ward.

KOALA RESEARCH

Memo 15/11/95

MC AD

22-11-95

KOALA TREES

3
What research is being done on our Campbelltown koalas? Well at the moment we (from the University of Western Sydney) are trying to answer some basic biological questions.

For instance how many koalas are there around Campbelltown? We know that our koalas are moving into the suburbs on the east of Campbelltown, in the Wedderburn area, in parts of the Holsworthy army range and are even moving across to the Heathcote National Park. However, as we don't know how much of this land the koalas are actually using, we cannot accurately estimate the population size.

Hopefully our research, with the assistance of the community, will produce a better estimate of the number of koalas, where they are, where they go, whether they are disease free and how well they are breeding. This sort of information is essential when making planning decisions; if we don't know where the koalas are and what they are doing, then we can inadvertently cause irreparable damage. If you sight a koala please contact Robert Close on (046) 20 3100 or after hours on (046) 20 3444.

Steven Ward and Robert Close

4
People can help koalas that move into the suburbs by planting trees that koalas like to eat. Wirrimbirra Sanctuary donates a suitable seedling to all Mac Koala club members, but there are a number of species that you can plant. Koalas mainly eat leaves from Eucalypt trees of course, although they will use other species and have even been found eating pine needles. Koalas mainly eat grey gums (Eucalyptus punctata) and stringybarks (Eucalyptus agglomerata and Eucalyptus oblonga) in the sandy areas of Campbelltown. In the areas with clay and shale soils, koalas favour forest red gums (Eucalyptus tereticornis) and cabbage gums (Eucalyptus amplifolia).

Tree seedlings should be planted in a hole which has good drainage, at least twice the width of the soil ball, and one and a half times as deep. Mix in some of compost and well rotted cow manure. Make sure the roots are not wound around the soil ball, and if they are, carefully tease them out so that they can grow out into the soil. Cover the top of the soil ball, then backfill the hole, firming down the soil to support the plant. Water thoroughly and place mulch up to, but not touching, the trunk. Carefully consider the location where you place your seedling. Currently forest red gums and cabbage gums are being included in the Mac Koala packs, with other species to come later. Forest red gums are big trees and should be planted at least 10 metres away from houses and power lines. Cabbage gums are smaller, but should still be planted at least 5 metres away from houses and power lines.

If you sight a koala please contact Robert Close on (046) 203 100, or after hours on (046) 203 444.1

Steven Ward and Robert Close

You can help in study of koalas

PHD STUDENT Steven Ward's challenging investigation into the life strategies of koalas at Wedderburn will take UWS Macarthur's ongoing koala research a step further.

The hands-on investigation will see Steven climb trees and dodge the claws of not so cuddly koalas in the search for information on their survival strategies, health, movement and birth and death rates.

"The koala colony in Macarthur boosts the image of the area," Mr Ward said. "However, very little is known about the native animal's habitat in Macarthur and that is why it is important to have community support."

Mr Ward expressed the importance of contacting the university on (046) 20 3100, or (046) 20 3444 after hours, if people see or identify signs of a koala.

"Through community reports we have picked up two koala corpses killed by dogs and have been contacted with six

live sightings at Airds, Ruse, Kentlyn and Wedderburn," he said.

"Once we find a live koala we check its health, attach a coloured eartag and monitor their movements.

"A koala ear-tagged at Kentlyn was recently spotted near the Pacific Highway in Heathcote National Park."

While completing his honours degree last year at Wollongong University, Mr Ward's thesis on the use of unburnt patches by small mammals after the 1994 fires spurred his interest in koalas.

He has had to learn new skills for his koala research such as climbing trees, spot lighting, riding a motorbike, handling the animals and avoiding sharp teeth and claws.

You can do your bit to help by joining the *Macarthur Advertiser's* Mac's Koala Club. Simply fill in the registration form in the *Advertiser* to learn the latest from Steven Ward's research. Members will also receive a variety of goods.



UWS koala researcher Steven Ward with a seven-month-old koala killed by dogs at St Helens Park.

A weekly bulletin of news and what's on at UWS Macarthur



MACH2

Volume 4 Issue 36

31 October 1995

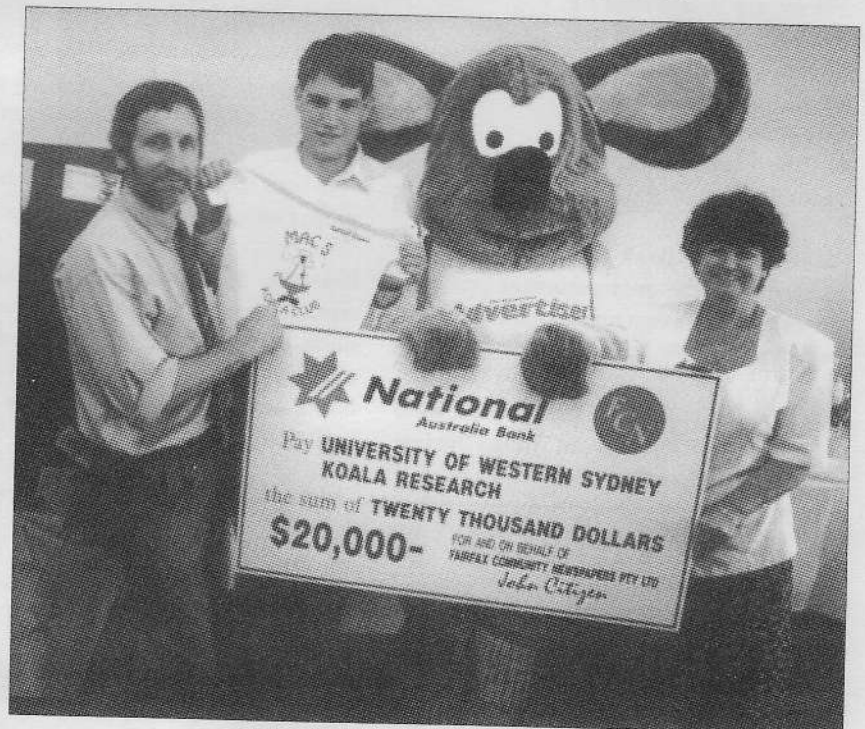
Local newspaper helps UWS koala research

In a unique partnership between UWS Macarthur and *The Macarthur Advertiser*, the local paper recently presented PhD student Steven Ward with a cheque for \$20,000 in support of koala research.

Steven's challenging investigation into the life strategies of koalas at Wedderburn will mark a new era in research for UWS Macarthur. The hands-on investigation will see him climb trees in search of the not so cuddly creatures, tracking their movements and survival strategies.

"In a steadily growing area like Campbelltown, it is imperative we trace the movements of koalas and determine their needs, so as to preserve the population - which is currently being threatened by increasing development," said Steven, 23.

The Macarthur Advertiser is playing an important role in Steven's research by making local residents more aware of Wedderburn's koala colony. According to Sue Paton, South West Promotions Manager for Fairfax Community Newspapers, "*The Macarthur Advertiser* will run weekly columns on koala awareness, what to do if you see one and who to call."



(left to right) Dr Rob Close, Steven Ward, Mac the Koala and Sue Kennedy; Promotions Manager, *The Macarthur Advertiser*

The newspaper has also set up Mac's Koala Club which will help to financially support Steven until his research is completed. Annual membership costs \$5 and includes a t-shirt, ruler, gum tree tube, stickers, balloons and a discount booklet.

If you have sighted a koala please contact Dr Rob Close or Steven Ward at the University on (046) 20 3100 or after hours on (046) 20 3444.



STEVEN Ward, right, Mac Koala, Robert Close and \$20,000 cheque.

Koala Club to help local colony of 60

MacAd
18/10/95

DON'T squeeze out the Macarthur colony of 60 koalas - instead join Mac's club to help the lovable native bears.

But Steven Ward, a koala research student at UWS Macarthur, said it was far too easy to push out the bears.

"Educating the public about bears' habits is important in trying to keep them local," he said.

"People should minimise their

impact on the colony of koalas."

Call the university on (046) 20 3033 if you spot a koala.

Fairfax Community Newspapers has donated \$20,000 for koala research in the area.

If you join Mac's Koala Club for a 12-month membership it costs only \$5, which is then spent on local koala research.

In return, club members receive a gum tree tube, T-shirt, ruler, sticker, balloon and dis-

count vouchers for McDonalds, Sports Unlimited, Skate Plus, Wendy's Ice Creamery, Soft Play and Astro Lanes.

Write your name, address, phone number and date of birth on an envelope, enclosing a cheque or money order for \$5 per member and send to Mac's Koala Club, PO Box 234, Campbelltown, 2560, or drop the envelope at our office at 263 Queen Street, Campbelltown.



Save our koalas . . . Sue Dobson inspects the Wedderburn site

CHRCN 3-10-95

PHOTO: John Appleyard

Koalas 'in peril'

FORMER Campbelltown councillor Sue Dobson fears the future of Sydney's last disease-free koala colony at O'Hares Creek Gorge, Wedderburn, is in danger if a proposed sub-division goes ahead.

Ms Dobson is concerned her ten-year battle to stop development in the area will be futile unless the State Government acquires the land and declares the area a national park and nature reserve.

She has called on the Govern-

ment and the "so-called environmentalists" on Campbelltown Council to protect the Victoria Rd site.

Initial owners Yeomans Pty Ltd went into liquidation and sold the land to Boxola Pty Ltd, who then sold half the land to Yap Yan Pin, reported to be an offshore company.

National Parks Association Macarthur branch recently met Planning Minister Craig Knowles to ask the Government to buy the land.

A spokesman for Mr Knowles' office said the Government had only recently learned of the proposed sale and would have to examine the zoning classification, appropriateness of buying the land and available funding.

"Boxola has resurfaced since the

council elections, which returned a conservative and pro-development council and placed in the hands of real estate agents the other parcels of land for development at an inflated price," Ms Dobson said.

Campbelltown councillor Verlie Fowler said any sale of land in Victoria Rd would cause controversy. She would urge councillors to make further representations to Mr Knowles and Environment Minister Pam Allan.

Koala study

A SCHOLARSHIP for koala research is being offered by Fairfax Community Newspapers (FCN) in conjunction with the University of Western Sydney Macarthur.

UWS's Dr Robert Close, a biologist who has been studying koala habitation in Macarthur, first received funding for koala research in 1990.

Dr Close said: "I've been here one day a week since that time and it's got to the stage where we need a full time student on the job and that's where Fairfax came to the rescue."

FCN, through the Macarthur Advertiser Scholarship, will fund the three year koala study.

The applicant would preferably be a PhD student who lives locally and who will be willing to live, eat and breathe koalas for the duration of the scholarship.

"The person would have to know how to climb trees, be able to work on their own in very difficult terrain, they have got to be pretty tough," Dr Close said.

"They would need an honours degree in ecology and they have got to be good at public speaking," he said.

The scholarship is worth \$45,000.

FCN general manager John Stafford said Fairfax was trying to ensure koalas in the Macarthur area are protected after.

He said: "We are looking for a better future for them."

Interested applicants should contact the *Macarthur Advertiser* on 046 25 5122.

Macarthur Advertiser 22nd February, 1995

Pledge on koala habitat

STATE Labor Candidate for Camden Peter Primrose has welcomed the State Government decision to establish a koala sanctuary at Wedderburn.

But he called on them to go one step further and fully protect the koala habitat as a national park.

"As everyone has seen from the research by Dr Rob Close, koalas roam throughout the O'Hares Creek catchment area," Mr Primrose said.

"Koalas that were tagged at Wedderburn have been found as far away as Sutherland.

"A State Labor government will fully protect the koala habitat by declaring this area the Dharawal National Park.

"The State Liberal Party has so far refused to establish a national park."

State Environment Minister Chris Hartcher announced last week that 360ha of bushland at Wedderburn would become Australia's first official koala sanctuary.

A sanctuary for koalas

MAC. ADV.
22-2-95

WEDDERBURN has been turned into "Australia's first official koala sanctuary" by the State Government, but, unsurprisingly, Labor has said this is not enough to save the koalas.

Environment Minister, Chris Hartcher, said making Wedderburn a "koala sanctuary" will give the koalas "the highest possible level of environmental protection".

"This will be a model to develop koala research and management techniques."

Labor's Camden Can-

didate, Peter Primrose, immediately claimed a Labor Government would turn the entire O'Hares Creek catchment area into the Dharawal National Park.

He said: "Koalas roam throughout this area, and have been found as far away as Sutherland.

"The Liberals have refused to establish a national park, which would fully protect the koalas - I welcome the decision to establish the sanctuary but I call on them to take the next step."

Macarthur Advertiser 22nd February 1995

The Chronicle 14th November 1995

Speed up koala map

CAMPBELLTOWN Council will write to the Australian Koala Foundation (AKF) to confirm when habitat mapping in the Macarthur area is likely to be completed.

The project, expected to cost about \$42,000 is still unfinished, two years after council asked the foundation to go ahead with identifying critical koala habitat areas.

AKF assistant manager and biologist John Callaghan said habitat mapping was essential to ensure the species survival.

"The project will be completed and sent to council as soon as the outstanding digital data has been installed to allow for the effective computer modelling of koala habitat," he said.

Councillor Jim Merry urged council to write to the AKF expressing its concern over the delay, and no firm completion date.

Thanks for caring

IT IS a delight and a pleasure to learn Fairfax Community Newspapers has donated \$20,000 for koala research in our area.

This support for the work being done by Dr Robert Close and student Steven Ward is generous indeed.

On the other hand, I am devastated that two koalas have died as a result of dog attack.

I wonder how we can allow two hundred more homes to be built at Wedderburn and two hundred more dogs to roam the plateau.

Because koalas usually do most of their travelling at night, it is essential that everyone living near bushland keeps their dogs under control at night.

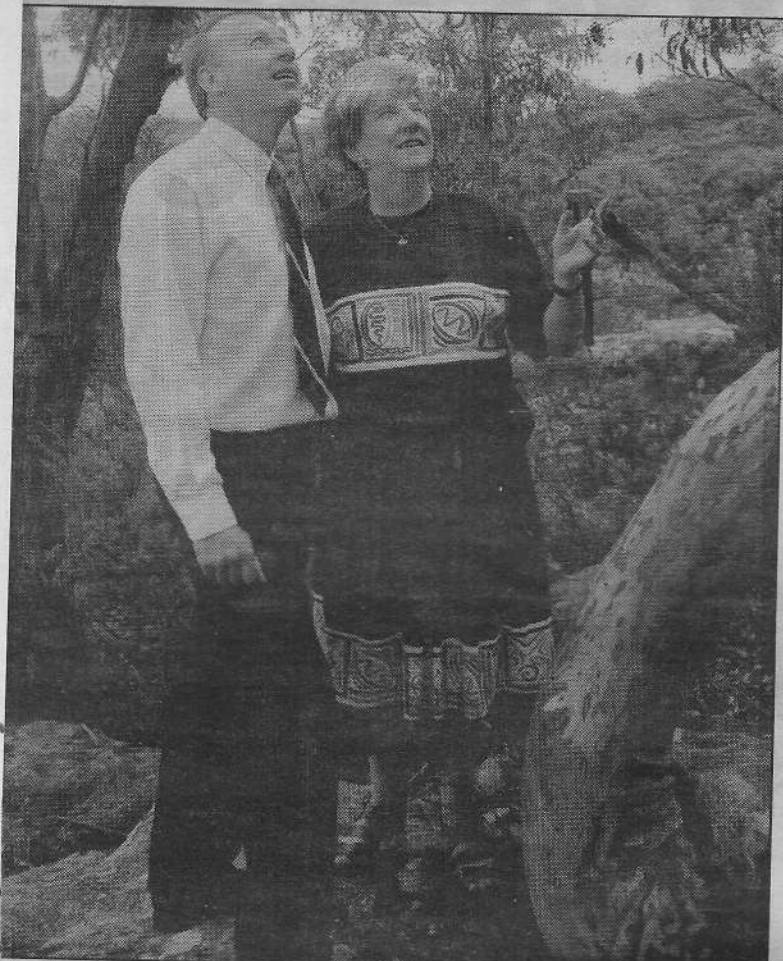
Councillor **VERLIE FOWLER**,
Campbelltown.

MAC AD 15/11/95

Macarthur Advertiser 15th November, 1995

3

'Policy puts habitat at risk'



Koala protection ... Liz Kernohan and Chris Hartcher visit the sanctuary site

KOALA experts are warning of a potential threat to the animals' habitats because a new State Government planning policy does not cover the Macarthur area.

They say the Macarthur area has been excluded because the Planning Department's policy, which is designed to protect koalas and comes into force on March 13, applies only to areas with certain types of eucalyptus trees.

The Macarthur district has the wrong type of eucalyptus trees to be covered by the policy.

University of Western Sydney (UWS) Macarthur senior lecturer in biology Robert Close says the issue could lead to trouble for koalas.

"The policy defines areas as potential koala habitats by the type of eucalyptus tree in the area," Dr Close, who is one of the State's leading experts on koalas, said.

"But they seem to have based it on the type of trees on the north coast of NSW. We have totally different types around Campbelltown."

He estimates there are about 60 koalas living along O'Hares Creek at Wedderburn with another eight to 10 at Kentlyn.

"I don't think there would be a problem in an area that is a known koala habitat. The council would never allow development there," Dr Close said.

"But the danger would come if there is development proposed in an area where we only suspect there are koalas."

He said Wilton could prove a problem area. "We've had a number of sightings of koalas there, but they are not officially recorded by the State as koala habitats. Developers would be legally within their rights to build there," he said.

Australian Koala Foundation executive director Deborah Tabart backed Dr Close's view.

"He is the expert on koalas in the Campbelltown area, so if he is concerned then there must be something to it," Ms Tabart said.

"But in general the Government has taken a very bold and courageous step with this policy."

A Planning Department spokeswoman said they would welcome written submissions on the policy.

Sanctuary for koalas

BUSHLAND at Wedderburn was dedicated yesterday (Tuesday) as Australia's first official koala sanctuary.

The 360ha site contains a rare and important koala habitat and forms part of a larger reserve proposal which encompasses the O'Hares Creek catchment.

Environment Minister Chris Hartcher said dedication of the land as a koala sanctuary provided the area the highest possible level of environmental protection.

"As the first official koala sanctuary declared in Australia, Wedderburn will be a model others will follow," Mr Hartcher said.

"Research and management techniques developed here will be extremely valuable in our fight to preserve dwindling koala habitats along the whole of eastern Australia."

The Wedderburn colony is one of the largest in the Sydney region and is free of chlamydia.

State Member for Camden Liz Kernohan said the Fahey Government saved Wedderburn from developers last year when the Planning Department, under directions from Planning Minister Robert Webster, acquired the property.

Mr Hartcher said the National Parks and Wildlife Service would develop a management plan for the area.

SSBU

Koala protection in doubt

Macarthur Advertiser 8th February 1995

By ANDREW HUNTER

LESS than a week before a new policy on koala habitat protection comes into effect, Campbelltown Council remains in the dark as to whether or not the policy applies to Campbelltown.

The south-western city contains one of the most important koala populations in NSW, but was left off the list of applicable councils when the Koala Habitat Protection policy was announced by the State Government last month.

In early January, a government spokesperson said the Act would be amended to include Campbelltown before February 13.

But council's environmental planning manager Keith Richardson said this week there was "no word" on the city's status.

Mr Richardson's report on the new policy goes before Council next week.

"There seems to be a general feeling that the policy was done without much consultation with the scientific community," Mr Richardson said.

Under the Act, no development application can be approved by a NSW council without investigation into the existence of koala habitats.

earth care

If a habitat is identified, a plan of management must be submitted to, and approved by, the director of the National Parks and Wildlife Service before the DA can be considered by council.

FOR most urban dwellers the local bush reserve provides their closest and most regular brush with nature.

And as Sydney continues to grow upwards, downwards and outwards, the fate of urban bushland will become a more pressing environmental concern for voters.

With this in mind, no doubt, State Opposition Leader Bob Carr recently released the ALP's Greening of Sydney, much to the chagrin of NSW Environment Minister Chris Hartcher.

Mr Hartcher said Mr Carr's promise to abolish the Urban Parks Agency (UPA) was an attempt to "conceal his theft" of Fahey Government policies.

"The Fahey Government has already

announced plans for new parks at Gladesville and Rozelle, and the UPA is advanced in its planning for regional parks at Horsley Park and Rouse Hill," he said.

Yet, some conservation groups such as the Total Environment Centre branded the policy "impressive".

Centre co-director Jeff Angel said the ALP policy was sufficiently detailed to allow voters to gauge what the future would hold under an ALP government.

"Far too often, we have seen mere rhetoric from both sides of politics, and this has been useless as a basis for deciding which party would deliver the better environmental outcomes," Mr Angel said.

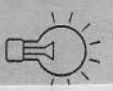
IF Australia burned the 14 million tonnes of waste it now dumps in landfill each year, it would reduce its greenhouse impact by between five-and-seven per cent, according to packaging industry spokesman Gerard van Rijswijk.

Mr van Rijswijk, executive director of the Association of Liquidpaperboard Carton Manufacturers, said this was a far greater saving than could be achieved by the proposed Carbon Tax.

ECOLINE

By Colherine Forley

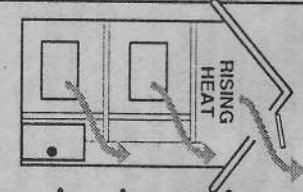
Caring for Our Resource



Keep cool

Air conditioners in homes and cars rely on CFCs, which destroy the earth's ozone layer. Air conditioning is also a major energy user.

Consider some cheaper and safer alternatives...



...And adapt yourself to the heat:

- Wear loose light-coloured clothes made of natural fibres.
- Carry a hand fan.
- Eat meals that require no cooking or cook outdoors.



Koala 'rescue' just latest victory in long campaign

AMIDST the hype generated by the decision of the State Government to "acquire" land at Wedderburn, it may be worth noting that what is being "acquired" is only about 50 hectares.

Most of the Yap Yan Pin land (about 300 hectares) was granted to Campbelltown Council several years ago as a result of a decision of the Land and Environment Court.

This came about because council, firstly under the mayorship of Peter Primrose, followed by myself as mayor, rejected all proposed developments and voted to rezone the area "Regional Open Space".

This would have seen all the land in community ownership and could have been (and should still be) the catalyst for the first national park in south-west Sydney.

The State Government unfortunately refused to allow the rezoning and Yap Yan Pin appealed against council's decision not to allow their development.

Although the court found in favour of Yap Yan Pin, it restricted their development to well under half what they wanted, and imposed a condition that most of their land be donated to council.

AFTER more than six years of protests, rallies, and the longest-running greenban in Australian history, the Wedderburn koala colony was finally "saved" in December. Premier John Fahey announced the bushland and gorge site would be resumed and become a reserve. In this special retrospect, Campbelltown Councillor JIM KREMMER - who was mayor from 1988-91, during the headiest days of the protests - looks back over the saga:

There is no doubt in my mind that the main reason the court was so restrictive in its approval was because council used the highest level of legal representation to support our case.

As mayor at the time, I had several meetings with our legal people and made sure they were well aware of council's commitment to protect the koala colony.

Once the court made its decision, council had no real choice other than to abide by it, and in any case, while it was certainly

not a victory it was still a long way from total defeat.

The developer got 50 hectares of plateau while council got 300 hectares of environmentally critical slopes and gullies and there were several offers to construct a koala research station.

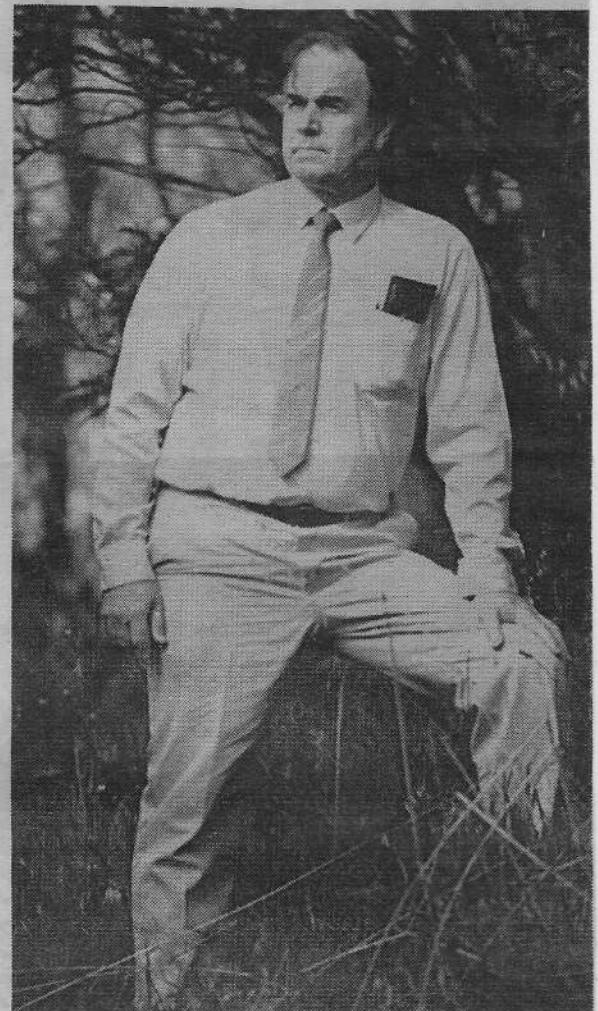
While council felt bound by the court judgement and mollified to some extent by the large amount of "Open Space" awarded by the court, other individuals and some union officials felt otherwise.

The unions decided to continue the fight by introducing greenbans which stopped any construction at the site.

Unfortunately, those well-intended bans affected all construction, including the research station, which meant that it all had to be shelved.

However, providing that some such facility is built, the unions' actions will have brought about the best result possible - which is all the Yap Yan Pin land in public ownership and the koalas getting the support they deserve.

What we need to do now is ensure that both Federal and State Governments recognise the national and regional importance of the area and commit funding to ensure the well-being of the



JIM Kremmer says many people took part in the campaign to save Wedderburn koala site

koalas and the declaration of a national park or nature reserve.

While one or two individuals may be singled out

for special mention at this time, let's not forget that this battle has been fought over a period of years by many people.

Macarthur Advertiser 12th October, 1994

The last hurdle cleared

By DUNCAN LAY

Macarthur Regional Organisation of Councils and the Greater Western Sydney Economic Development Board as being the major catalyst for western Sydney's economic growth in general and Macarthur in particular.

"It will be of immense benefit to the area, providing employment and stimulating industry and business," Mr Haviland said.

Funding has been set down for 1996/97 with the first stage of development scheduled to open in 1998/99.

"It is only five years away, and there is a great deal of work that must be done, not only on the airport, but on the transport links around the airport," he said.

"I don't think we need it brought forward any more, it has already been brought forward enough."

Mr Haviland said he was inviting public submissions about the name of the airport.

"There is no time-limit on it, but now would be a good time to get some names in, and I have already had several possible names mentioned to me," he said.

Mr Haviland said anyone interested should write to Chris Haviland, MP, Parliament House.

BADGERS Creek International Airport has cleared probably its final hurdle, and development is assured by the Year 2000, Macarthur Federal MP, Chris Haviland, said.

"There was a feeling, although I did not necessarily agree with it, that if the Federal Government could not sell or lease its major airports, then there would not be funds available to develop Badgers Creek," said Mr Haviland, whose electorate covers Badgers Creek.

The recent ALP National Conference resolved to lease the 22 major airports for 50 years, and retain majority Australian ownership.

That pleased most of the ALP Left, including myself, who are opposed to privatisation, but it also meant funds would be available to develop Badgers Creek, or whatever the name of the new airport will be," he said.

"It could have been seen as a hurdle, although personally I always thought it would be funded, whether from the sale/lease of the airports or otherwise.

"The decision reached was an excellent compromise, enabling development to proceed and overcoming the concerns about privatisation."

The airport has been identified by both the

Koala land to be saved

by LYNDA FALLON

THE State Government will resume environmentally-sensitive land at Wedderburn after lengthy negotiations for sale of the area stalled.

State Planning Department officials and mortgagee-in-possession of the land Overseas Union Bank Australia (OUBA) have been locked in negotiations for the sale but could not agree on a price. The market value of the land is estimated as at least \$3.5 million.

Environmental and community groups have fought for more than six years to preserve the land, which is home to Sydney's last thriving disease-free koala colony.

Trade unions slapped a green ban on the site, which was subdivided into 22 lots of 2 to 2.4ha. Despite earlier refusals to buy the land, Premier John Fahey announced on Tuesday that what would become a reserve for the permanent protection of koalas and said the NSW Valuer-General would determine a "fair price" for the land.

OUBA managing director Geoffrey McIntyre said he was pleased for the community.

"We understood the position but we had a responsibility to get the best price possible," Mr McIntyre said.

"We sought consultation when others would have used the law to push the bans aside."

He said OUBA would "definitely be taking action in the court" if the Government offered too low a price.

Mac Chron 9/12/94

Chron 9/12/94

Row over future of Dharawal bushland

Chron 13/12/94

OPPOSITION Environment spokeswoman Pam Allan has accused the State Government of "squandering another opportunity" to set up Dharawal National Park.

Mrs Allan said the park was a necessity to protect koalas and other endangered species at Wedderburn. She said the Fahey Government announced plans to create 10 new national parks but Dharawal was "conspicuously absent".

"Once again John Fahey and Liz Kernohan have failed to keep their promise to protect the pristine O'Hare's Creek catchment," she said.

"State Labor forced the Government to start negotiations to buy privately-owned land at Wedderburn and these negotiations keep dragging on.

"But the koalas and other endangered species also roam throughout the O'Hare's catchment." State Member for

Camden Liz Kernohan slammed Mrs Allan's claims as "trying to make political capital out of nothing".

"These statements are ridiculous," Dr Kernohan said.

"It was the Fahey Government, at my instigation, that declared the area a nature reserve that would be maintained by a community committee.

"It is our Government that has resumed land at Wedderburn."

Dr Kernohan said the land could not be declared a national park because it lay on top of coal.

Labor Candidate for Camden Peter Primrose said the establishment of the Dharawal National Park was one of the most pressing conservation issues in NSW.

"This land contains many species and helps support one of the largest disease-free colonies of koalas in NSW," Mr Primrose said.

Housing meeting

A PUBLIC meeting will be held at Cobbitty to discuss controversial plans for housing development in the area.

Several landowners at Cobbitty want to subdivide their properties and have formed the Cobbitty Progress Group with the intention of putting a joint submission to Camden Council.

The group has been facing some opposition from residents against more housing and associated development in the area.

The meeting will be on February 15, at a venue yet to be decided, at 7.30pm.

Some councillors will attend the meeting as observers to gauge the acceptance or otherwise of such proposals from the Cobbitty community.

After years of turmoil, koalas get their habitat

McAd Dec 7 / 1994

By DUNCAN LAY

FTER more than six years of protests, rallies, claim, inter-claim and the longest-running union green ban in Australian history, the Wedderburn koalas have been freed.

NSW Premier John Fahey announced yesterday the land had been resumed by the State Government and would now become a reserve.

Campbelltown councillor Sue Dobson, who formed the Campbelltown Koala Association and led the fight against development for the last six years, was overjoyed.

"This is just a dream come true, Christmas has come early for me - I think there is a Santa Claus after all, I don't get the smile off my face," Cr Dobson said.

"We thought we had lost it a few times, it was only the green ban from the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Engineering Union (CFMEU) that stood between the koalas and the developers.

"It was the longest-running green ban in Australian history, and I must say a big thank you to Paul Matters from the South Coast Labour Council, Andrew Ferguson from the CFMEU, but most importantly Jimmy Avinou, who was the local official and did more than anyone else to keep the green ban."

Jimmy Avinou said: "There must really be Santa Claus, and I'm just glad that we have saved this land for future generations so they can enjoy it.

"It just shows that if working-class people stick together, they can make a change, because that is what we have done, we have made a change.

"I had comments from different people at different times, saying we wouldn't make a difference, that we would never win, but I knew we would."

Mr Avinou paid tribute to Cr Dobson and her work to free the koalas.

"Whenever I was feeling low, I used to go in there and talk around, and it just used to pick me right up," Cr Dobson said.

"But the fight is not yet over, now we must make sure the area is not spoiled, that it can still be enjoyed by many people from now."

Cr Dobson also thanked all the local parliamentarians who had helped fight for the koalas.

Mr Fahey said after representations from Camden MP Kernohan, the State Government had negotiated with landowners over the land.

When negotiations failed to reach an agreed price, the Government decided to resume the land, Mr Fahey said. "The many people who were concerned about the fate of the koalas will share my delight at this announcement," Dr Kernohan said.

Macarthur Advertiser 7th December, 1994



Re:

THIS WEEK

omy.

McAd □□□ 12/10/94

LATEST inclusion in the "That's a Coincidence!" Department. Dr Robert Close, an environmental scientist from the University of Western Sydney, has become well-known for his ongoing studies into the Wedderburn koala colony. But who was the owner of the land the colony now occupies earlier this century? A quick check of the 1923 parish map at Campbelltown Library reveals the answer. It was a farmer called Robert Close. (Insert theme music from the Twilight Zone here).



MEG Oates at the O'Hares Creek Gorge: 'No matter how hard you try, no camera can do it justice.' Photo by JEFF DE PASQUALE

A hidden tourist mecca!

By JEFF MCGILL

"SPECTACULAR" was the only word Meg Oates could use to describe her view across the metre-wide chasm which swept down into pristine river wilds below.

And perched at the edge of a jagged rock parapet, the strong winds hitting her face made crystal clear how high she was.

But no, Councillor Oates was not visiting Fitzroy Falls or a tourist lookout in the Blue Mountains.

She was right here in Campbelltown - at the O'Hares Creek Gorge, just 15 minutes from Queen Street.

Public access to this amazing "hidden corner" of our city has been long blocked, and few Campbelltonians even know it exists.

But the former mayor now regards it as one of several sites which could trigger a huge boost in local tourism - particularly the booming eco-tourism market.

The gorge site, near Wedderburn's controversial koala colony, has already been earmarked

as a national park by NSW Opposition Leader, Bob Carr - if he wins government in March. Responding to this, the Fahey Government has declared the region a "reserve".

Cr Oates is confident that schools and residents of south-west Sydney would love such close access to this type of attraction.

"The vast majority of Campbelltown people have no idea of the incredible gorges and beauty that surround them," she said.

"Campbelltown unfortunately suffers from negative images on the TV screen, but these sites are something to really help raise our self esteem."

Her stance follows the recent collapse of the Macarthur Country Tourism Association (MCTA), and Cr Oates is determined to prove Campbelltown does not need Camden and Wollondilly to attract local tourists.

She is considering the creation of a special tourism committee, which would include local Aboriginal representatives and environmentalists.

Cr Oates says tourism at such sensitive

bushland sites would have to have strict environmental controls to prevent vandalism, litter and threats to the flora and fauna.

Last week, Cr Oates met Dr Robert Close of the University of Western Sydney, an expert on the nearby koala colony, to discuss her ideas.

Dr Close said while he would love to see people enjoy these sites, he would also love to see the sites protected from any harm.

"I once led guided tours of the Galapagos Islands, and by doing that we prevented any vandalism, and could also give information to the tourists," he said.

Cr Oates agreed, and if the gorge was opened to the public, she would aim to establish a locked gates policy to prevent unofficial entry, and build a small live-in ranger station.

As well as council funding, money could be sought from government bodies such as the Water Board.

"Maybe Campbelltown can get back some of the \$80-per household environment levy we all pay," she said.

LOCAL KOALAS
O'HARES CR

McAd 12/10/94

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS & TECHNOLOGY
BIOLOGY 1B

Bushfires are no novelty here

WHEN a hundred hectares of Wedderburn was blackened by bushfires last week, it was hardly a new experience for this isolated bushland community.

Because stories of wild bushfires and the gorge country south of Campbelltown go hand-in-hand.

It was in 1939, after a savage blaze destroyed 80 per cent of the local fruit crop, that the Wedderburn Bush Fire Brigade was established. It has been kept busy ever since.

Declared a Scenic Protection Area by Campbelltown Council, the area is probably the best known these days for the koala colony discovered on the edge of O'Hares Creek gorge.

But the first selectors arrived in the 1880s, carving farms and orchards into the wilderness.

A school opened in 1896, and a union church two years later, but the community remained largely isolated by the steep and jagged track from Campbelltown, and didn't even receive electricity until 1952.

In the 1990s, floods still cut off the suburb when the Georges River bursts its banks.

How Wedderburn got its name seems lost to history.

But it was described as an unsettled area known as the "parish of Wedderburn" as early as 1848 in the *Geographical Colonies* by W.H. Wells.

OUR SUBURBS

By JEFF MCGILL and VERLIE FOWLER

Most of the suburb's modern roads follow the path of the old bush tracks carved by the pioneers.

Two stretches along the main thoroughfare are now known as Lysaght Road and Minerva Road.

Andrew Lysaght was the local MP in the 1920s when its believed some improvements were made to the roadway.

Minerva was the ancient Roman goddess of the arts, and former ranger Keith Longhurst suggests the name was most likely dreamt up by an early settler called Broinowski.

This Polish-born selector lived on the roadway and was a talented artist who completed 300 illustrations of Australian birds.

(A swimming spot in the nearby creek system is called Minerva Pool).

Broinowski's general love of birds may also be responsible for the title of nearby Bellbird Road, as old-time locals say they have never seen or heard a bellbird in the area.



THE road down Wedderburn Gorge, photographed by Tom Swann early this century (Courtesy of Campbelltown and Airds Historical Society)

Far more common are lyrebirds, also known as bush pheasants, hence Pheasant Creek, and nearby Pheasants Road.

Hillcrest Road possibly denotes the geography, while Jersey Road may have been named by a settler from the Channel Islands.

George Scattergood, who came to Wedderburn in 1945, says the old track that led across the gully from Jersey Road to the home of the pioneering Swann family is now called O'Hares Road.

This is named for the creek which winds through the spectacular gorge east of the settlement.

Does any reader know how Exley Road or Kenwood Road got their names?

Blackburn Road recalls an early settler who is listed on parish maps as "G.V Blackburne".

Aberfoyle Road is a Scottish name and therefore may have been given by Caledonian settlers, the Scobie family.

Two other early roads are Victoria Road (after the reigning Queen?) and Airlie Road, which

apparently was an access way into an early holding.

A local environment plan has been exhibited to allow further subdivisions in the Wedderburn area, but council has requested further information - including a fauna planning study - to assist in its decision making.



THE koala colony is one of the most well-known aspects of Wedderburn

Macarthur Advertiser 5th October, 1994

Macarthur Chronicle 12th October, 1994

Save our rivers

A PROGRAM to clean up NSW rivers was launched in Camden last week by State Member for Camden Liz Kernohan.

Dr Kernohan said RiverCare 2000 would focus on people working together for clean, healthy and productive rivers.

She said it would recognise, celebrate and encourage community, industry and government initiatives.

"It is only through involvement of the

community at all levels working cooperatively with the government that real progress will be made," Dr Kernohan said.

"Without clean, healthy, productive rivers and streams life cannot be sustained. This is clearly evidenced in the drought gripping more than 80 per cent of rural NSW."

"In times of major crisis such as drought the outbreak of algae blooms the vulnerability of our river system is highlighted."

Freshwater mussel power tests river system health

EARTH CARE

By ANDREW HUNTER
A RESEARCH team from Sydney University has embarked on an innovative pollution monitoring scheme using freshwater mussels to gauge the health of the Hawkesbury-Nepean river system.

And it's the polluters of NSW who are indirectly financing the program.

The university's Anatomy and Histology Department was recently granted more than \$120,000 from the Environmental Trusts, a program funded by government levies on industries which discharge their pollutants into the sewerage system.

Heading the research is Dr Maria Byrne, who said this was the first time freshwater mussels had been used as bio-monitors

in Australia.

According to Dr Byrne, the mussels filter six litres of water per hour, accumulating heavy metals along with the iron and calcium they need to form their shells.

"Mussels have long been recognised as an important bio-indicator species," Dr Byrne said.

"The Environmental Protection Authority and the Water Board have been looking at marine mussels but the freshwater systems are where Australia's major environmental problems are.

"We want to look at mussels from clean waterways and compare those with mussels from other areas."

Dr Byrne had already started her research before the grant but said the new funds had allowed her to increase the scope of the study.

The 'natural monitoring' concept is being pursued by another research team, this time from the University of Technology.

The university's Biological and Biomedical Sciences Department received \$97,000 from the Environmental Trusts to use common street trees to monitor air pollution.

Like Dr Byrne's mussel research, leaf samples will be compared between pollution-free areas and pollution-prone areas.

Announcing the grants recently, Environment

Minister Chris Hatcher said he had been amazed at the quality and diversity of proposals submitted for consideration.

"There is a particular emphasis this year on projects which protect and rehabilitate the state's waterways," Mr Hatcher said.

"This scheme is a great example of the government working with research bodies to find solutions to some of the state's environmental challenges."

THE Nature Conservation Council of NSW will consider the issue of Australia's introduced animals at two seminars to be held on September 23 and 24 at the Australian Museum Theatre.

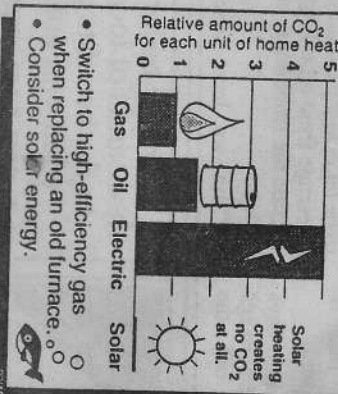
ECOLINE

by Catherine Foley

Caring for Our Air

Electric heating puts 5 times as much carbon dioxide into the air as a high-efficiency gas furnace.

Most peak demand electricity is produced from coal - nearly twice as polluting as gas. Only a third of the energy in coal is turned into electricity. (In a home gas furnace up to 95% is turned straight into heat.) A further 10% of the electricity generated is lost before it reaches your home.



Source: Environmental Protection Agency

© 1992 ArtPress International. SOUTHAM SYNDICATE

Landcom to spring-clean lake

by LYNDIA FALLON

SPRINGFIELD Lake at Ambarvale will be given an extensive facelift to repair years of damage wreaked by people emptying fish tanks into the water, dumping domestic birds at the reserve, polluting and littering.

The lake at Mandurama Reserve is owned by Landcom which will clean up the area and give it to Campbelltown Council.

Work on the reserve and lake

includes a tree planting program, extending the existing footpath, providing facilities and vehicle barriers and removing domestic birds and salvinia molesta (salvinia weed).

A report to council on Tuesday said Springfield Lake was in a poor

state, suffering from siltation, overstocking of domestic birds, erosion and weed infestation.

The proposed revamp of the lake was advertised and public submissions supported the development.

However residents were concerned a proposed boardwalk on the southern side of the lake was dangerous and could be used by children as a diving board. Water

plants will be put in front of the boardwalk to make it less attractive for diving and swimming.

Residents also believed the public should be educated about not emptying goldfish bowls into the lake and asked for a public awareness program to stop run-off containing detergents, oils and other waste products from surrounding properties. The lake is choked with salvinia weed, a possible by-

product of people emptying goldfish bowls into the lake. Landcom will drain the lake and remove the salvinia weed before refilling it and beautifying the area.

The RSPCA will be asked to net domestic birds such as ducks and geese and take them to farm dams. Landcom will maintain the site for six months before handing it over to the council.

LOCAL

over 23/8/94

MAC 14/9/94
ABV

Creek gets clean-up to help river

By JAMES WOODFORD

A creek flowing through Plumpton Park, in Sydney's west, has been turned from a filthy ditch into a wetland that experts say could help save the Hawkesbury River.

Until recently, Bells Creek - in the Blacktown Council area - carried the run-off from a housing development that was completed a decade ago.

It was an eyesore that had *E coli* counts higher than raw sewage, was strongly alkaline and had levels of phosphorus that were eight times higher than the national standard.

The whole cocktail flowed into Eastern Creek, then into South Creek, before making its way into the Hawkesbury-Nepean River where it contributed to the blue-green algae outbreaks that have plagued the river.

A wetlands expert, Mr Geoff Sainty, was employed by Blacktown Council 15 months ago. \$1.3 million was allocated by the council to turn the creek into the centrepiece of Plumpton Park.

"It was really a place not to go," Mr Sainty said. "It was a bit of a mess."

His work had three goals: to improve water quality, to prevent floods and to provide a place that could be used as an educational resource.

Today the artificial wetland is nearing completion. Noxious weeds have been replaced by 25 native, wetland species, and wetland birds have begun to use the site.

The plants in the wetland are known as macrophytes - meaning big eaters - and these eat excess nutrients, the main cause of blue-green algae.

"The new wetland is right up the top of the catchment as close as possible to the urban area," Mr Sainty said. "We have slowed down the flow and created a nice place to visit and habitat for plants and birds."

The Sydney Morning Herald 24th August, 1994

1994

Carr slams koala sale

Macarthur Advertiser 17th August, 1994

By CARLOTTA McINTOSH

OPPOSITION Leader Bob Carr has accused the State Government of playing politics with a koala habitat at Wedderburn after a real estate advertisements were seen in Campbelltown this week.

In May this year Mr Carr said an ALP government would buy or swap 22 five acres lots on Wedderburn Grange with

state owned land.

"If the government is serious about buying the land, why is it listed for public sale," Mr Carr said.

Earlier this month Planning Minister Robert Webster announced he was negotiating with the mortgagee in possession Overseas Union Bank (Austra-

lia) to buy the Wedderburn land to protect a koala colony from housing development.

Yesterday Mr Webster's office was not aware the land was being advertised but said negotiations with OUB were continuing.

Housing development on the land has been held up since union green bans were put in place since 1988.

OUB Australia spokesman Geoff McIntyre said Elders Real Estate telephoned to ask if the land was still for sale.

"At the same time the government approached us and we entered into discussions with a view to buying the land," Mr McIntyre said.

"I would not enter into any contract until I spoke to the government and informed them of the situation."

Macarthur Chronicle 4th October 1994

FIREFIGHTERS battled a blaze at Wedderburn for almost 15 hours on Tuesday and Wednesday before containing flames that endangered homes and razed 100ha of bushland.

More than 150 firefighters, most of them volunteers, fought the flames from 4.40pm Tuesday to 7.20am Wednesday. The area, off Victoria Rd, was not officially safe until Thursday morning and Campbelltown City was under a declared state of emergency for two days.

Three 16-year-old youths are facing charges in connection with the blaze. Police said the boys, two from Campbelltown and the other from Leumeah, have been charged with maliciously setting fire to scrubland.

Campbelltown Council fire control officer Angelo Baldo said the fire was fuelled by tall, dead grass and dry scrub.

Mr Baldo said water had to be taken into the area because there were no mains at Wedderburn and dams usually used in fire emergencies were dry because of the drought. The fire stretched across a 1km front and winds of up to 45km/hour whipped 5m-high flames towards homes.

Bushfire season officially began on Saturday but council had moved the season forward one month because of the dangerous conditions.

Mr Baldo described the work by emergency services

as "fantastic" and thanked all those who had helped.

"The co-ordination of all the emergency services was fantastic and everyone deserves to be thanked for their efforts," he said.

BURN FIRE

The Chronicle

Macarthur Chronicle 4th October 1994

Koala colony put in peril

WEDDERBURN'S treasured koala colony came perilously close to danger as flames licked near the edge of their habitat last week.

Victoria Rd, which was closed off because of the fire, borders the koala colony.

On the northern side of the road, in the Pheasants Nest catchment, there are an estimated five or six koalas.

The main colony is at the end of Victoria Rd, in the O'Hare's Creek catchment, where there are about 60 animals.

Robert Close, a lecturer in biology at the University of Western Sydney Macarthur Campbelltown campus, has studied the koalas since 1991.

On Tuesday he faced a great dilemma - whether to move some of the koalas out of

harm's way or leave them to fend for themselves.

"It would have been very difficult to get in because the fire was outside the only track that leads into the area," Mr Close said.

"It was just too dangerous. If we went in there and the fire came in after us, we would not have been able to get out. We would not have found more than one or two, they can be very difficult to find."

He said it was not his job to interfere with the koalas. "Our aim is to study them not impinge on their lives," he said. "Fire is part of their lives."

Mr Close said people should be more aware of potential bushfires.

"Although the koalas have to live with fire, we don't want it to be man-made fire."

Mac Chronicle 4/10/94

Ruling cuts coal option

THE Kembla Coal and Coke (KCC) mining company has says conditions accompanying the approval to mine the Tahmoor North coal reserve would make mining impossible.

KCC principal environmental officer Dave Olsen said the Land and Environment Court's ruling had cut off the existing Tahmoor mine from a new shaft site at Picton.

"We can't access the shaft from our operations because it is under prohibited zones," Mr Olsen said. "We will seek a change to the activities allowed in the area."

Technical general manager Rick Davis said the court's conditions would have to change.

"We don't believe retaining the prohibition on mining in the lease is sustainable," Mr Davis said.

KCC was permitted to mine the majority of coal in the Tahmoor North lease but placement of prohibited zones such as residential and industrial areas prevents the use of longwall mining, the most efficient way to extract coal in the area. Mr Davis said no decision had been made yet on KCC's course of action.

"When you get that sort of decision, you have to sit back and look at how to tackle it," he said.

The Sydney Morning Herald 12th August, 1994

Koala colony's future brighter

By COL ALLISON

The threatened Wedderburn koala colony, near Campbelltown, one of Australia's last disease-free koala sanctuaries, may soon be saved by the State Government after a long-running protest and green ban.

Conservationists, who have fought a succession of would-be developers of the land adjoining the fragile koala habitat in O'Hares Creek, believe their 12-year battle may be ending.

The Government has been negotiating confidentially with the mortgagee in possession, the Singapore-based Overseas Union Bank (OUB) Australia, to buy the 44.5 hectares of housing development land on the ridge above O'Hares Creek known as "the lungs of the Georges River".

A representative of the Minister for Planning and Housing, Mr Webster, confirmed that the minister had been personally seeking a solution to the plight of the koalas after persistent pressure from the MP for Camden, Dr Liz Kernohan.

Mr Webster was optimistic and believed the multi-million-dollar purchase of the site from OUB via the Sydney Regional Development Fund would protect the habitat of at least 60 breeding koalas from housing, land-clearing and domestic pets.

Dr Robert Close, senior biology lecturer at the University of



Wedderburn koala . . . their safety seems assured.

Western Sydney and long-time researcher of Wedderburn's koalas, has been monitoring the koalas via radio telemetry for four years.

He believes that the colony is breeding freely and shows no signs of chlamydia, the disease ravaging the fertility of koalas nearly everywhere else.

"Young koalas being driven out to find new territory by their parents are constantly turning up in Campbelltown backyards," he said. "Only recently I found one in the Royal National Park, just south of Sydney, where the animals have not been seen for three decades. I believe the Wedderburn koalas, once their future is assured, will ultimately recolonise the national park."

15th August 1994

Wedderburn koalas

I wish to clarify two points in the article (*Herald*, August 12) regarding koalas at Wedderburn.

First, although the animals were described as "disease-free", tests conducted by veterinarians at Elizabeth Macarthur Agriculture Institute show that animals at Wedderburn have had contact with the chlamydia bacterium

which causes decreased fertility and sometimes blindness and death. To date, none of the koalas we have examined has shown clinical signs of the disease, but they could appear if the koalas were placed under environmental stress such as over-crowding or dietary insufficiencies.

Second, the koala ear-tagged at Campbelltown was spotted in December 1993 at Heathcote National Park, not Royal National Park as reported. However, it was seen only 1km from Royal National Park and may have made it across the freeway in time for the fires.

Robert Close,
University of Western Sydney,
Macarthur,
Campbelltown.

August 15

Justine

Koala reprieve!

Govt plan to buy land

By CARLOTTA McINTOSH

THE STATE Government is negotiating with a Singapore banking group to buy back land at Wedderburn to save the koala colony threatened by housing development.

After months of lobbying by Camden MP Dr Liz Kernohan, Planning Minister Robert Webster announced on Friday his intentions of buying 22 five-acre lots owned by mortgagee in possession, Overseas Union Bank (OUB) Australia.

Kernohan said it is intended to purchase the land through the Sydney Regional Development Fund.

"The considerable community concern about the koalas prompted me to raise the matter with the Premier, so I'm very happy to see a satisfactory solution has been sought," Dr Kernohan said.

"Furthermore, if acquired, the site will be maintained as open space and with natural regeneration, it is likely the koala habitat will spread back to this land."

OUB managing director Geoff McIntyre confirmed discussions had been going on with Mr Webster's office but said he could make no official comment about the sale.

The news has delighted environmentalists who have been battling to stop development since 1988.

UWS koala expert Dr Robert Close said he estimated there were about 60 koalas along the O'Hares Creek gorge.

House project falters

"If the land is protected it will safeguard other rare fauna found here, not just koalas," Dr Close said.

"Anything that reduced human impact on O'Hares Creek will be important for the long-term survival of koalas."

Dr Close's studies have shown the colony has a number of young productive females.

"So far the local koalas are not showing any signs of chlamydia, the wet-bottom disease that has affected the fertility of many koalas in built-up areas."

● Contd page 2

Macarthur Advertiser 3rd August, 1994

THE State Government's shock decision to purchase the land occupied by Wedderburn's famous koala colony, should finally bring to an end six long years of protests, picket lines and legal action.

And although it is undoubtedly a moment of glory for Camden MP, Dr Liz Kernohan, the unsung heroes should also be remembered.

These are the residents, environmentalists, unions and councillors who for years "held the line" against development of the koala habitat.

The drama began back in 1988, when it was revealed a colony of koalas had been discovered in thick bushland about to be developed into a prestige housing subdivision.

However, Campbelltown Council had already zoned the land on the fringe of O'Hares Creek gorge as suitable for rural-residential blocks.

As all three levels of government began blaming each other for the problem, environmentalists led by the National Parks Association and Campbelltown Koala Association demanded the area be protected.

The Advertiser spearheaded news coverage from day one, with our articles detailing protest meetings, council debate, maps, promises and proposals numbering into the hundreds.

With the council blocking Yap Yan Pin Pty Ltd's development proposals, the matter went before the Land and Environment Court, which gave conditional approval to most of the estate.

But outraged opponents began a series of protests and picket lines while the unions declared "greenbans" on the site.

For the past two years the matter has rested at a stalemate, but in an electoral boundary redistribution, the site was transferred from the ALP seat of Campbelltown into the marginal seat of Camden, held by Dr Kernohan.

The Liberal MP took an immediate interest, toured the area with the Advertiser, and began making a rolling series of representations to the minister, urging action.

● From front

Environmentalist Verlie Fowler who was president of the Macarthur branch of the National Parks Association during much of the campaign to stop development has expressed delight at the news.

Campbelltown Councillor Sue Dobson who has been in the fight since 1988, told the Advertiser she always believed in an ultimate victory.

"There were times when I thought I could not carry on, then I

would take a walk out there and the trees would give me the strength to continue," Cr Dobson said.

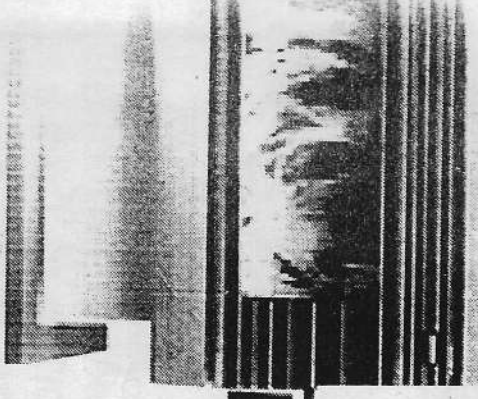
"I am very excited the government has decided to buy the land. It has taken a long time but I won't be opening the champagne until the land titles are in the possession of the State," Cr Dobson said.

Cr Dobson said the National Geographic magazine will put the story of the plight of the koalas in the international arena in the September or October edition.

JUST A PRETTY FACE

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Macarthur has again been made into a marginal seat... the Liberal Party organisation and I agree that I could make a much greater contribution to winning the next election by locating my office in Narellan."

But on Friday, Sen Baume insisted he would remain in the Upper House.

"As much as I enjoyed being the MP for Macarthur, I definitely have no designs on going back to it," he told the Advertiser.

It's understood local Liberal branches will choose their candidates for the next election in August.

There is no obvious candidate yet, although four names are repeatedly mentioned - Charlie Lynn of Bradbury, Penelope Scott of Camden, Ron Forrester of Bowral and Peter Annandou of Cobitty.

President of the Macarthur Liberal Electoral Conference, Andrew Thomson, confirmed there was no clear frontrunner.

THE poor performance of Macarthur's Labor MP, Chris Haviland, has been given as the reason why Liberal Senator Michael Baume has decided to make Narellan his new home base.

Senator Baume, who was previously based in Wollongong, claims he's had to deal with an increasing local workload due to the "inadequate" efforts of Mr Haviland.

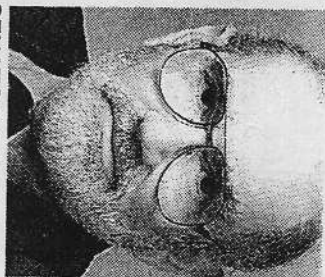
But meeting the criticism head-on, Mr Haviland said he wasn't aware there were "any gutters big enough" in Narellan to accommodate his opposition.

For many residents, Senator Baume will not be a stranger, after serving seven years as the Liberal MP for Macarthur until he

Last week, he told the Camden Liberal Party he hoped to establish his office at Narellan within the next two months and play a larger role in local affairs.

"The Macarthur area is among the fastest growing regions of NSW, resulting in many problems requiring federal attention at a time when the area is inadequately represented by an inexperienced local Labor MP," Senator Baume said.

"As a former MP for Macarthur, it would give me a great deal of pleasure to help win this seat, which has never been in opposition in its 45-year history, back for the Liberal Party. "Another reason I am



SENATOR BAUME today

glad to return to Macarthur is that my wife, Toni, comes from Camden and her parents and adult children all live in the area, with which I have very strong personal ties."

As the local MP, Senator Baume was well-known for his larrakin sense of humour, even to the extent of running elec-



JUST A PRETTY FACE

FROM the Advertiser archives... an election ad used by Michael Baume in 1975

tion ads which deliberately poked fun at himself.

One 1975 advertisement read: "For a start, he is an incredible five foot two inches tall, and the most un-fastidious dresser (try as we may, he'll never really look like a Liberal Party candidate)".

Children make a wallaby welcome

● From front koala tracking collars used to record the whereabouts of koalas found on the edge of the Wedderburn Gorge and Kentdyn further north on the Georges River.

Dr Close said he decided to introduce nine-month-old Isey to the kids so they could see a harmless native creature first hand.

Isey, short for Mount Isa, where she was found after she was abandoned by her mother, closely resembles a species of rock wallaby which once inhabited the Wedderburn gorge and plateau.

"There haven't been any sightings of this kind of rock wallaby around Campbelltown in recent years," Dr Close said.

Koala campaigner and Campbelltown Councilor Sue Dobson has challenged other schools in the area to equal the efforts of the Beverley Park kids.

Dr Close needs funds for running costs for koala research, but in the meantime he is hoping to

Dispute on value

LIVERPOOL mayor Mark Latham has disputed the valuation of a property jointly owned by the doomed Macarthur County Tourist Association.

Cr Latham told Liverpool Council he doubted if the property was worth the Raine and Home figure of \$395,000, but would be interested in a "more realistic" offer.

Despite opposition from Camden and Wollongong MCTA will be disbanded and its assets sold. Liverpool owns the land the MCTA building stands on, but it holds the land and the building in trust for the MCTA.

As a first step to selling the land Liverpool has rezoned it - from tourist 5A - to "operational" land.

The MCTA has agreed that the property should be sold. Will and

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Kids make a wallaby welcome

McA
June 21
1994

By CARLOTTA McINTOSH

CHILDREN from Beverley Park special school were over the moon yesterday when they clapped eyes on a tiny female rock wallaby for the first time.

University of Western Sydney koala expert Dr Robert Close brought Isey, a female rock wallaby, to see the children after he learned they had raised \$40 for koala research.

The Campbelltown children were moved to raise the money after they saw reports in the *Advertiser* about endangered koala habitats.

Teacher Susan Phipps said the idea to raise money by making and selling chocolate crackles came from the children themselves.

"These kids are always receiving charity, so this was a chance them to turn it around and do something for others," Ms Phipps said. "They made 200 chocolate crackles in two days and sold them to parents, staff and other students."

Dr Close, who lectures in biological sciences at UWS Macarthur, has been researching koala production rates, breeding and eating habits since 1990.

At the same time he has been carrying out studies into the formation of new species of rock wallabies.

He will use the \$40 to buy two new batteries for

● Contd page 2



BEVERLEY Park pupil Brook Johansen meets Isey, the baby rock wallaby Photo by Jeff De Pasquale

Devoted
his life
to town

Ingleburn

Sun Herald 3rd July 1994

Scheme to save koalas

By **HEATH GILMORE,**
Environment Reporter

THE Federal Government is mounting a plan to save the koala.

According to the Australian Koala Foundation, the national koala population has declined from several million in the 1920s to between 40,000 and 80,000, and some conservationists have warned it could face extinction.

Other animals under pressure include the Bilby, Gouldian Finch, Adelaide Blue Tongue Lizard, Leadbeaters Possum, Long Footed Potoroo, Trout Cod and Orange Bellied Parrot.

There are 178 species of plants, 57 species of birds, mammals, reptiles, frogs and fishes classified as endangered.

The Australian Nature Conservation Agency claims another 100 species of plants and 30 species of birds and mammals are presumed to have become extinct since 1788.

The Government is now set to take action, with environment minister John Faulkner announcing plans to relaunch the stalled National Biodiversity Strategy.

Senator Faulkner will appoint a committee to implement new national guidelines, and his staff are investigating the possible use of legislative enforcement.

The Biodiversity strategy, developed at the end of 1992 to deal with the

problem, has stalled with a joint committee of Federal and State environment ministers. The NSW, Western Australian and Victorian governments are yet to support the plan.

A spokesman for NSW Environment Minister Chris Hartcher said: "We have no problem with the principle of the agreement just a concern that it may overlap a number of other Commonwealth strategies.

"We still need to be reassured it would be effective."

But Mr Faulkner said last week that a national council comprising Federal and State government representatives, scientists, conservationists and industry would implement the strategy.

"There is an enormous diversity of plant and animal species in Australia, many of which are found nowhere else in the world," he said.

"We are the only developed country which is classified as megadiverse. Our special circumstance demand that we are one of the world's leading nations in implementing the United Nations' Convention on Biological Diversity; just as we played a leading role in its development.

"The Government has worked hard to develop a National Biodiversity Strategy. We need to develop a program to ensure its effective implementation."

on level four. ... in the stationery storeroom

Mapping out koalas' future

by JESS TAYLOR

THE Campbelltown koala map will not be quite what it sounds.

Rather than helping lost koalas find their way home, the koala map will be used more to help humans stay out of the way.

Manager of the Koala Foundation's environment division Stephen Phillips has been working on the map for the past few months.

He expects to hand down his final report to the Campbelltown Council by the end of June.

"That will include a report by us explaining the whole system of koala mapping and providing guidelines for the management of koalas and their areas," Mr Phillips said.

"Campbelltown is one of the key places in NSW for koalas; it's in the top 10 on our list."

Mr Phillips said the research took a particular area and captured data on all the environmental aspects of the place and those attributes were fed into a computer.

The computer then selected sites accounting for every possible geological variation in an area and these sites were examined for evidence of koalas.

"By sampling these areas with different geological aspects we are able to pick up a great amount of information on koala habitats," Mr Phillips said.

"In other words it tells us what sorts of vegetation, geological areas and other aspects contribute to koalas choosing their habitats.

"It also helps us tell how many koalas can be found in an area and, based on other areas having the same geological make-up, we can tell what other places are likely to have koalas."

Campbelltown Council has contributed \$25,000 to the research, which is expected to cover 20,000 hectares in the area.



Finding the koalas . . . Steve Phillips from the Australian Koala Foundation is mapping Campbelltown's colony PHOTO: John Appleyard

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Habitats disappear

THE life-story of our endangered koalas makes heart-wrenching reading. Yesterday we began the saga of one young female koala, Pebbles. The tiny koala was orphaned when her mother was hit by a car on a busy road. Weighing just 400g, she was found crying in the gutter a few metres from her dead mother's body.



DAY TWO: Two boys walking along the road hear Pebbles' pathetic whimpers. They pick her up and cuddle her. She is bleeding so they rush her to the State's only Koala Hospital, at Port Macquarie, where she is found to be suffering severe head injuries and shock. After 18 months of veterinary attention, hand feeding and tender loving care from Koala Hospital volunteers, Pebbles regains her health. "She was in a terrible way when we first got her," former president of the Koala Preservation Society, Cath Le Page, said. "It took a lot of hard work to get her well." Pebbles is now almost strong enough to go home to the eucalypts.

Tomorrow: Pebbles' final home



Molly, who was found in a Campbelltown backyard, bears up well after being nursed back to health

AT just 18 months old, Molly represents a new generation of urban koala - in touch with the world thanks to high technology. Molly, from a koala colony at Wedderburn, near Campbelltown, is part of a study being conducted by the University of Western Sydney. Fitted with ear tags and a radio collar, scientists monitor her every move. She can be tracked via radio signals emitted from her collar, allowing scientists to take notes of her favourite trees, her diet, health and socialising behaviour. They believe that if the colony at Wedderburn - Sydney's last viable colony - continues to thrive it could act as a base for recolonising other suitable parts of Sydney, providing proposed development of the area does not proceed. Molly is one of the first of this new generation of koalas who are

High-tech Molly keeps scientists in touch

being found in urban backyards. Just 20 years ago koalas lived throughout Sydney on the northern beaches, the Blue Mountains and Ku-ring-gal - but all have suffered local extinction. Already a young female from Wedderburn has been found 25km from where she was born at Heathcote. And Molly was found wandering in a Campbelltown backyard. Head of the university study, Dr Robert Close, said about four young koalas at Wedderburn were living on the urban fringe. "Molly" was dehydrated but we

don't know if she wasn't getting enough moisture from the trees or if she had just been weaned and was having difficulties for that reason," he said. She was brought back to health by WITRES volunteer Gaylene Parker, who nursed her for nine days. "When I got her she was very debilitated, very thin and very sad. "But I was surprised she perked up so quickly." Molly has been released into a part of the Wedderburn area specially selected by scientists to ensure she is not encroaching on another koala's territory.



SPECIAL REPORT by CHRISTINE SPITERI

THERE is no need for a koala hospital in Sydney. There are no koalas.

Where once koala populations thrived - mostly along the east coast of Australia - rampant urbanisation has destroyed almost all of the koala habitat.

Koala Conservation Council president, Dr Frank Carrick, said all areas where koalas now live would once have been only marginal habitat.

In metropolitan Sydney, koala numbers have plummeted. It took less than two decades for a koala colony on the Barenjoey Peninsula to drop from 120 to six.

And koalas - spotted in Ku-ring-gal in the early 1980s - have since disappeared.

"Sadly, I think Sydney has blown it," Dr Carrick said.

"Between Sydney and the NSW-Victorian border the koala is almost extinct.

"And a few places where relict populations are known to occur are being clear felled for export of wood chips under the control of the Forestry Commission of NSW."

Dr Carrick said the koala's plight had been known for some time and should have been acted on earlier.

Nationally, the koala population has dropped from several million in the 1920s to between 40,000 and 60,000 today. Their natural habitats are being destroyed as developers move in and erect new housing estates, shopping centres, and roads forcing the koala to negotiate major highways in search of a new home.

Dr Carrick said a NSW Koala Summit was held in 1988 to investigate the problem and recommended a moratorium on further overseas exports.

"Some five-and-a-half-years later this still has not happened," he said.

"The rhetoric of the State Government and local councils expressing commitment to conservation of the species is simply not carried through into actual enforcement of controls on inappropriate development."

At the State's only koala hospital in Port Macquarie, in northern NSW, cheery volunteers



nurse koala road victims back to health.

Volunteers feed orphaned baby koalas special formulas, mash gum leaves for the broken jaw patients and furnish the nine koala yards with fresh gum leaves.

Outside the hospital's front door is one of the 21 "hit spots" in the Port Macquarie area.

Hit spots are a stretch of road near bushland where travelling koalas are known to cross.

Koala Preservation Society president Jill Reid pleads with drivers to slow down and look when they see a koala crossing sign.

Rio Rita was hit by a car in April 1980 and as a result her left arm was amputated after the fracture turned gangrenous.

She is now a permanent patient at the hospital which survives thanks to the unpaid work of 130 people.

Then there is O2 (the chemical symbol for oxygen), orphaned when his mother was

squashed flat by a logging truck in the forest. "Koalas are very territorial," Ms Reid said.

"They have been known to cling to wooden doorways of new apartment buildings in the place where their home used to be."

The hospital desperately needs donations to help pay annual running costs of between \$58,000 and \$60,000.

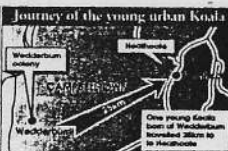
Hidden colony faces building threat

A THRIVING koala colony at Wedderburn in Sydney's south-west may hold the key to the re-emergence of koalas in suburban backyards.

Experts are monitoring the movement of young koalas travelling from Wedderburn to other parts of Sydney, as part of a study at the University of Western Sydney in Macarthur.

A young female from the colony has been seen at Heathcote, 25km from where she was born. Four others are living on the urban fringe - one of which was found in a backyard in Campbelltown.

But scientists believe proposed development in the area could kill off their habitat within 10



years, leading to extinction of the colony.

Opposition leader Bob Carr has written to Premier John Fahey urging him to either buy the land or offer the bank a land swap.

Mr Carr said: "I have gained the support of OJB Australia who have indicated their willingness to negotiate a solution with the Government."

University of Western Sydney koala expert Dr Robert Close, who is

monitoring the koalas with masters student Wayne Foster, said a strong breeding colony such as Wedderburn, combined with a network of bush corridors allowing koalas to travel safely, could see populations increase throughout Sydney.

"Prior to 1986 people didn't even know koalas existed in Campbelltown and now they're finding them in their backyards," he said.

With the colony population at about 60 and growing, young Wedderburn koalas are moving further afield to find new places to live.

"Over a number of generations Wedderburn could re-colonise many parts of Sydney, but it can only happen with education," he said.

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Tomorrow: how you can save the koalas



Molly, who was found in a Campbelltown backyard, bears up well after being nursed back to health

AT just 18 months old, Molly represents a new generation of urban koala – in touch with the world thanks to high technology.

Molly, from a koala colony at Wedderburn, near Campbelltown, is part of a study being conducted by the University of Western Sydney.

Fitted with ear tags and a radio collar, scientists monitor her every move.

She can be tracked via radio signals emitted from her collar, allowing scientists to take notes of her favourite trees, her diet, health and socialising behaviour.

They believe that if the colony at Wedderburn – Sydney's last viable colony – continues to thrive it could act as a base for recolonising other suitable parts of Sydney, providing proposed development of the area does not proceed.

Molly is one of the first of this new generation of koalas who are

High-tech Molly keeps scientists in touch

being found in urban backyards.

Just 20 years ago koalas lived throughout Sydney on the northern beaches, the Blue Mountains and Ku-ring-gai – but all have suffered local extinction.

Already a young female from Wedderburn has been found 25km from where she was born at Heathcote. And Molly was found wandering in a Campbelltown backyard.

Head of the university study, Dr Robert Close, said about four young koalas at Wedderburn were living on the urban fringe.

“(Molly) was dehydrated but we

don't know if she wasn't getting enough moisture from the trees or if she had just been weaned and was having difficulties for that reason,” he said.

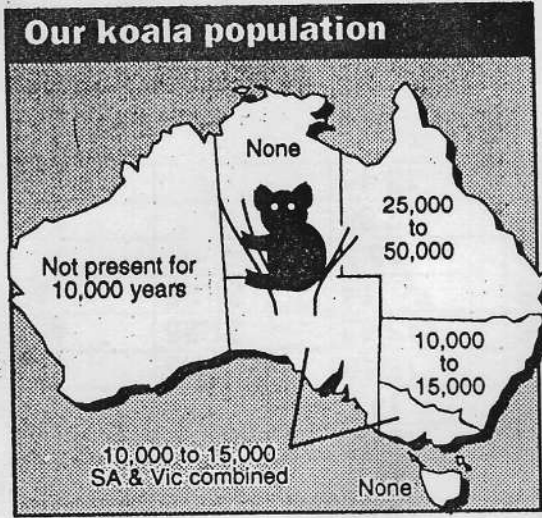
She was brought back to health by WIRES volunteer Gaylene Parker, who nursed her for nine days.

“When I got her she was very debilitated, very thin and very sad. “But I was surprised she perked up so quickly.”

Molly has been released into a part of the Wedderburn area specially selected by scientists to ensure she is not encroaching on another koala's territory.

Telegraph Mirror 13th May, 1994

Koala numbers at 'chronic level'



KOALAS are rapidly losing their battle with developers, cars and feral predators, and their numbers are slipping to chronic levels, the Australian Koala Foundation warned yesterday.

As few as 45,000 koalas may be left in Australian bushland, according to the latest estimates, with only 10,000 to 15,000 in NSW.

Scientists and environmentalists fear many of the remaining colonies are on the brink of localised extinction, masked only by the animal's long life span. "No one wants to think of Australia without koalas, but every year at least 4000 are killed by cars and dogs, not to mention those who lose their homes when trees are felled," Australian Koala Foundation executive director Deborah Tabart said yesterday.

"Everyday Australians need to understand how seriously their national symbol has come under threat, acknowledge the

By ROD ALLEN

causes and start to make changes."

The foundation, which was formed by scientists and businesses 10 years ago, yesterday launched a national awareness campaign on the need to preserve gum trees.

Ms Tabart said Australians needed to appreciate the value of gum trees.

"If you live in an area and notice that a development is proposed, someone has got to say those are koala trees and you can't knock them down," she said.

"It is up to the people in the community to act now to save the koala."

She said there were about 400,000 koalas in the wild in 1988. About three million were shot for their furs in the 1920s.

The foundation manages the Australian Koala Fund and is promoting Save The Koala Day on Friday, July 29.

Scientist Steve Phillips, who has studied koalas for 20 years, said they were fragile, territorial creatures and females only produced one cub every two years on average.

He said it only took the removal of several key trees and the colony's entire reproductive pattern could be broken.

"Koalas are very territorial and will not leave an area if the trees are destroyed," he said.

"They will hang around and starve or get eaten by dogs."

Mr Phillips is currently surveying the only significant koala colony left in Sydney - at Wedderburn, near Campbelltown - which is under threat from development.

He said the numbers were dropping every year - and the same was happening in a colony at Avalon, which once contained hundreds.

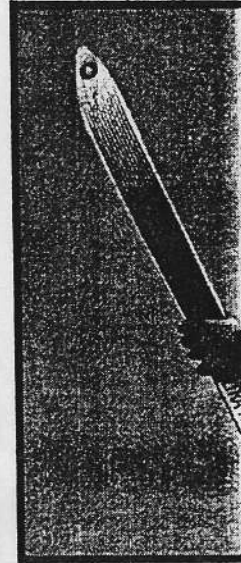
"The numbers are down to chronic levels, there is not much time left," he said.

He predicted koalas, which live for about 15 years, could be extinct from the wild within three generations.



Kathy Thomson and daughter Ellise admire a koala at Koala Park, Pennant Hills

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SYDNEY'S DECLINING KOALA POPULATION



Only 100 Sydney koalas left – and they may not last long

The dwindling koala populations around Sydney may be wiped out by the end of the decade, wildlife experts warned yesterday.

The Australian Koala Foundation believes fewer than 100 koalas survive free in the Sydney region. Scientists at the CSIRO and the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service support the foundation's concern.

The foundation's environment manager, Mr Steve Phillips, said yesterday research showed the national koala population had declined from several million in the 1920s to between 40,000 and 80,000 today.

The Sydney koala populations had been particularly badly hit by human encroachment, and the remaining population was vulnerable to fires as well as disease, cars and dogs, Mr Phillips said.

"In 1942 scientists predicted the then

124 koalas in Avalon would be extinct in 50 years because of the encroaching human population," he said.

"The current number is around five or six. I think that story shows what is happening all over Australia."

Dr Steven Cork, from the CSIRO's division of wildlife and ecology, said the biggest threat to the few remaining koalas around Sydney was loss of habitat.

"Unfortunately, koalas and humans vie for the same territory – areas by the coast or in river valleys," he said.

The koala foundation called for stringent assessments of development plans and proposed tree felling in areas where koalas were reported. It also emphasised the importance of land corridors between areas able to support koala populations.

□ MARC LLEWELLYN

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851408	GO	H	8.52	11.8	18.00	31.1
832054	GIL	M	10	13.2	18.0	45
855593	KURDI	P	11.2	18.3	18.00	20.10
850288	KOJONHOB	O	11.2	14.3	51.0	13.1
855504	HNDSON	E	13.2	14.8	33	20.1
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851503	HVINIO	H	15.52	18	51.30	20
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851183	CVNRETT	V	11	14.8	11	10.10
880108	VRJCV	M	15.52	18.00	51.00	40.20
855104	VRJCV	L	10.2	14.5	50.52	41.00
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Where are the koalas?

Oct 14
McA

IN reply to Verlie Fowler's letter on "picturesque bushland setting" at Wedderburn (October 7), we feel that perhaps she is referring to our property on Wedderburn Road as the one being bulldozed.

Yes, we have bulldozed shrubs and trees devastated by fire in recent times; however, what was not mentioned was the fact we have gone to great personal expense to employ a landscape architect who was project designer for Mount Annan Botanic Garden.

Plans have been submitted to council which feature a predominantly Australian nature garden without the shrubbery and dense undergrowth which is a dangerous fire hazard, and the plan also includes a fire trail.

As far as the koala population of Wedderburn is concerned, one only has to speak with any long-term resident of the area to discover that not one of them has ever seen a koala in the area in over 100 years of settlement.

Yet now the area supposedly abounds with koalas which have appeared from nowhere.

It appears that according to some people you cannot alter the "picturesque bushland setting" and also enhance it to protect human lives because they don't agree with it and are more concerned with the welfare of animals.

B & S SCATTERGOOD,
St Helens Park.

Carr's plea for koala

● From page 1
koala colony and the sensitive and pristine O'Hares Creek catchment at the headwaters of the Georges River".

"It is my belief the failure to include this land within the proposed park would sabotage effective conservation of the whole area, placing at risk the koala colonies and other flora and fauna," Mr Carr said

Mr McIntyre told the Advertiser he welcomed Mr Carr's proposal, but said he would prefer the Government to purchase the land at an agreed price.

"If this is not possible, we will support a land swap arrangement for crown land elsewhere of comparable value," he said.

"This is a sensible approach for all parties involved."

"It would avoid the conflict that would arise if we pursued our legal rights."

Mr Primrose, who raised concerns about protecting the O'Hares Creek catchment when he was the mayor of Campbelltown, said protection of the land as national park was a key part of Labor's environment policy.

The Australian Heritage Commission registered the catchment area in 1992. It listed about 20 rare and endangered mammals including the platypus, eastern pygmy possum, spotted quoll and the leathertail glider.

Cr Dobson, who has actively campaigned against development on the OUB land, has also welcome Mr Carr's offer to swap the land.

"It's been a long time," she said. "I just hope Mr Carr's proposal will lead to a way of saving these valuable flora and fauna," she said.

"This fight is not just for Campbelltown but for the river, for Australia and for the planet."

THE MACARTHUR
Advertiser
A FAIRFAX COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER
Campbelltown Office:

Carr vows to swap land to save koala

BY CARLOTTA MCINTOSH

A LABOR Government will swap government land to stop housing development threatening a koala colony at Wedderburn, Bob Carr said this week. Mr Carr has asked Premier John Fahey to join him in a bi-partisan approach to solve the six-year deadlock between the

Singapore-based Overseas Union Bank (OUB) Australia and NSW labor unions. The longest-running union green bans in Australia were first imposed by the South Coast Labor Council and building unions in 1988. Two weeks ago,

the NSW Labor Council threw its weight behind the bans. Mr Carr took time out from the Paramatta by-election campaign on Monday to make a quick trip to Wedderburn. He was joined by Camden ALP candidate Peter Primrose

who flew in from Tasmania; union leaders Graham Childs (CFMEU) and Paul Matters from the South Coast Labor Council and Campbelltown Councillor Sue Dobson. OUB Australia owns the land as mortgagee in possession of 22

five-acre lots at Victoria Road, Wedderburn. Mr Carr told OUB managing director Geoff McIntyre a Labor Government would create a new national park "to protect the

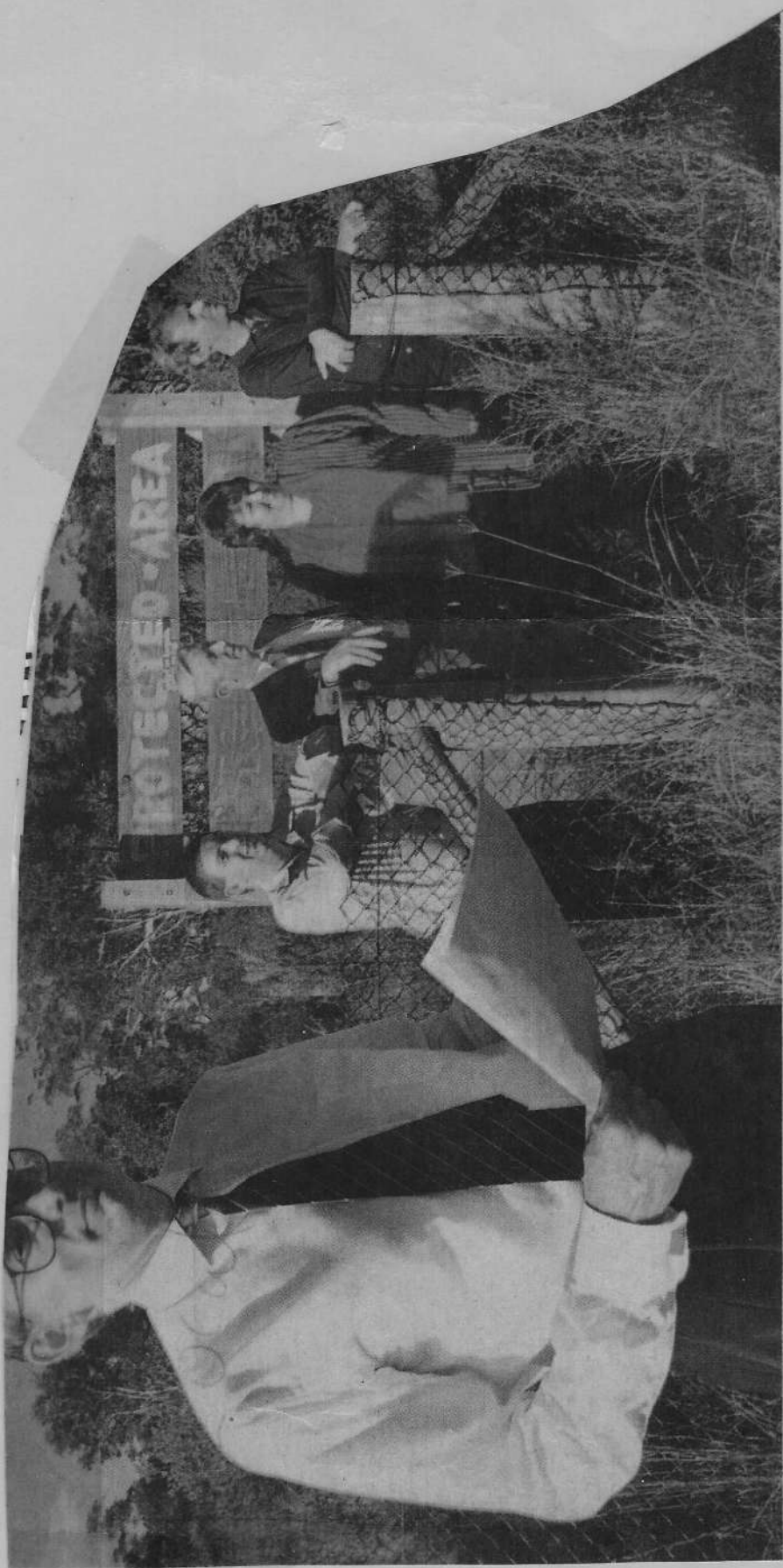
'Animals threatened by housing'

McA 4/5/94

● Continued page 2

ALL WATCH SERVICES

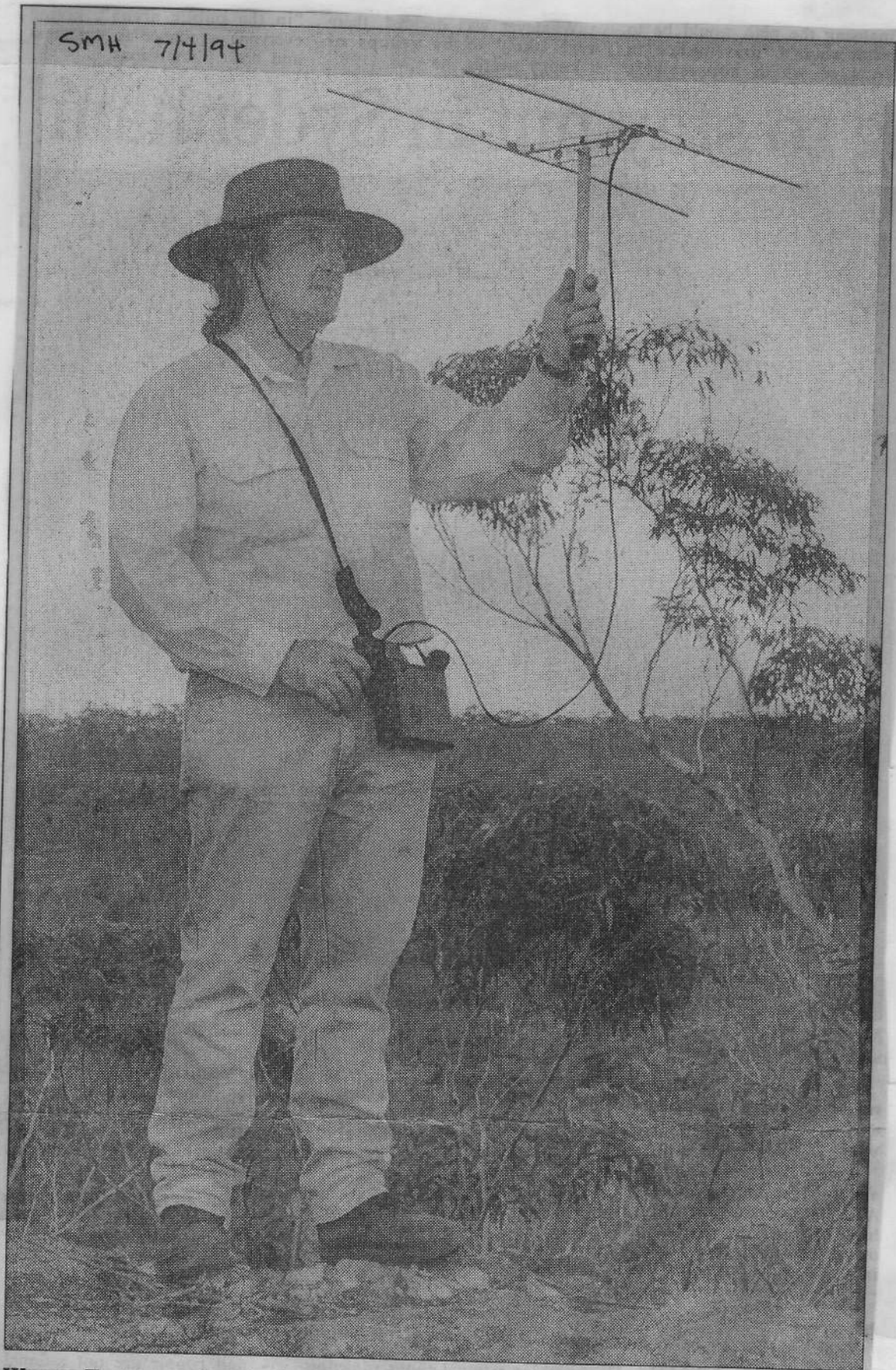
- Batteries fitted \$6
- Watch and clock repairs
- Watchmaker on premises
- 1000 watches from \$25



BOB Carr at Wedderburn on Monday with a copy of the letter he sent to Premier John Fahey. In the background are Peter Primrose, Graham Childs, Su Dobson and Paul Matters.
Photo: ROBERT POZZO

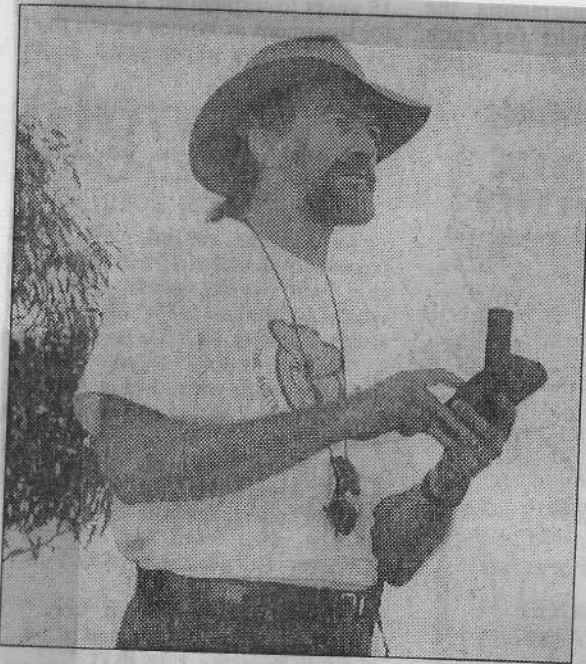
Macarthur Advertiser 4th May, 1994

The Sydney Morning Herald 7th April, 1994



Wayne Foster, a chemical ecologist, uses a tracking device to pick up signals from radio collars on koalas in the bush near Campbelltown.

Pictures by TROY HOWE



Steve Phillips uses his global positioning system to track suspected koala habitats.

Satellites help preserve space for koala families

By KATE SOUTHAM
Environment Writer

Steve Phillips taps a set of numbers into his "satellite-driven" compass and sets off through the bush near Campbelltown in search of a koala habitat.

The hand-held device, which looks like a jungle-green calculator, is called a global positioning system and enables Mr Phillips to "speak" to satellites.

It picks up signals from radio-equipped collars fitted to koalas, helping to keep track of a list of suspected koala sites in bush between Wedderburn and Lake Woronora, on the eastern boundary of Campbelltown.

Mr Phillips, the environment manager of the Australian Koala Foundation, is working on an ambitious project to map "hot spots" on the east coast of NSW where urban development is threatening the survival of koalas.

He said only 10,000 to 15,000 koalas were left in NSW and the list of hot spots included Tweed Heads, Lismore, Port Macquarie, Port Stephens and Campbelltown.

Work on mapping Tweed Heads is well under way and Campbelltown Council has provided \$25,000 to map its area,



which may contain 20,000 hectares of koala habitat.

Mr Phillips said the *Koala Habitat Atlas* would use a combination of satellite images, aerial photographs and field work. It would eventually enable planning authorities to examine in detail an area just 20 metres square through a computer database.

The information includes the type of soil, geology, terrain and vegetation of a given area and how the factors combine to produce koala habitat. It also shows roads, zoning and land tenure.

"Until we get a handle on what needs to be done to manage koalas effectively, these areas

should be regarded as sacrosanct, but that is not what has been happening," Mr Phillips said.

He suspected that whole koala populations were wiped out by the January fires. Urban development was isolating surviving koala populations, making them more vulnerable to natural disasters such as fires as well as disease, cars and dogs, he said.

Mr Phillips will spend this week working in the Campbelltown bush with a chemical ecologist from the University of Western Sydney, Mr Wayne Foster, who has caught four koalas in the Wedderburn area during the past few years and tracked them through radio collars.

The environmental planning manager of Campbelltown Council, Mr Keith Richardson, said the mapping system would be used to ensure that development in the area did not have an adverse impact on koalas.

Mr Phillips said the atlas would be finished within three years and would be available to the public and to State Government bodies, including the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Roads and Traffic Authority.

UNIONS IN WORK BAN

Land plan a koala threat

by LYNDA FALLON

NSW unions reaffirmed their green bans on the beleaguered Wedderburn Grange subdivision on Thursday.

But unless a land swap can be arranged with the State or Federal Government the development will go ahead anyway.

The NSW Labor Council re-endorsed the bans at a meeting last week because it believes the development threatens Wedderburn's koala colony.

Merchant bank Overseas Union Bank (OUB) Australia plans to sell off 22 lots of 2 to 2.4ha to recoup debts from the land's Indonesian owners Yap Yan Pin.

Labor Council research officer Tom Forrest said the area at Wedderburn, on Victoria Rd, was "particularly environmentally precious land".

"We are not trying to stifle development but we are particularly concerned at activities to subdivide the area," Mr Forrest said.

"There has been a green ban on the area for quite some time and we have no intention of lifting it.

"We will be pushing the State Government for a land swap so the developer can still get their money and no-one gets ripped off."

Mr Forrest said no union builder would work on the land and anyone who tried to develop the area would have to battle union and conservation group picket lines.

Ap. 26 1994 Chronicle
"I'd be staggered if the company even considered developing the land," he said.

OUB Australia managing director Geoffrey McIntyre said his company was the meat in the sandwich of the development.

"As mortgagee-in-possession we are legally obligated to get the market value of the security," Mr McIntyre said.

"This problem could be solved tomorrow if Campbelltown Council, the State Government and the Trade Union paid us the \$3.5 million market value of the land.

"We would be quite amenable to a land swap. We'd be happy to see it [this land] taken off our hands."

The State Government has previously refused to acquire the land and turn it into open space.

Mr McIntyre said Campbelltown Council had approved a subdivision on the land before Yap Yan Pin bought the area as an investment.

He said the Land and Environment Court reapproved the development because the land had been bought in good faith.

Compromises have been made with the court and Campbelltown Council to reduce the number of lots in the area from 40 to 22 and add a buffer zone.

Other conditions include any developer working with the National Parks and Wildlife Service to protect flora and fauna.

"We met with concerned groups in October and they asked us to postpone doing anything with the land while they tried to arrange a land swap," Mr McIntyre said.

"We recognise their position but we want them to understand our position too."

Mr McIntyre said he had buyers for the area and the law was on the side of anyone who complied with the Land and Environment Court's approval conditions.

MEMO REPORTS

There are cracks in the wall

Last koala refuge here



DR Robert Close tags a koala at Wedderburn

MAJOR destruction of the Royal National Park by bushfires may mean Campbelltown is the last koala refuge near Sydney, a Campbelltown councillor has warned.

Councillor Sue Dobson said the bushfires could happen anywhere and koalas would be unlikely to survive.

Koalas are an endangered species and in recent years a number of them have been caught and tagged for tracking purposes in a bid to find out more about them.

Studies by UWS koala expert Dr Robert Close indicate koalas are breeding along the Georges River. One Kentlyn doe, tagged by Dr Close 18 months ago, was discovered recently on the edge of the Royal National Park.

"It is extremely unlikely she survived the heat and smoke of the bushfire," Cr Dobson said.

"If that is the case it is all the more important to keep the bushland we have so that our koalas can survive."

CARLOTTA McINTOSH

MacAd 19/1/94

Kentlyn koala's odyssey

MAC AD 15/12/93

By CARLOTTA
McINTOSH

A KENTLYN koala travelled 25km before she was spotted in Heathcote National Park this month, according to UWS koala expert Dr Robert Close. Dubbed Wilhemina by the Laird family of Kentlyn where she was first sighted 18 months ago the three-year-old female is reported to be alive and well.

News of the wandering koala came after a bush-walker saw her in the park and reported the sighting to National Parks and Wildlife.

Her wanderings have flabbergasted Dr Close who refused to speculate on the reason for the journey but said it showed the importance of maintaining corridors for migratory animals.

"She may have been looking for a koala colony she could fit in with. We simply don't know what prompts them to travel or to stop in one site," Dr Close said.

Koalas are known to travel long distances but they also stop in the same site for several years.

"She must have crossed two rivers and travelled about 25km. I'm delighted she made it to the national park," he said.

"It shows Campbelltown koalas are travelling large distances and are clearly capable of colonising new areas.

"There have been very few koalas sighted in Heathcote. This is especially exciting because she may even be pregnant and about to start a new colony."

Wilhemina was first noticed in April 1992 near the property of long-term Kentlyn resident Reg Laird.

"I've lived here since 1958 but it was the first time I had ever seen a koala," Mr Laird told the *Advertiser*.

Reg's son Bruce took the picture of Wilhemina with a telephoto lens as she hung from the forked branch of a gum tree halfway between Georges River Road and the Georges River.

Shortly after Dr Close caught and tagged her for tracking purposes. She disappeared until she was found in Heathcote National Park about 1km from the edge of Royal National Park.



WILHEMINA in Kentlyn,
April 1992

Managing the koala

SIR: It is 10 years since Roger Martin and I demonstrated to a symposium of the Academy of Science that many koala populations have exceeded, or are close to exceeding, the food resources of the limited areas in which they now live. Ironically, this situation has arisen because Europeans significantly reduced the traditional predators of the koala — Aborigines and dingoes.

Now, without significant enemies, koala numbers tend to increase until limited by stress, starvation and disease. Again ironically, such crises can almost be predicted where koalas are most protected — where sick, injured or dispersing animals are cared for and returned to the local forest. Currently, the healthiest koala populations — in terms of age structure and freedom from disease — appear to be those that are periodically culled by drought, fire or cyclone.

Despite cries of horror from the Total Environment Centre and the Australian Koala Foundation, Martin and I presented a decade ago and which I believe to be accepted by most mammalogists. Quite simply, where koala numbers exceed the carrying capacity of a locality, these should be reduced.

This is not an argument against planting more eucalypts. Let's have billions more! When these have grown, the problem will remain: in the absence of predators, some koala populations must be managed.

Ronald Strahan,
Consultant Zoologist,
Neutral Bay.

Koala colony found in Kentlyn region

By CARLOTTA McINTOSH

MOTORISTS are being warned to watch out for koalas crossing Georges River Road following the discovery of a tiny colony breeding in the Kentlyn region.

A young female koala was photographed by *Advertiser* photographer Jeff De Pasquale as she sat sleepily in the upper branches of a tall grey gum tree, within metres of passing traffic last week.

The 18 month old doe was first seen in September by an early morning jogger who was "stopped in his tracks" by the astonishing sight of the young koala crossing the road.

Where she was going or why, are the kind of questions occupying University of Western Sydney koala researcher, Doctor Robert Close, since he began collecting data on the habits of the furry marsupials two years ago.

The reason for the sudden appearance of koalas so close to the road is a mystery.

"This is the peak of the mating season, so the female koala could be moving around for those reasons or looking for new territory. We simply don't know," Dr Close said.

News of the colony has come like "a bolt out of the blue" to one local resident of more than 30 years who said he has never seen a koala in the region.

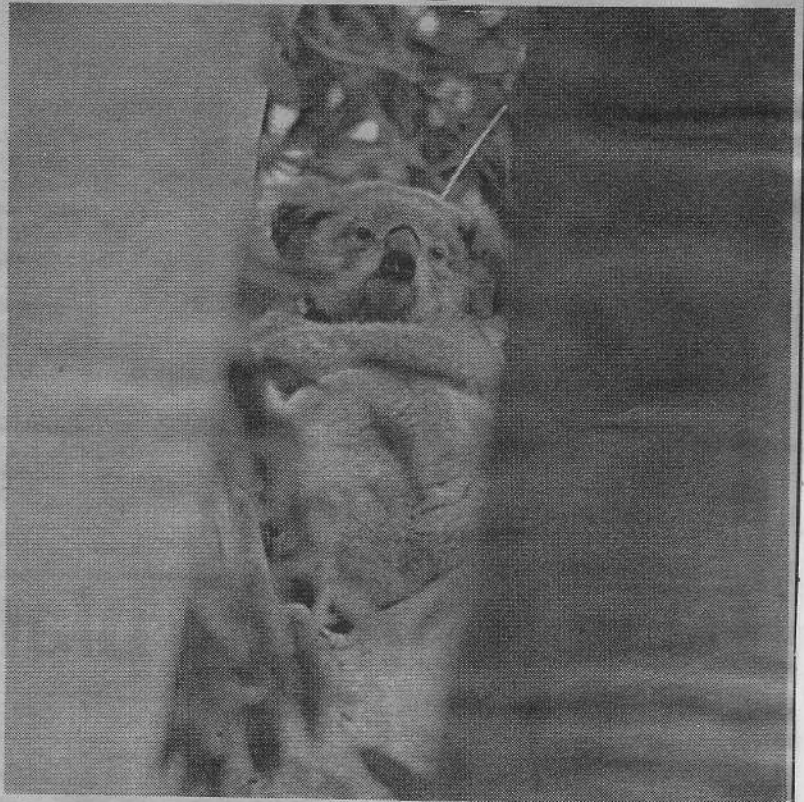
Known only as Radio Frequency 600, she is the fourth young koala spotted in bushland along the busy road this spring.

This confirms Dr Close's knowledge of the existence of a small colony in the region after characteristic olive shaped droppings and fresh scratch marks on tree trunks were reported over the past 12 months.

"It's gratifying to find four offspring this year living and breeding well so close to urban regions," Dr Close said.

RF600 is almost invisible from the ground. Her grey fur is the same smoky tone of the forked trunk of the eucalyptus punctata she was lodged in when we paid her a visit.

Dr Close believes she would have stopped travelling on her mother's back about one month ago.



RF600 took a break from lunch to pose for *Advertiser* photographer Jeff De Pasquale

Koalas are indifferent to man-made obstacles such as roads and speeding cars. When she feels like some exercise, the young lady is the habit of visiting another tree close to a nearby house.

"These are the hazards of being a semi-urban koala," Dr Close said as he unloaded his battery driven tracking equipment. When he pointed the equipment in her direction, it gave off a steady beep.

So far, RF600 has covered about 1.5ha since Dr Close attached a radio collar for tracking purposes one month ago.

"Each time we have seen her, she has been in a different tree, either a grey gum, a stringy bark or a blackbutt," he said.

The young doe is thought to be part of a thinly stretched koala population extending from Kentlyn to Wedderburn.

Koalas were hunted for their fur in Campbelltown at the turn of the century and white people only

found out they were still inhabiting the region in 1986.

Dr Close's work is the first scientific research to be carried out in the Campbelltown region.

Virtually nothing is known about koala numbers in Army or Water Board land, but they have been seen crossing Heathcote Road near Lucas Heights.

"We suspect there are many more of them across the river," he said.

The annual mating season is in full swing, so pig like sounds around dusk could well come from a buck calling to one of his does.

Only one koala is born to a female each year. The birthing takes place in the safety of the treetops and the babies spend six months in their mother's pouch.

They spend another six months travelling on her back, so this is the young doe's first mating season.

Koala sightings can be reported to Dr Close at UWS on (046) 203203 or after hours on (046) 268679.

Keep an eye out for koalas this Sunday

By CARLOTTA McINTOSH

VOLUNTEER koala spotters will take to the bush around Campbelltown on Sunday in a bid to determine population numbers.

Koala expert Dr Robert Close from UWS Macarthur will be part of a catching team which will fit them with radio tracking collars.

People who live on the Georges River but cannot take part in the organised survey on Sunday are welcome to look for telltale signs of koalas, like olive-sized droppings and scratch marks on tree trunks.

Anyone who finds the droppings should send them to Dr R. Close, UWS Macarthur, PO Box 555, Campbelltown.

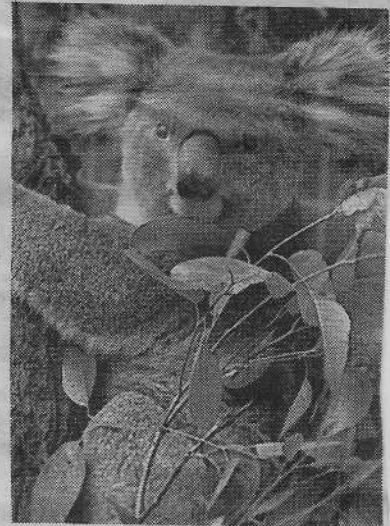
Volunteer spotters are to meet at Campbelltown Civic Centre in Queen Street at 8am on Sunday.

They will survey five areas in O'Hares Creek and Kentlyn.

Spokesman for National Parks and Wildlife Stephen Smith said information about koala movements could protect their habitats, which could be threatened by future residential developments.



DR Robert Close



KOALAS ... development threatens their survival

"This information will help provide a picture of which areas the koalas need for survival," Mr Smith said.

"We need to ensure that development in the Campbelltown area pro-

ceeds with minimal impact on the koala population."

Volunteers should have their own transport and lunch.

For information call (02) 542 0666 or (02) 542 0648.

Chron
Nov 3 1993
Briefs

Counting koalas

VOLUNTEERS are needed for a koala headcount in Campbelltown on Sunday.

National Parks and Wildlife spokesman Stephen Smith said people would count the koalas and also fit radio tracking devices to the animals.

No skills are needed but volunteers should bring their own transport and lunch.

The survey will take place from 8am to 12.30pm. For information contact Mr Smith on (02) 542 0666.

Chron 19/10/93
Koalas in the garden

BABY koalas looking for a new home could wander into residential gardens in Campbelltown during the next few weeks.

University of Western Sydney, Macarthur koala researcher Robert Close said two young koalas had already appeared in gardens and more could follow.

Mr Close has been researching the koala colony on the outskirts of Campbelltown near the Georges River.

"It's at this time of year the young ones are left by their mothers to fend for themselves," he said.

"They don't really have anywhere to go except up and down the Georges River or into residential areas."

Mr Close said anyone who found a koala in their yard should phone himself or his assistant Wayne Foster.

They can be contacted at the university on (046) 20 3203. Mr Close's home number is (046) 26 8679 and Mr Foster's after hours number is (046) 30 9285.

GREAT gift boosts Wedderburn

SCIENTIFIC research into the Wedderburn koala colony received a welcome boost last week, with the donation of \$1000 from a resident-based environment group.

The Georges River Environment Action Team (GREAT) handed a cheque to Dr Robert Close of the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur, to assist his research on the movement, reproduction rates and health of the colony.

Macarthur branch of the National Parks Association has previously donated \$3500 to the research project.

In past months, small radio transmitter collars have been fitted on to selected koalas, enabling Dr Close to accurately track their habits.

This research is now concerned with other endangered species in the area as well.

GREAT spokeswoman Kath Robinson said much of Dr Close's work was shared with Dr Gary Reddacliff, of the Elizabeth Macarthur Institute, who is examining some of this material for evidence of chlamydia in the local colonies

"Chlamydia has already had a devastating effect on the koala populations in other areas of NSW," Ms Robinson said.

Macarthur Advertiser 19th May 1993

koala research



DR Robert Close high in the treetops at Wedderburn, catching one of the koalas to check for signs of disease



O'Hares Creek, George, near Wedderburn, is an important koala habitat threatened by expanding urbanisation.

mark animals with coloured, distinguishing ear-tags. Each animal is then weighed and examined by Dr Gary Reddick, a vet from Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute. Although no animals have shown clinical signs of chlamydia tests show that it is present in the colony. After examination, the animals are then released back at the point of capture. One tagged animal, captured only four kilometres from Campbelltown Station, has been seen three times since. It has moved five kilometres down the Georges River, and was last seen at the start of the closest remaining bush corridor to the Nepean River.

Unfortunately capturing the koalas is not easy. Not only are they scarce, but when they are found they are usually 30 metres high or precariously hanging over a cliff. We have been able to capture only seven animals to date. Radio-collars are now placed on captured animals. This allows animals to be followed to determine home-ranges with accuracy and to keep track of their breeding success. It also helps verify population estimates and identifies those areas which are important to the koalas. This latter point is important in an area where there is a demand to clear existing bush for dwellings and for agriculture.

Although only two animals have been tracked to date, the findings are

of interest. One animal, a breeding female, remained in habitat which we had classed as prime. The other, a male, has spent several months in an area which is currently controversial. This area will be classified as 7(1) (i.e. can have limited clearing) in a Draft Environment Plan now being debated in Campbelltown Council. Moreover, the koala is not obeying our preconceived rules. It spends most of its time in Stringybark trees (not Grey gums) and has an enormous home-range. Admittedly, the animal is old and may be being excluded from prime habitat. However, it has shown that koalas can survive for long periods in areas not perceived by planners and biologists as suitable koala habitat.

What appears to be happening then, is that the koalas have a number of "core" or breeding areas which we identified with our transects. Adjacent to these areas lies bushland which can support koalas, but is the domain of young or old animals which have been excluded from the core areas. In the case of disaster, such as the "hazard reduction burn" which in May 1991 "crowned" through two of the Wedderburn core areas, these koala reserves would replenish the breeders. During the good years, the reserve animals would move away from Wedderburn, and reinforce other more distant colonies such as those at Wilton. The Campbelltown animals, therefore, have a regional as well as local role.

The Yap Yan Pin development does not include core areas, and the proposed housing area is at present covered with thick heath. This heath, which replaced the original bush removed in an ill-fated cattle-breeding venture, would hinder dispersing animals. Development would probably open up the site to koala movement from the core areas on three sides, but would expose young animals to the perils of dog, car, and swimming pool. The danger of the development is that it is the first major development along the O'Hares Creek scarp. This creek runs through a superb gorge which is pristine. This is a rare and precious quality, particularly so close to Sydney.

Other species

Many other species, less well-known than the koala, are also found in the area but we have even less information about these. The fact that an animal as large, visible and well-recognised as the koala was not officially recorded until 1986 shows that our zoological

"The koala has awakened an awareness of the local bush amongst Campbelltown citizens and has been a powerful educational tool for the larger ecological good. The local colony must be retained not only for that educational value but also as a source of replacement animals for smaller, more vulnerable local colonies."

knowledge of the area is sadly deficient. Except for the excellent bird studies conducted by Allan Leisman (Royal Botanic Gardens), no long-term faunal study has been made in the area.

Apart from the relatively common mammals - wombat, grey kangaroo, swamp wallaby, greater glider, sugar glider, ringtail and brushtail possums, antechinus, several bat species and platypus - we can only guess at the mammal fauna to be found there. However reports persist of tiger-cats, unusual wallabies and even the eastern quoll. The invertebrate fauna and its ecological importance is completely unknown.

A wildlife corridor

What is known is that the Georges River and its surrounds (which includes Wedderburn) is an area of great ecological significance. It separates us from human settlement, the adjacent large region of relatively pristine Sydney sandstone vegetation, which holds an important reservoir of native organisms. These organisms have the potential not only to enrich our lives aesthetically but to contribute to the health of the entire Sydney basin.

The riverside vegetation of the Georges River provides protection, food and moisture for dispersing organisms. From there, they have only to negotiate a four kilometre long bush corridor along a narrow creek-line to connect with the Nepean River system. This then provides access to the south, west and north. The corridor contains a wide variety of plant species but unfortunately it is under severe pressure from recent clearing, weed invasion and cattle grazing.

The koala stands as a visible champion for all these lesser known but equally important organisms. While the public and planners can appreciate the loss of koalas from Barrenjoey and perceive the dangers to the Campbelltown koalas, they find it harder to see the importance of maintaining remaining bushland. Hence at Wedderburn and elsewhere along the Georges River, there is continued pressure to clear, subdivide and burn.

Councils and councils seem unable to prevent piecemeal development that will inevitably lead to a diminished function of the Georges River as a natural habitat and as a corridor between the Nepean and the unspoiled bush to the east. The koala has awakened an awareness of the local bush amongst Campbelltown citizens and has been a powerful educational tool for the larger ecological good. The local colony must be retained not only for that educational value but also as a source of replacement animals for smaller, more vulnerable local colonies.

Required action

If Campbelltown Council is really serious about conserving koalas and the Georges River, it must take the following actions:

- (1) Veto any development which removes native bush or places pressure on the river.
- (2) Be prepared to enforce rules regarding illegal clearing, dog ownership, sewage and nutrient run-off, rubbish dumping, destructive landscaping, weed invasion and off-road vehicles.
- (3) Put in place a fire management program which will maintain natural conditions.
- (4) Organise an educational program to ensure that the above actions are successful since enforcement is unlikely to be effective.

Although a strong Council resolve is necessary, even greater will is required by the residents living in bushland. Their actions must be as follows:

- (1) No dogs, cats or hooved animals.
 - (2) Extensive plantings of local trees.
 - (3) No unofficial tracks made down to the river.
 - (4) Precise attention to efficient sewage treatment.
 - (5) No fertilizers.
 - (6) Face the risk of a severe bushfire every 15-20 years.
- Each one of us has some negative effect on the environment. Those who live in bushland, however, have a significantly greater impact and must

For further information on the campaign to save the Wedderburn koalas, contact the NPA Macarthur Branch, PO Box 792, Campbelltown, 2560.

Wanted: More Membership Muscle for NPA's Park Management Committee.

Our recent call for new members has produced some good responses, but a few more would be just great.

Experience is not essential, but a commitment to National Parks principles is all-important.

If you have this and would like to help keep an eye on our parks and reserves, contact Carol at the NPA Office on (02) 264 7994.

Campbelltown's koalas:

what is their future?

By Robert Close*



It is a paradox that in 1986, a time when Sydney's major urban population of koalas on Barrenjoey Peninsula was approaching extinction, a new colony was discovered at Wedderburn, near Campbelltown on the opposite side of the city. The history of the Barrenjoey population is a sad one, and one which can provide lessons for retaining the Campbelltown animals. This article briefly describes those lessons, summarises the recent history of the koalas and discusses their future. It also links the campaign to save the koala with the need to conserve the Georges River bushland and associated flora and fauna.

Lessons from the demise of the Barrenjoey Peninsula koalas

As long ago as 1953, there was public concern about the effects of extensive housing development on the Barrenjoey animals. Consequently the Fauna Protection Panel surveyed the population in 1955 and concluded that koalas were threatened by clearing, but would probably survive given extensive tree plantings and the creation of new reserves. Despite this strategy the population crashed from 123 in 1970 to eight in 1990 (Smith and Smith, 1990. *Australian Zoologist* 26:109-29).

Reasons given for the Barrenjoey decline include the following:

- Isolation from other colonies (i.e. loss of dispersal corridor to Ku-ring-gai Chase NP).
- Dog kills (24-40% of all mortality).
- Decreasing tree densities due to clearing and dieback (from 46% in 1946 to 8% in 1990).
- Dieback of food trees primarily along drainage lines and therefore associated with nutrient run-off.
- Increase in rainforest vegetation in gullies associated with

decreased frequency of wildfire and increased nutrient run-off.

- Decreased eucalypt regeneration due to decreased wildfire and an associated increase in Black she-oak on the ridges.
- Increased numbers of walls and fences which impede movements of animals.

Perhaps five apply: the lessons learnt from the Barrenjoey crash, then the Campbelltown koalas can be protected. Before discussing the actions required, I shall outline the known history of the Campbelltown koalas. Recent information stems from sightings recorded by the Macarthur branch of the NPA, and from the work sponsored by the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur; NPA Macarthur; and GREAT (Georges River Environmental Action Team); and conducted largely by my research assistants Anthony Scarman and Wayne Foster.

History of the Campbelltown koalas

Although several long-term residents of Wedderburn still deny that koalas lived in the area before 1986 (implying that the present animals were brought in by 'greenies'), koalas were actually

being harvested there before the turn of the century. Local historian and NPA stalwart, Keith Longhurst, reports that Aub and Mick Rixon who lived on the Georges River at the site of the present rubbish tip were then obtaining one shilling per pelt. With his 60 to 80 hounds, Mick would venture out to the 'second creek over' (presumably O'Hares Creek) to hunt.

Then followed a long period with few reports until 1986 when the foreign development company, Yap Yan Pin, bought a property overlooking O'Hares Creek and was given Council approval to construct dwellings upon it. When NPA members reported that koalas were living on the O'Hares scarp, instantaneous uproar broke out. In the ensuing melee, former Environment Minister Tim Moore was forced to back down from an early declaration to protect the koalas, and 22,000 signatures were collected, and local papers were saturated with stories.

Eventually, the dispute went to the Land and Environment Court, and in a compromise, land was given up to make a buffer zone between the development and the koala habitat, and the number and size of blocks was reduced. Roads have now been constructed, and Prospect Council is

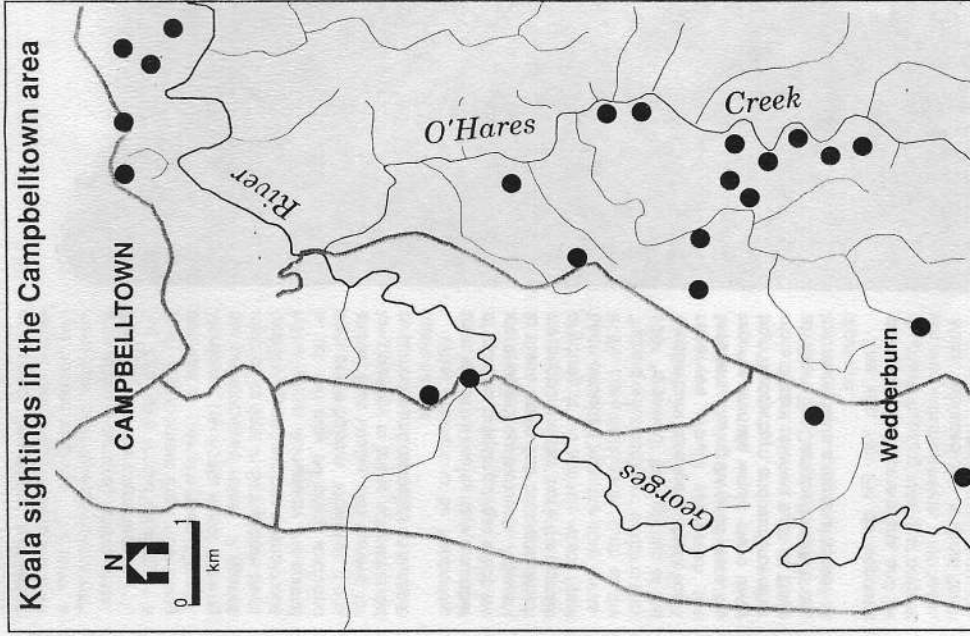
population size and preferred areas. We relied on the current wisdom that the Grey gum, *Eucalyptus punctata*, was the major food tree in the area. This tree has smooth, soft bark which carries the scratches of the koala for several years. When heavily scratched trees are found, searches on the ground beneath for the distinctly shaped and scented faecal pellets are warranted. As these pellets can last several months, areas where koalas are active can be detected without actually sighting the animals.

We were able, therefore, to conduct transects at regular intervals along the O'Hares Creek and tributaries, and beside the Georges River. By scoring the frequency of grey gums, the number with old or new scratches, or with faecal pellets, or with live koalas, we were able to divide the habitat into areas of varying koala density. These areas consist of breeding areas, occasionally used areas, and areas with few indications of koala presence. While most breeding areas were beside O'Hares Creek, a small one was also found on the very edge of Campbelltown, a few kilometres from Wedderburn.

Our estimate in the O'Hares Creek region was 0.1 koalas per hectare in 600 hectares of suitable habitat: a total of 60 animals. This low density was emphasised to me when I visited a site in Victoria. Here I saw more animals in an afternoon than I would have in 30 at Wedderburn. Such a small population is extremely vulnerable to fire or habitat degradation.

A second phase of the study was to produce a questionnaire/brochure. This was used to obtain information from Wedderburn residents and to publicise throughout the region south of Sydney that we were seeking records of sightings. Only 26 of the 210 Wedderburn households responded to the questionnaire despite the stamped, addressed, return envelopes. Only eight of these reported sightings of koalas. Responses from the southern region identified several previously unrecorded colonies in several localities from Wilton to Bowral. One of these, the first from Colo Vale, was an animal killed in a back yard by a Flottweiler dog. Other sightings have been reported to the east from Woronora Reservoir, Heathcote Road, and ANSTO at Lucas Heights. These eastern sightings indicate that the large Army and Water Board areas support at least some koalas.

A third phase is to capture and



poised to supply electricity. However, union green bans are still in place, community feeling is still running high, and local environment groups are still fighting.

But what of the koalas themselves? How many are there? What area do they inhabit? What is their reproductive success and disease state? These were the questions which tantalized me. Newspapers would report that the colony was disease-free and that the colony was endangered. I wanted to know on what biological data these statements were based.

It turned out that no koalas had been tested for chlamydia, the disease which has affected many koalas elsewhere. However, nor were external signs of the disease noted

Current research

With financial assistance from the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur, I began a study of the koalas. There have been three phases to our work. The first was to determine basic data such as

Wedderburn bid to get power flowing

By JEFF MCGILL

DEVELOPERS of a proposed housing estate amid Wedderburn's famous koala colony have met Prospect Electricity in a renewed effort to speed up public sale of the land.



SUE Dobson

electricity to the subdivision.

In past months there been controversy because Prospect had taken no action, although OUB had paid more than \$120,000 for the cost of electricity.

"Prospect will (now) provide electricity to meet the timing requirements of a completed permanent residence on any one of

the 22 lots comprising the subdivision," Mr McIntyre said.

"From our point of view, this now clears the way for intending purchasers to erect dwellings on the lots without the fear of an illegal ban.

"Unfortunately, Sue Dobson will not accept that all proper procedures had been followed and that buyers are legally entitled to go ahead and develop houses on the lots."

But Ald Dobson said Mr McIntyre was making guarantees he couldn't keep and claimed the green bans would prevent any homes being completed for electricity to be connected.

She was backed up by Jimmy Avinou of the powerful Construction, Forestry, Mining and

Energy Union (CFMEU).

"I doubt the electricity will be switched on, but even if they did some how, I doubt very much if any development will go ahead," he said.

In a letter to the *Advertiser*, Mr McIntyre singled out Ald Dobson and said she should "demonstrate the responsibilities" of an alderman by accepting the referee's decision and not "continuing to conduct a campaign designed to alarm potential buyers".

However, Ald Dobson says she is not alone and supported by every major environment group in NSW, the Federal MP for Macarthur, Chris Havi-land, Australia's largest union, and 22,000 Campbelltown residents who signed a petition to stop the development.

Mr McIntyre said OUB had tried to do the right thing all along.

"We have listened and co-operated with Sue when she sought government intervention," he said.

"If the government, State or Federal, made a realistic commercial offer for the land subdivision, we would co-operate and consider such an offer."

Premier John Fahey and Planning Minister, Robert Webster, have refused to step in, Mr

Webster claiming there were no koalas living within the actual housing subdivision.

But Dr Robert Close of the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur (who has been studying the creatures using sophisticated tracking collars), suspects the site is used as a vital land corridor by the animals.

Ald Dobson said she is pinning her hopes on "holding out" until the next State elections when she predicts a Bob Carr Labor Government will come to power.

In 1990, Mr Carr vowed to "save the koalas" if he was elected.

"I would immediately investigate using powers under the Heritage Act for a land swap with the developers for Government land in another area," Mr Carr said.

Last weekend, Ald Dobson visited the site with Campbelltown Council's three newest aldermen, Russell Matheson, Phil Cooper and Paul Blyton, where they viewed koalas in the wild.

The battle to stop the housing development has waged for six years and continues, despite the fact the estate was approved three years ago in the Land and Environment Court.

Macarthur Advertiser 7th April, 1993

New MP gives

McAd
24/3/93



NEW Macarthur MP, Chris Haviland, and other members of the party touring the Wedderburn Gorge area on Monday

support pledge for embattled koalas

24/3/93

IN HIS first public act as Macarthur's new Federal Labor MP, Chris Haviland has offered his full support to environmentalists battling to preserve the Wedderburn koala colony.

On Monday, Mr Haviland visited the bushland site where it is proposed to build a housing estate amid one of Sydney's last remaining koala colonies.

"As the local MP, I am determined to look at every avenue possible to protect this colony," he told the *Advertiser*, after viewing one of the marsupials in the wild.

The battle to stop the housing development has waged for five years and union greenbans still exist on the site, despite the fact the estate was ap-

By JEFF MCGILL

proved three years ago in the Land and Environment Court.

Environmentalists insist the judgment was based on outdated information, particularly in light on recent research by Dr Robert Close of the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur.

Planning Minister Robert Webster has refused to step in, claiming there no koalas living within the actual boundaries of the site earmarked for development.

But Dr Close, who has been studying the creatures using sophisticated tracking collars, suspects the site is used as a vital land corridor by the animals.

Accompanying Mr Haviland on his tour were

Dr Close, Independent Campbelltown alderman Sue Dobson, and representatives of the new Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) — Australia's largest industrial union.

CFMEU secretary Andrew Ferguson reinforced the green bans on the site, while area union organiser Jimmy Avignou said it was a "new beginning" in opposition to the development.

Ald Dobson is confident and says the battle is "far, far, far from over".

"Wedderburn Grange will have no power, no buildings — buyer beware," she claimed.

The mortgagee-in-possession of the land, OUB Australia, which has been marketing the site as "Wedderburn Grange", hopes to develop 22 rural/residential blocks on the site.

OUB managing director Geoff McNytre has made repeated overtures to negotiate with unions and environmentalists, but has insisted the proposed development is legal, while the green bans were illegal.

He was recently quoted criticising Prospect Electricity for its failure to install power to the site, blaming union pressure.

How Wedderburn battle was won

Chron 2/3/93

by ERIC KONTOS

AFTER a protracted battle that has lasted close to five years, Campbelltown Council has accepted that the "war" over Wedderburn's koala habitat is finished.

Mayor Les Patterson last week said there was nothing else council could do once its bid to have the site of the nearby housing development rezoned was rejected by the State Government. The aim of the last-ditch plan was to turn the land into open space and subsequently have the State Government acquire it.

Council's efforts have also included fighting the original development application by Indonesian company Yap Yap Pin in the Land and Environment Court.

"There is, unfortunately nothing much left to do," Mr Patterson said last week. But at the same time as council was accepting the end of a controversial chapter, one of its own, Alderman Sue Dobson, has made it clear that she will fight on. This is despite full approval of the housing development, being marketed as

But Dobson vows fight is not over

Wedderburn Grange, that includes 22 lots varying between five and six acres mostly off Victoria Rd.

Ms Dobson, who last year unsuccessfully sought the establishment of a "green lottery" to help buy the land, believes powerful political and legal forces are behind support for the development, which will be near a court-imposed koala buffer zone.

"Yes, I am still opposed to it," she told *The Chronicle*.

"The union bans are still on and even though OUB is going ahead with marketing the lots, I'll be saying 'buyer beware' to anyone contemplating buying there."

Ms Dobson says she doesn't dispute the development has been approved by

Wedderburn site. Yap Yap Pin Pty Ltd, went broke, packed up and returned to Indonesia. Yap Yap Pin's bank, OUB Australia, says they left behind outstanding debts of \$3.4 million. There was also outstanding interest of \$374,000 owed to OUB Australia. As a result, OUB became mortgagee-in-possession of the Wedderburn property. It made a decision, after discussions with other Yap Yap Pin creditors, to continue with the Wedderburn development as a way of recouping the Yap Yap Pin debts.

Then it struck trouble, with union bans that were continuing despite court approval for a revamped development.

This also stopped Prospect County Council from installing power to the site (See story, Page 1).

When the NSW Land and Environment Court dealt with the original application in the late 1980s, it approved it but ordered the development be scaled down from the original 28 lots of around 10 acres each to 22 five-six acre lots.

It also ordered the creation of a buffer zone between the proposed housing and the koala habitat. "We have been a respon-



Sue Dobson ... plans to keep fighting the development

sible corporate citizen since we have taken over the development," said Geoff McIntyre, OUB's managing director.

"In trying to recover our debt we have sought to listen to environmental concerns about the development and even delayed marketing for three months — at a great cost to us of \$1000 a day. "We allowed an opportunity for the State Government to acquire the property, but it decided not to." Mr McIntyre said. "We are sympathetic to the concerns that have been expressed. But everything we have done has been entirely proper and we just want to recover what we are owed."

Prospect inaction slammed

by ERIC KONTOS

MORE than 13 months after being paid \$123,470 for the work, Prospect County Council has failed to install power to the controversial housing development near Wedderburn koala colony.

The mortgagee-in-possession of the land, merchant bank OUB Australia, believes Prospect has not done the work to the approved development because of union pressure.

Power poles were delivered to the site soon after full payment by OUB Australia in January 1992, but no work was subsequently carried out.

OUB says Prospect halted work after being informed of a "green ban" by the South Coast Trades & Labor Council.

But Prospect told OUB the reason power could not be connected was that an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) had to be carried out beforehand.

Prospect on January 27 of this year informed OUB the EIS would be completed in about two weeks and a final decision on the work would be made soon after that.

A frustrated OUB, which has now given the go-ahead to the marketing and sale of the 22 five-six acre lots, last week was considering its legal position in regard to Prospect County Council.

Campbelltown's delegate to Prospect, deputy mayor Jim Merry last week said he was unaware there was a need for an EIS, nor that Prospect had decided to have one done before proceeding with the work.

"The issue did not come before the Prospect Board," he said.

"What I do know is that this is a perfectly legal development and there is an illegal union ban on it."

Prospect County Council spokesman Mike Donnelly denied union bans had anything to do with the way the electricity authority had dealt with the Wedderburn work. "We are currently

● TO PAGE 2

**Million
dollars
of work:
Page 10**

The Chronicle 2nd March 1993

Prospect cops blast

● FROM PAGE 1

carrying out a review of various factors, including environmental, and expect a final decision soon," he said.

The South Coast Trades & Labor Council did not respond to *Chronicle* requests for a comment over its stand.

The managing director of OUB, Mr Geoff McIntyre said the bank had a fully legal development, which was being stifled by Prospect's inaction, illegal union bans and environmentalists.

"We even agreed to delay marketing of the sites — at a cost to us of \$1000 a day — until the State Government had been given a chance to consider purchasing the land itself," he said.

"Both the union and the environmental representatives we met agreed with this," he said.

The State Government has since informed OUB that after "careful consideration" of the matter, it had come to the conclusion "the land ... does not include lands with known koala habitats".

Planning Minister Robert Webster also said in his December 23, 1992 letter to OUB: "In view of the fact that the areas of known koala habitats are already protected, the Government has decided that expenditure of funds to acquire additional lands is not justified or appropriate."

PAGE 9: How the battle was lost

PAGE 8: Editorial

2/3/93

Wedderburn site
→ power supply to it

MACARTHUR Chronicle

March 2, 1993

Turn on power

Prospect County Council must act quickly to provide power to the Wedderburn housing site that's the subject of this week's page 1 story.

More than a year after having paid for the work is long enough to wait.

The facts are irrefutable: The development has been fully approved and is at present being marketed to buyers.

Environmental factors were extensively considered before the development was approved.

It was also the subject of a court decision, which ordered as well the creation of a buffer zone between the proposed homes and the koala colony.

Of course, apparently, there is still a union ban on work at the site.

Prospect denies that it has been intimidated by this ban and says that it needs to prepare an environmental review before proceeding to supply power to the site.

It is accepted that as a government authority, Prospect has specific responsibilities to carry out before installing power.

But surely one of its responsibilities is to supply power as quickly as possible to a site that has been fully approved, without the need for further studies.

Disease could devastate the Wedderburn colony, warns expert

New estate threat to koalas

By JEFF MCGILL

IF the proposed housing estate goes ahead, the dreaded koala disease, Chlamydia, could break out and devastate the Wedderburn colony, warns a respected environmental scientist.

Dr Robert Close, from the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur, has been conducting extensive research into the koala colony over the past years and is regarded as the foremost expert.

Last week he contacted the *Advertiser* from Brisbane (where he is meeting with fellow researchers) and warned of the dangers.

"Koalas living in urban areas have a higher incidence of chlamydial disease and an associated lower fertility rate than those living in adjacent, undisturbed bushland," he said.



DR Robert Close

"Stress of various kinds can cause the latent chlamydia to erupt into clinical signs such as wet-tail, conjunctivitis, and lowered fertility. This stress could be

changes to the core area (of food) such as tree loss, fire, or predator pressure, such as dogs or cats.

Planning Minister Robert Webster has refused to act to rezone the land because he says the koalas are "protected" because none are known to inhabit the proposed housing area.

But Dr Close points out those same lots are surrounded by two major core habitat areas, and it appears the koalas are using the proposed housing site as a "corridor" between the two.

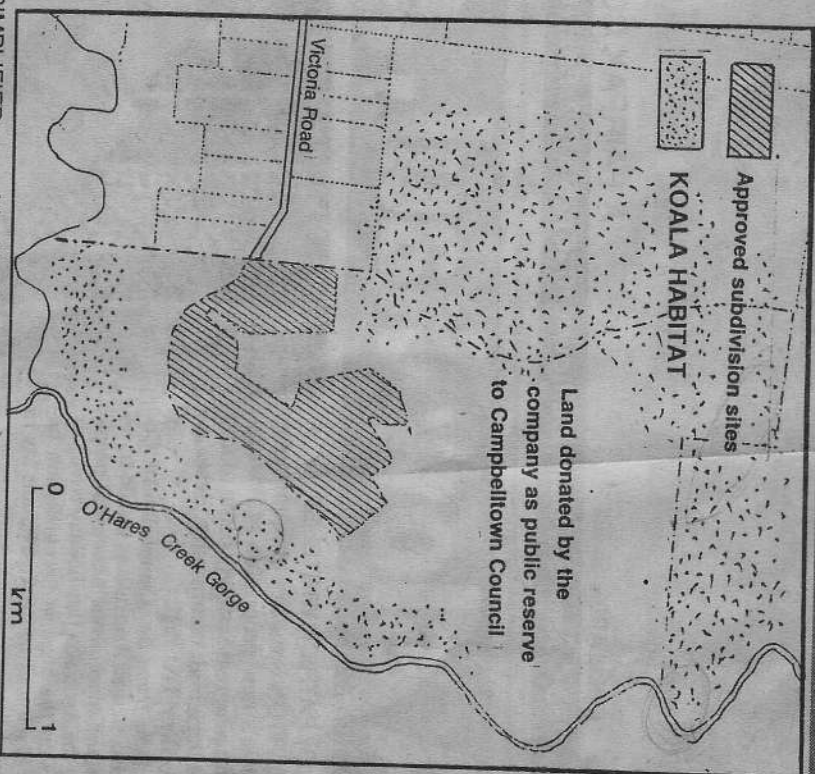
"We don't have radio collars on these particular animals as yet to test this idea, but such a move-

ment would expose the animals to dogs, cats, swimming pools (if the development went ahead)," he said.

"On balance, you would have to say that development of the estate is more likely to damage koala populations than to improve them."

And the habitat areas themselves are under threat due to increased human and dog movement, altered fire regimes, and nutrient flows down the gullies from fertilisers and septics.

"This disturbance could affect the social system within the core areas and cause the chlamydial disease to erupt."



A SIMPLIFIED map of the Wedderburn development site, based on the most recent findings of Dr Close's research

KOALAS IN PERIL, GREENS FEAR

Mac
AD
27/1/93

CLAIMS that Wedderburn's famous koala colony is now in danger of becoming extinct have been made by angry environmentalists.

This follows the State Government's final refusal this month to step in and halt a proposed housing estate near the bushland site.

It appears the only barrier left to development is union "greenbans" which are viewed to be illegal anyway.

Premier John Fahey has refused to hold a green lottery to raise money to purchase the site for a national park, claiming it would be "too narrowly focused to be a financial success".

Meanwhile, his Planning Minister, Robert Webster, has

could endanger the colony's existence.

The Government's stance has upset many environmentalists who have battled for almost six years through the courts, council, picket lines and protests.

Alderman Sue Dobson said the Government should be held responsible for any koala deaths that resulted from development in the area.

"Not only has the Government made its decision based on information five years out of date, but I believe the bureauc-

Yan, Pin Pty Ltd, has gone into receivership and the land is now held by OUB Australia Ltd, a merchant bank owned by the Overseas Union Bank of Singapore.

Managing director Geoff McIntyre stressed that OUB had merely inherited the controversial block of land and needed to recoup its severe losses by the sale of the land.

Mr McIntyre says he has co-operated fully with environmentalists and delayed any land sales, at great cost.

rary is not sending the true and correct messages to the minister's office," Ald Dobson said. "If it goes ahead, this development will see a slow destruction of the colony."

But she insists the battle is not yet lost and when the housing lots are placed on the market, she intends to "make as much noise as possible to let any potential buyers know they will face big headaches".

These will include picket lines and union bans. The original developer, Yap

The road was closed either side of the Georges River causeway as firefighters tried to determine which direction the blaze would take.

A stiff north-easterly breeze fanned flames and caused spot fires to break out up to 500 metres ahead of the main blaze.

In less than half-an-hour advancing flames forced firefighters to shift their vehicles further up the road and set up a new blockade.

The fire burnt across a six-kilometre front and sent thick, black smoke billowing from dense scrub which had not been burnt out in 15 years.

As the fire moved closer to half a dozen houses along Wedderburn Road, volunteers and members of the NSW Fire

Owen Muhn, from Campbelltown, monitors the Wedderburn fire. ARMEN DEUSHIAN.

A STATE of Emergency was declared in Campbelltown last Friday as bushfires raged out of control, with 20-metre-high flames threatening homes in Wedderburn.

The alert was raised at 6 pm when flames jumped the Wedderburn Gorge, in the Georges River Nature Reserve — where the fire was believed to have started — and moved up both sides of Wedderburn Road, threatening homes in the area.

One resident, fearing the worst, loaded a van with valuable electrical equipment and furniture and led away horses and other pets as the fire skirted his property.

Brigade started setting up property protection measures.

One property owner cleared scrub around his house and hoped the fire would not shift direction and threaten his home.

All the while, emergency radios crackled with reports of 20-metre flames, the need for water tankers in certain locations, updates on weather conditions, and of outbreaks near Rosemeadow and St Helens Park.

An ambulance was called when Norm Scattergood, of the Campbelltown Bushfire Brigade, received burns to his back after battling flames in the Rangers Road area.

Big threat to koala

country

WHEN families purchase land at 'Wedderburn Grange', Victoria Road, Wedderburn, they will do so because of its picturesque bushland setting.

However, because there is a high risk of bushfire (but no reticulated water), new owners will be tempted to bulldoze every single tree, and based on previous experience, Campbelltown Council is unlikely to enforce development controls.

Anyone believing otherwise should drive along Wedderburn Road just west of the Georges River crossing and observe how trees have been bulldozed and others have been buried metres deep in building rubble and soil, all without development consent.

This is koala country, yet the council has yet to demand a Fauna Impact Statement.

VERLIE FOWLER,
President, Macarthur
branch of the National
Parks Association.

WEN

Wedderburn koala dispute re-ignited

From Page 2

ment to back up her campaign.

Ald Regan originally supported development at Wedderburn, but now says: "It seems the spread of koalas is larger than any of us first thought, and until Dr Robert Close's study is finished any development is very premature."

Dr Close, from the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur, is conducting the most extensive study of the koala colony yet, using sophisticated tracking devices.

Meanwhile, the managing director of OUB Australia, Geoff McIntyre, said the company had no wish to antagonise anyone, but had merely inherited a volatile section of land from Yap Yan Pin.

"We were not involved in the original proceedings, but finished up as mortgagee in possession as a result of the problems the company had," he said.

"We reluctantly found ourselves holding the property as security and followed the proper processes of the law as decreed by the Land and Environment Court.

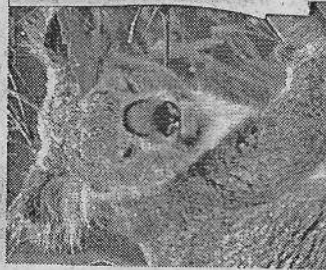
"I am very sympathetic

AFTER two years of quiet stalemate, the Wedderburn koala issue went back on the boil last week when landholders finally moved to sell the controversial bushland which is earmarked to

By JEFF MCGILL

become a prestige housing estate.

Promoted as "Wedderburn Grange", the 22 blocks (selling for an average \$162,000) were placed



to the feelings of these people, but we have stuck to the law and complied with every rule."

But Jimmy Avinovich, State Organiser for the Building Trades Group, warned they would nevertheless face opposition.

"The unions' green bans on the site are still on and no further construction will take place at Wedderburn while they remain on," he told the *Advertiser*.

The controversy stretches back to 1988 when the koalas were discovered on a site previously approved for housing developments.

After years of resident protests and resistance by Campbelltown Council, the matter was taken to the Land and Environment Court, which ruled in favour of a modified development.

Macarthur Advertiser 7th October, 1992

koala row



KOALA campaigner Alderman Sue Dobson, with two new allies, aldermen Sam Mir and Bryce Regan, at the Victoria Road site in Wedderburn last week

homes would be halted by a hostile picket line.

And once again, the resistance is being spearheaded by Alderman Sue Dobson.

"What state has Australia got to when we let an offshore bank destroy this country's heritage, which is the life support

system of the entire Georges River."

She is confident of wide support and last week visited the site with two Independent aldermen, Bryce Regan and Sam Mir, who have given a firm commit-

Continued Page 10

Study vital to urban koala colony

THE Macarthur branch of the National Parks Association (NPA) of NSW Inc. has donated \$3,500 to Dr Robert Close of the UWS - Macarthur's Faculty of Business and Technology to help fund a vital koala research project in South West Sydney.

Dr Close's study involves observation and monitoring of the movements of the colony in the Campbelltown and Wedderburn area, where up to 60 koalas are believed to be residing. Called to a number of sightings in the district in the last three months, Dr Close believes that monitoring the koala colony is essential given the proposed development of the Wedderburn area.

"The koala colony in this region is the last known viable one left in the entire Sydney urban area, outside of National Parks," Dr Close said.

"It's obviously very important to aid their survival wherever possible."

The donation from NPA, which includes \$2,000 from Dick Smith's Australian Geographic Society, will be used to help fund a scholarship for a postgraduate student to carry on the survey work.

Other funding from the University has provided Dr Close's project with a light motorcycle, six radio transmitter collars and a receiver, as well as tree climbing equipment and a research assistant one day a week.

"We attach the radio-telemetry collars to the koalas in order to monitor their movements on a day to day basis," Dr Close said.

"These movements are plotted and reveal the corridors in which the koalas move, and most importantly, the areas which are most vital to their existence."

Already, according to Dr Close, the koala monitoring has revealed that some of the proposed clearing for the development in the Wedderburn area is being used by the koala population.

"Further monitoring will enable us to determine exactly how many koalas, over what area, might be effected by the proposed development."

Dr Close is also supported in his research by the Water Board and Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Insititute (EMAI). The Water Board has pledged financial support for the project, while EMAI is involved in examining the koalas to assess their health and susceptability to various diseases.

SURVIVAL THREAT

Housing advance on koala habitat

by SUSAN BRIGGS

SURVIVAL of Sydney's last urban koala colony could depend on a temporary development ban at Wedderburn.

The warning comes from Chairman of the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur, Doctor Robert Close.

Dr Close has called on Campbelltown Council to defer the local environmental and development control plans for the Wedderburn region.

In a submission to council Dr Close says wildlife corridors must be identified in the local environmental plan before it is approved.

Dr Close said monitoring of koala movements has revealed that some areas earmarked for development are being used by the native animals.

"The koala colony in this region is the last known viable one left in the entire Sydney urban area, outside of national parks," he said.

Dogs, pools, cars and urban expansion are the main reasons Sydney's koala population has plummeted during the past 20 years.

Dr Close says his research indicates the animals travel along wildlife corridors to reach prime feeding grounds.

Koala ear-tagged in



□ Chronicle photographer JEFF DARMANIN "caught" this koala at Wedderburn last week.

Kentlyn in October 1991 was reported at Wedderburn Gorge in June 1992 — a distance of 5km.

New equipment financed by the university has enabled Dr Close to monitor koala movement more accurately.

"We attach the radio-telemetry collars to the koalas in order to monitor their movements on a day to day basis," he said.

"These movements are plotted and reveal the corridors in which the koalas move and most importantly the areas which are most vital to their existence."

The National Parks Association has given Dr Close \$2000 to help fund a scholarship for a post-graduate student to carry on the monitoring work.

Dr Close hopes to have 12 koalas collared by 1993.

"There are so many things we don't know about koalas," he said.

"We don't know why they like certain trees, we don't know if that changes with the seasons."



□ Dr Close: Call on koalas.

Comeback trail for 60 koalas

WEDDERBURN'S koala colony has been somewhat of a mystery since its discovery in 1986, but soon many of the unanswered questions could be solved.

And all thanks to six small radio transmitter collars. During the next few months the special collars will be fitted to a random selection of the koalas, enabling Dr Robert Close of the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur, to accurately track the movements of the animals.

Dr Close has been conducting research into the colony (believed to include about 60 animals) for two years and now hopes to accurately confirm claims about their habitat, eating patterns and corridors of travel.

Until now, such information was based solely on educated guesswork and isolated sightings.

This week the *Advertiser* joined Dr Close, his assistant Wayne Foster, and Keith Longhurst and Graham Groves from the Macarthur branch of the National Parks Association (NPA) to catch a koala already collared.

This was to take blood samples and test for chlamydia and other diseases.

It is said for every koala you see in the wild, 20 will remain unseen, but with Dr Close's sophisticated tracking equipment, we easily found the animal feeding in a stringybark near Aberfoyle Road.

"We attach the radio-telemetry collars to the koalas in order to monitor their movements on a day to day basis," Dr Close said.

"These movements are plotted and reveal the corridors in which the koalas move, and most importantly, the areas which are most vital to their existence.

"The koala colony in this region is the last known viable one left in the entire Sydney urban area, outside National Parks, and it's obviously very important to aid their survival wherever possible."

Special report by JEFF MCGILL,
who went koala hunting this week

The good news is that the koalas appear to be totally disease-free — a rarity — but local environmentalists fear the shadow of development is the koalas' greatest threat.

Ongoing industrial green bans and other complications have prevented any major development of the controversial subdivision planned for Victoria Road, on land allegedly inhabited by the koalas.

Dr Close now urges aldermen to wait until detailed monitoring of the colony is undertaken before they vote on the proposed Wedderburn Local

Environment Plan (LEP), soon to go before Council.

If approved, the draft LEP would allow conversion of many Wedderburn farms (most of which of a minimum of 10 hectares in size) to rural-residential blocks of only two hectares.

"One of the koalas we are currently tracking has moved through a bush corridor which is under consideration as a development site, back to an area which was recently burnt back for hazard reduction purposes," Dr Close said.

"Further monitoring

will enable us to determine exactly how many koalas, over what area, might be effected by the proposed development."

But several aldermen have stressed the LEP is being compiled with strict environmental guidelines and will guarantee the area's preservation as a rural-residential suburb, much like Kentlyn.

Bushland preservation is a cornerstone of the plan.

Dr Close and the UWS Macarthur have received financial support for their program from both the Macarthur NPA and the Water Board, although Dr Close is keen to attract funding for a postgraduate student to assist

THE MACARTHUR

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 1, 1992



TRYING hard not to stress the wild koala, Dr Robert Close got a firm hold of the animal in an attempt to test it for disease.

No cuddles from this koala

HOW much can a koala bear?

This maverick marsupial from the famous Wedderburn colony wasn't too helpful last Wednesday when a team of environmentalists led by Dr Robert Close of the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur, led an expedition to conduct medical tests on him.

Advertiser reporter Jeff McGill and photographer Robert Pozo joined the small group which quickly located the koala in thick bushland.

Keen to test the animal for clamydia and other diseases that threaten the health of the wild koalas, Dr Close repeatedly attempted — unsuccessfully — to coax the little fellow out of his tree.

The environmental science lecturer eventually jumped into a special harness and climbed more than seven metres up into the upper branches of the stringbark to tackle the situation head on.

These colour photographs may look like close-ups, but they were actually shot from ground level with a 300mm 2.8 telephoto lens, as Dr Close teetered high above.

After a few near misses, Dr Close finally grabbed hold of the koala, but armed with sharp claws and a determined growl, the native animal escaped

“You win some, you lose some,” Dr Close said as he packed up his gear. Keen not to stress the beautiful animal, he admitted they'd have to return another day.

In the meantime, Dr Close and other environmentalists are concerned about a new plan to subdivide Wedderburn. Full story on page 2.



THE defiant wild koala, fitted with a special radio transmitter collar placed on him last month.

The quest to save our koalas

□ BY DENNIS GREEN

The view from the fork of a gum tree is looking a little gloomier for our koalas these days as their natural habitat slowly disappears.

Urban development, bushfires and predators are all striking at the koala, one of our great national symbols. However, new moves are afoot to ensure their survival.

The koala in NSW (along with some other wildlife), is now classified as vulnerable and rare, it's within the

endangered category and needs special attention to ensure it does not end up as a threatened species.

This follows the passing of the Endangered Fauna (Interim Protection Act), 1991, in place until the end of the year when it is due to be revised.

The Australian Encyclopedia defines the koala thus: "a stub-tailed, arboreal marsupial with large, furry ears, a black leathery nose and long, strong claws."

It's the only living member of the family Phascolarctidae in the order Diprotodontia. This order also includes the possum, kangaroo and wombat.

As a national symbol, the koala bobs up in everything from the credits of television's *A Country Practice* to a current TV commercial.

Last month the marsupial even graced a major credit card promotion. A highlight of tourist visits to zoos and wildlife sanctuaries is the tree-top one.

At Western Sydney University, Macarthur Campus, Campbelltown, Dr Robert Close talks about research into local colonies, invites public input, and displays some skulls and (yes) droppings.

Later, barely 2 km east of the Campbelltown city centre, we walk in the bush among some tall grey gums.

Koalas were last sighted in this eucalypt-scented area a week earlier.

It's a sunny afternoon, a gentle breeze sways upper tree boughs, reflected light bounces off foliage, and you realise koala-sighting in a natural habitat can be difficult.

Dr Close points out the signs that indicate the presence of koalas in the area — prominent tree-trunk scratch marks and nearby ground droppings, old and new.

A nearby pole with an 8m lasso is used to briefly capture the koalas for tagging. They are then released so the researchers can track their movements.

But there's no need for the lasso today: more than an hour of patient searching produces no sightings.

Dr Close teaches at the campus' School of Business and Technology. His koala research is in its third year and he hopes it will be a continuing study. His interest also extends to other wildlife.

His research began several years after the 1986 discovery of a koala colony, about 10 km south of Campbelltown, and after developers came on the scene.

□ CONTINUED OVER PAGE

Illawarra Mercury 25th April 1992

Holding on: The quest to save our koalas

□ FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

At this stage, his research depends on university funding: \$9000 in 1990, \$6500 last year, \$7500 this year, and a lot of voluntary help.

An early community questionnaire designed to establish koala distribution in the Campbelltown region, encourage people to report sightings, and tell them how to recognise signs of the marsupial's presence scored a disappointing 20 per cent response.

In studying distribution, research team members have surveyed a 7 km section of bush south of Campbelltown and searched 60m sections at 250m intervals.

"Our findings show there is one koala per 10 ha, compared to 50 per 10 ha in more fertile areas," Dr Close said.

"Koalas are becoming more isolated and more vulnerable to fire, drought and predators (such as dogs).

"They can't move freely because there are fewer bush corridors between remaining colonies."

He also believes urban development, such as that in the Appin Rd area and

south-west at Mittagong, is likely to affect colonies, removing access corridors.

Dr Close believes his research enhances his teaching role.

"My role is teaching biology and environmental science... I believe graduates need a grounding in basic ecology these days, particularly all biologists going into industry."

He agrees the koala is one of our great national symbols but believes that, as a society, we'll have to take more positive action to protect it.

"My view is humans and koalas can mix, but it means humans have to make real sacrifices; it means no dogs (in the koalas' habitat), maintaining vegetation around habitats suitable for movement, and driving in koala areas in such a way that they are not killed."

Research is about to take a new direction in the Campbelltown area. This involves capturing sighted koalas and attaching a small collar transmitter, and releasing them so they can be tracked through the bush.

The koala's gum leaf diet and its make-up are not always understood by

those of us on the ground, according to Dr Close.

"The eucalypt leaf is a poor quality diet because of the toxins in it and the koala has to use energy to detoxify its food. It has a liver overload.

"In general, in poor quality soil areas, the eucalypt will produce more toxins."

My view is humans and koalas can mix, but it means humans have to make real sacrifices.

"Because we (humans) have taken the best quality soils, they (koalas) are pushed back to poor quality soils where there are more toxins to deal with."

He points out that the koala can't carry excess weight and carries little body fat; it's "cuddly" rather than "chubby".

Dr Close said the marsupial often had to move quickly in search of food,

and if this wasn't found in 24-48 hours, it could be in trouble.

Only a few species of smooth-barked eucalypts are suitable food trees for the koala.

Three species will sustain the koala if eaten exclusively. They are the forest red gum, grey gum, and manna gum. The river red gum is also particularly palatable.

In quality soil areas (not found around Campbelltown), the koala has a home range of 14 or 15 trees and within the home range it usually has a favourite tree. It descends to the ground only to change trees.

Breeding occurs during spring and summer. The young one remains completely within the pouch for about 175 days after which it may protrude an arm or head until, after more than 200 days, it begins to emerge completely from the pouch.

Koala numbers have fluctuated from the beginning of European colonisation.

In the beginning, their colonies extended in eastern Australia throughout areas of sclerophyll forest

from Cooktown, Queensland to southern Victoria and south-eastern Australia, with populations occurring east and west of the Great Dividing Range. Fossil skulls have been found in West Australia.

It is likely that koala numbers were kept low by the Aborigines who killed them for food. In the latter half of the 19th century populations flourished and by 1890, koalas were abundant.

They were then easily collected for their skins to supply the thriving fur industry. Hundreds of thousands of koala skins were exported annually.

A critical decline in numbers occurred; ophthalmic disease and pneumonia (still around) worsened the situation.

Koalas became extinct in South Australia and rare throughout the rest of their range, with numbers declining in Queensland a decade or so later than in the south.

Strict protection and management of surviving populations allowed the koala to recover in numbers again.

Now it's their habitats that are threatened.

CLINGING ON FOR DEAR LIFE

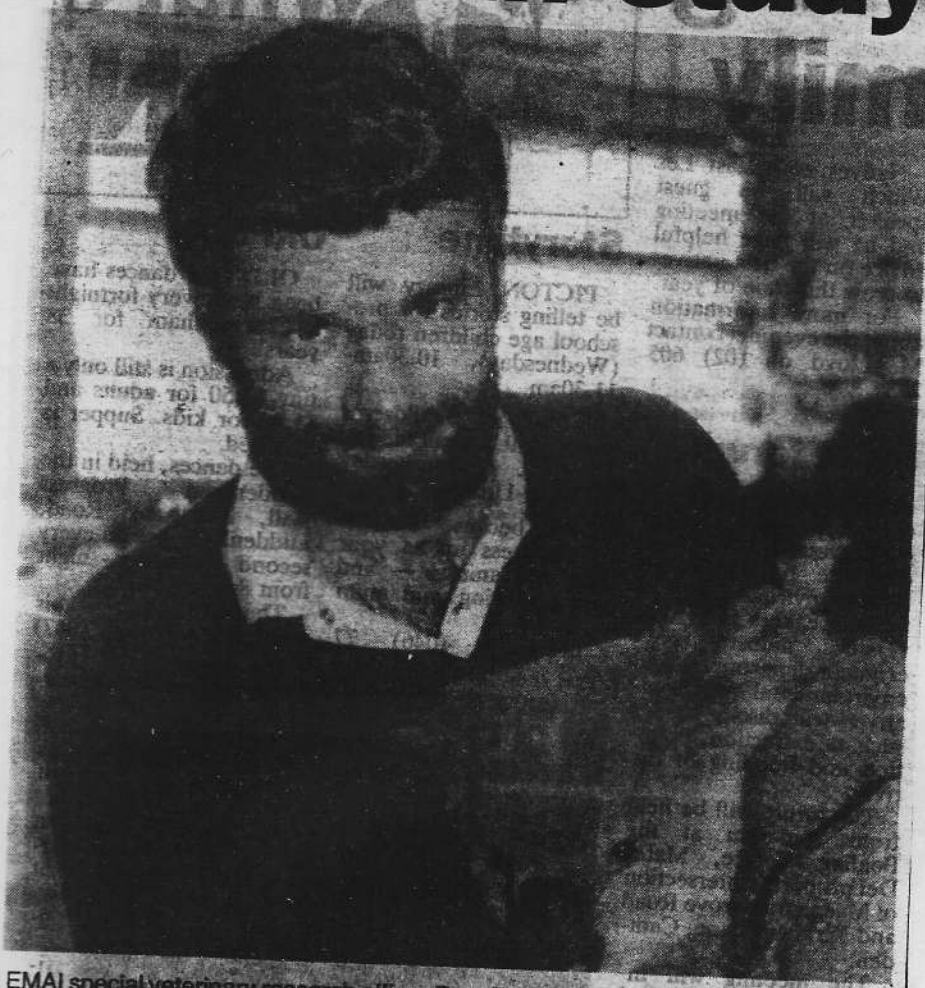


ABOVE: Koala researcher Dr Robert Close with his collection of skulls and droppings.
 LEFT: Dr Close in search of the elusive marsupial in bush outside Campbelltown.
 BELOW: A koala in close-up . . . now classified as vulnerable and rare.

Pictures of Dr Close by KEN ROBERTSON.



Koalas in study



EMAI special veterinary research officer Gary Reddcliff holds the first koala tested at the institute as part of a co-operative project with the University of Western Sydney.

KOALAS in the Campbelltown district had their survival prospects boosted recently with the establishment of a new joint study into their living habits.

Veterinarians at the Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute (EMAI), Camden Park, tested their first koala last week as part of a joint project with the University of Western Sydney (UWS).

EMAI will assess the health of koalas captured by UWS Macarthur, providing vital information for the university's ongoing study of koalas in the Campbelltown district.

University of Western Sydney began a preliminary study of koalas last year and senior lecturer Dr Robert Close said UWS was originally looking at koalas in the

Wedderburn area but widened the study to include the entire Campbelltown region.

"The first koala tested was a two-year-old animal found in suburban Campbelltown less than five minutes from the city centre," Dr Close said.

"This shows everyone should be conscious of koalas in their home environment and work towards minimising the dangers to their survival."

Dr Close said Campbelltown koalas were very rare with the Hares Creek Gorge population estimated at just 60.

The National Parks and Wildlife Association, which is carrying out its own koala study, notified UWS about the koala.

EMAI veterinarians collected blood and faecal samples

The Chronicle 8th October,

1991

Health of district koalas under the spotlight

VETERINARIANS from Camden's Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute (EMAI) have tested their first koala as part of a joint project with the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur.

EMAI will assess the health of koalas captured by UWS, providing vital information for the university's ongoing study of koalas in the

district. UWS, Macarthur began a preliminary study of koalas in October last year.

Senior lecturer Dr Robert Close said the university was originally looking at koalas in the Wedderburn area but widened the study to include the entire Campbelltown region.

"The first koala tested was a two-year-old animal found in suburban Campbelltown less

than five minutes from the city centre," Dr Close said.

"This shows everybody should be conscious of koalas in their home environment and work toward minimising the dangers of their survival."

Dr Close said Campbelltown koalas were very rare with the O'Hares Creek Gorge population estimated at just 60.

Fears for koalas

M/A 15/5/91

CAMPBELLTOWN Council's recent back-burning at Wedderburn has caused widespread damage to the area's koala habitat and furious environmentalists fear some of the animals may have been burnt to death.

Members of the Macarthur branch of the National Parks Association and the Campbelltown Koala Association have joined Dr Robert Close of the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur, in condemning the hazard-reduction burn-off.

Dr Close, who has been conducting an extensive study of the koalas, said no carcasses had yet been found, but almost every gum tree marked in his survey had been scorched or destroyed.

"The drought conditions were forcing the koalas to live on the borderline, but this fire has devastated much of their habitat and will make their battle all that harder," he said.

Former council ranger Keith Longhurst inspected the site on Monday and described the damage as a "holocaust".

He told *The Advertiser* the fire had raged through bushland in the army reserve, burning many gulleys, including the site where a baby koala was first sighted in a mother's pouch.

By JEFF MCGILL



THE latest photo of a koala at Wedderburn, taken by environment campaigner Sue Dobson, before the council back-burning.

Mr Longhurst estimated the fire burnt about 2000 acres and said he was against such widespread operations, in favor of smaller selected burning-off near properties.

"I wouldn't like to have been one of the koalas in that fire," he said.

Deputy mayor and chairman of the area's volunteer bushfire council, John Hennessey, was shocked by the claims and vowed "this type of thing must never happen again".

He said he would call for an immediate investigation by council.

M/A 15/5/91

However, Mayor Jim Kremmer disagrees and said the burn-off was necessary to protect the Wedderburn area from far more devastating fires.

But he said he did not oppose the suggestion that council notify the National Parks Association or other community bodies prior to future burn-offs.

The fire caused headlines last week, when Environment Minister Tim Moore claimed the massive smoke pollution contributed the Sydney's horrific air pollution readings.

New rescue plan for koala colony

THE Duke of Edinburgh has been asked to become patron of the Wedderburn koala colony in a new Campbelltown Council plan formulated by Mayor Jim Kremmer.

Stories by
JEFF MCGILL

The invitation to Prince Philip is only one tactic proposed in the Mayor's new "Koala Rescue Package", which was officially put into action last week.

If successful, it will see the animals protected within a newly-declared Dharawal Nature Reserve, on land both dedicated to the council and purchased jointly by the council and the State Government.

Mayor Kremmer is already in the process of creating an international trust to raise money to establish a ranger and research station on the site. The ongoing Wedderburn koala fight has

dragged on for almost three years, climaxing late last year when the council lost its bid in the courts to prevent Indonesian developers Yap Yan Pin Ltd from developing a rural housing estate on land adjacent to the koala habitat.

Union greenhans were placed on the site, but early this year developers moved in with police help to build a roadway with non-union labour.

But only a fortnight ago, representatives of South Coast unions and the Transport Workers'

Union insisted a full ban would be reinforced.

The Mayor's "rescue" resolution has already been endorsed by Campbelltown Council.

Ald Kremmer suggests it should be known as the International Assistance to Rescue the Koala (International ARK) Trust, which would consist of well-known people for conservation groups as well as corporate and civic representation.

"I believe the time has now come to face reality and accept the ruling of the court, although how we react to that ruling that is very important," Ald Kremmer said.

"Rather than attack the State and Federal Governments for their refusal to assist or waste time trying to placate a small group who say council should have done more, I have opted for a more positive approach to the koala's survival."

The council-endorsed plan involves:

- An urgent submission to the State Government's Open Space and Heritage Fund asking the body to buy the most environmentally sensitive blocks of the Yap Yan Pin estate.
- That all the acquired land be dedicated as Stage One of the Dharawal Nature Reserve.
- Council seek assistance from project home builders to construct a ranger station.

Animals 'on the move'

THE Wedderburn koala colony appears to be "on the move", says local environment expert Dr Robert Close.

This follows a sudden increase of koala sightings close to homes in Wedderburn since the fierce bush fires that devastated much of the habitat earlier this year.

Dr Close is a senior lecturer at the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur, and is conducting an extensive survey of the controversial colony.

"Prior to the fires, such reports (of koala activity) were infrequent," Dr Close said.

"These sightings may be coincidental, or they may represent a real phenomenon in which koalas begin to move after exposure to smoke, or perhaps in response to the extremely dry conditions.

"As the opportunity to witness and record this phenomenon, if it actually occurs, may not come again for a long time it is important all sighting be recorded and general patterns identified."

Dr Close urges any Wedderburn residents who have sighted koalas recently, or seen signs of them in places they were unknown before, to notify him or Anthony Scarman on 20 3203.

The distinctive signs can include double scratches, about two to four centimetres long, on some gum trees, or faecal pellets, often orange-brown, shaped like an olive pip.



PROFESSOR David Barr accepting the painting donated by artist Barrington Roberts.

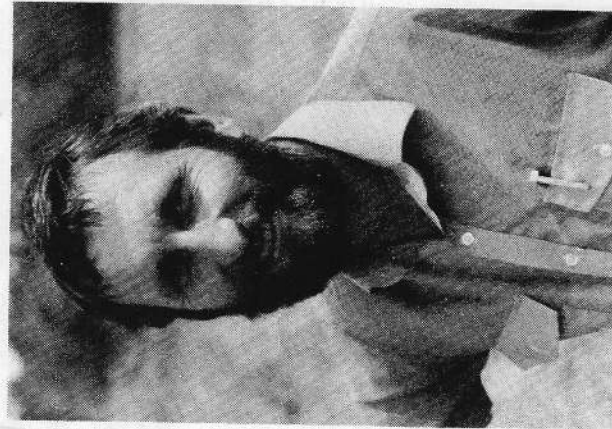
LOCAL artist Barrington Roberts last week donated an oil painting of a newborn koala with its mother to the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur.

The painting, accepted by chief executive officer, Professor David Barr, was designed as a gesture of support for the university's ongoing research into the habitat of the Wedderburn koala colony.

Macarthur Ad. 31/10/90

Macarthur Ad. 29/3/91

Koalas survive Campbelltown burn out



Dr Robert Close — "We need to know where all the existing colonies in the South-West of Sydney are".

Back-burning, sound fire management strategies and a dose of luck appear to have saved a colony of koalas in the bushfire ravaged town of Wedderburn near Campbelltown, according to Dr Robert Close of the School of Business and Technology.

With the assistance of the local community, Dr Close and research officer Anthony Scarman, have been conducting research into the habitat of koalas in the Campbelltown region for the last four months and hope to publish a preliminary report of findings later this year.

"At this stage it seems that the flames did not affect the main colony of koalas in the O'Hares Creek gorge area and this was mainly due to obliging winds and effective back-burning in the region by our local fire fighters."

"What we haven't been able to ascertain is whether the koalas were affected by the blanket of smoke that covered the gorge and this will require checking on the

ground when things clear up."

"Koalas do tend to suffer quite badly in fires and a likely scenario is that they headed as high as they could," Dr Close said.

Dr Close estimates that up to forty koalas may live in the O'Hares Creek colony and believes that the recent bushfire demonstrates the need for more information about their existence and activities.

"Fire is a natural part of their lives and colonies must cope with a burn every 10 to 15 years in the sandstone areas. They do this by recolonising from unburned areas."

"Had the gorge been totally fired the major colony in the area would have been destroyed, thereby reducing the chances of recolonising."

"For this reason, we need to know where all the existing colonies in the South-West of Sydney are, and we need to maintain corridors of habitat between colonies," he said. □

Koala ranger station

AS bulldozers continued to clear roadways into bushland near the Wedderburn koala colony this week, Campbelltown Mayor Jim Kremmer announced a new "last-ditch" plan to protect the animals.

If housing development does go ahead on the site, Ald Kremmer says he will urge council to join its funds with those of environmental groups and build a special ranger station nearby.

The plan, which has been initially applauded by the Campbelltown Koala Association (CKA), involves employing a ranger and building both a ranger station and veterinary facilities on the narrow corridor between the koalas and civilisation.

It is proposed this ranger could enforce environmental regulations on nearby residents, protect the animals from cars, dogs, and intruders, and monitor the koalas' movements.

But despite this "last-ditch" suggestion, the council, CKA, and National Parks Association still hope to stop development altogether.

Already the CKA is preparing an Australia-

Continued page 2

Macarthur Advertiser 30th January, 1991

Koala ranger station

From page one

wide publicity campaign to raise funds to buy the land from developers Yap Yan Pin and turn it into a wildlife reserve.

Ald Kremmer said he hopes this action will work and offered council assistance in preparing a sponsorship package.

But he stressed if development does go ahead, they should have the ranger station as a back-up plan.

He suggests the money raised by the CKA and council, together with other donations, could establish a private foundation to build the facilities.

If the CKA can raise

enough money and save the koala colony that's great," he said.

"But if development does go ahead, let's not throw our hands in the air and say it's all over."

A ranger station could create a physical barrier between the koalas and civilisation.

CKA Secretary Vivienne Christodoulou said the mayor's suggestion was "a great idea" and said she was sure the association would support him.

Dr Robert Close of the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur, who is conducting extensive research into the Wedderburn koalas, supported

the move.

He said a ranger could also look after the abundance of other wildlife along O'Hares Creek gorge such as platypus and wallabies.

Campbelltown Council spent \$80,000 last year fighting Yap Yan Pin in the courts, but the judge ruled that a modified housing development could proceed.

Union greenbans on the site stopped any work for months, but four weeks ago contractors for Yap Yan Pin Pty brought in heavy earth-moving equipment and broke the picket lines.

However, Sue Dobson of the CKA claims it could



MAYOR Kremmer.

now be easier to buy the land cheaply from Yap Yan Pin, because the Taxation Office is taking the company to court this week to be liquidated for failing to pay backtaxes.

The State Government still refuses to acknowledge responsibility for the koalas' safety and refuses to help purchase the land from developers.

Tax man may save koalas

By JEFF MCGILL

THE fight to save the Wedderburn koala colony from developers took a twist last week, when the Taxation Office announced it was taking action to wind up development company Yap Yan Pin Pty Ltd.

This secretive company, operated by Indonesians, broke union green bans this month and moved bulldozers onto the controversial piece of land near the Wedderburn koala colony site.

After the police broke up the protesters' picket line last week and allowed the "scab" developers to enter the site, the battle to save the koalas took a severe setback.

But in light of last week's action by the Tax Office, protesters have now called for the State government to halt all development and hold an investigation.

Union support

In support, powerful building unions, the BWIU and FED/FA, were visiting the site, hoping to urge the contractor to stop work, at the time of going to press.

The unions and protesters will also press the Government, which has to date largely ignored the pleas of environmentalists, to step in.

But when the *Advertiser* called Environment Minister Tim Moore's office yesterday, no-one was available for comment.

Many of the protesters from the efforts of the

Taxation Office in filing a summons in the NSW Supreme Court to wind up Yap Yan Pin as a chance for a last minute reprieve.

The Deputy Commissioner of Taxation began an action in the Equity Division of the Supreme Court against the company, over a total of \$205,749.67 in penalties and back taxes from July 1, 1988.

The Deputy Commissioner further sought additional tax for late payment of \$156,549.72 at the rate of 20 per cent a year from October 16, 1990, until payment or judgment.

But, in an amended summons, the Commissioner applied through the courts this week to wind up Yap Yan Pin and appoint a liquidator on February 1 for failing to pay the tax demanded.

The *Advertiser* sought comment from the company's address, at 45 Captain Piper's Road, Vaucluse.

When the phone was answered an accented voice asked "hello", but it was hung up as soon as we mentioned the name Yap Yan Pin.

Subsequent phone calls were unanswered.

Telecom says the com-



LOCAL koala campaigners Sue Dobson (right) and Vivienne Christodoulou defy the developers.

pany's mobile telephone number has been disconnected, and no comment has been available from the registered office of Yap Yan Pin, care of Wearne and Co, accountants at Chatswood.

A search of corporate records at the Australian Securities Commission shows the company was registered in 1983 as a property developer with two Indonesian directors, William Budiman and Koesmiati Sari of Jakarta.

Secretive

Over the past two years, Yap Yan Pin has remained secretive, elusive, and refused to talk with the media, aldermen, or protesters—instead using local surveyors Lean Lackenby and Hayward as their representatives.

But now, Lean Lackenby and Hayward can no longer comment on any aspect of the Wedderburn issue.

It has been suggested Yap Yan Pin broke the site's union green bans to prepare some blocks for sale to raise money to pay the Taxation Office, but the answer was again, "no comment".

Campbelltown Council spent \$80,000 of ratepayers' money last year fighting Yap Yan Pin in the courts, but the judge ruled that a modified housing development could proceed.

Union green bans on the site stopped any work for months, but this month, contractors for Yap Yan Pin Pty Ltd brought in heavy earthmoving equipment and are clearing roadways in the scrub.

KOALA IMPASSE

Sydney Morning Herald 19th January, 1991

Tax Office moves to wind up Yap Yan Pin

By COL ALLISON

The Taxation Office has filed a summons in the NSW Supreme Court to wind up Yap Yan Pin Pty Limited, the company penetrating the koala sanctuary at Wedderburn, near Campbelltown, with a controversial 50-hectare housing subdivision.

News of the summons has angered aldermen from Campbelltown City Council, which spent \$80,000 of ratepayers' money last year fighting Yap Yan Pin's development application in the courts.

The mayor, Alderman Jim Kremmer, is seeking legal advice while his deputy, Alderman John Hennessey, has called for a halt to the development and a full public inquiry.

The bulldozers and earth-moving equipment worked yesterday on the site above O'Hares Gorge, the so-called "lungs of the Georges River", home of about 300 koalas and one of Australia's few remaining disease-free colonies.

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The *Herald* sought comment yesterday at the company's address, Captain Pipers Road, Vacluse, but a man who

answered the phone said he didn't speak English.

The company's published mobile telephone number has been disconnected, Telecom announced, and at the registered office of Yap Yan Pin, care of Wearne & Co, accountants of Chatswood, no comment was available.

A search of corporate records at the Australian Securities Commission yesterday revealed that Yap Yan Pin Pty Ltd, had been registered in 1983 as a property developer, with two Indonesian directors: William Budiman, 52, and Koesmiati Sari, 48, both of Jakarta.

Repeated calls to the directors' Whaling Road, North Sydney, address failed to make contact.

Mr Hennessey said an immediate stop should be stop to the work at Wedderburn until the situation could be clarified.

He called on the Minister for the Environment, Mr Moore, to institute a full inquiry.

Mr Hennessey said the company had cost Campbelltown ratepayers dearly in fighting the development through the Land and Environment Court last May.

The court approved the subdivision after years of council rejection and residents' protests, provisional on the initial scope of the development being greatly reduced.

The company subsequently transferred 275 hectares of land to the council for reserved open space as a buffer between the subdivision and the koala habitat.

This week, using non-union labour under the direction of Campbelltown surveyors Lean Lackenby and Haywood, Yap Yan Pin moved in the heavy earth-movers, after two years of union green bans. Local protesters failed to stop the work.

Hay suggests colony study

STATE Planning Minister David Hay has called on Campbelltown Council to make an environmental study of the koala habitat in the Wedderburn area.

"The study is required to properly define the koala colony and the potential impact of any development on this area," he said.

Mr Hay had earlier met with Campbelltown Mayor Jim Kremmer to discuss the council's concern for the protection of the koala colony.

Mr Kremmer suggested that the State Government buy the area of a subdivision impinging on the koala habitat after it was rezoned as Regional Open Space.

Mr Hay turned down this request.

He said: "The council came in with only one thing in mind, which was to get the government to buy it out of the mess it had got itself into."

"The council talks about the area being Regional Open Space, but this is just a ploy to attempt to absolve

the council of any financial responsibility."

Opposition planning spokesman Tony Doyle criticised Mr Hay for failing to give a more substantive reply to the threat to the koala colony.

Mr Doyle said Mr Hay's call for a further study was hedging and a delaying tactic.

"The government has proposed to the council that open space land along the Georges River be sold for residential development," he said.

"This would result in a windfall of \$70 million for the government, yet they are not prepared to spend one or two million dollars to acquire the Wedderburn land for inclusion in a nature reserve," Mr Doyle claimed.

Concern at long last

AT long last the people of Campbelltown are showing their concern for the Wedderburn koalas.

Members of the Campbelltown Association to Save the Wedderburn Koala Colony have been working in Campbelltown asking people to sign petitions, and the count of signatures over a couple of weeks is very encouraging.

The whole of Australia's environment is under threat with logging going on all over the place and politicians chasing the "mighty dollar" and allowing overseas developers to buy up and destroy our natural beauty spots.

Are the people ever consulted about these decisions?

Were people consulted when waste treatment stations were built? I think not.

Don't allow destruction at Wedderburn by mercenary politicians.

It might be interesting to speak to the children of

SMH
19/1/91

Eying Wedderburn for development

WHAT'S happening out at Wedderburn?

I hear the vultures are preparing to pick the bones. The hyenas are ready to tear the flesh from the wounded victim.

The bulldozers are gathering like flies around carrion. Wedderburn and its natural inhabitants have not only been devastated by fire, but now again faced with the onslaught of the developers.

Are these developers deaf? Haven't they heard the will of the people?

Is our council dumb? Are they mute? Has its

heart been cut from its chest?

They are not voicing the wishes of the community. Why aren't council using their resources, monetary and otherwise, to stop this environmental vandalism?

Has their concern for Wedderburn up till now been nothing more than an act?

Will they allow these insensitive opportunists to choke the last remaining life out of an already devastated Wedderburn?

Or will they show their strength and stop this madness?

Even nature will recover from this recent holocaust. But not so the effects of bulldozers and unnecessary development.

Come on council, show your love for Campbelltown and the well being of its people.

Your future could well depend on it!

Larry Whipper,
Ingleburn.

Man and nature cut koala range

WEDDERBURN koalas have had their range cut back by the recent fires and now developers Yap Yan Pin is knocking down their trees to make roads and house sites.

This is the last colony close to Sydney and it must be saved from man's encroachment with killer cars and dogs that have destroyed other colonies.

I have a question. Is it true that the council town planner that sold the land to Yap Yan Pin is now working for the developers that are destroying the koala habitat at Wedderburn?

Linda Reid,
Claymore.

Develops disgust at the bulldozing

I WISH to express my disgust after learning developers have the bulldozers in at Wedderburn.

Isn't it enough that koalas and other animals have been traumatised by recent bushfires, and now rattling earth moving equipment is thundering into their habitat.

The recent fires saw families evacuated from their homes, but the animals fended for themselves and after the catas-

trophe need peace and solitude to recover from their ordeal.

But no, these money-hungry, greedy morons are causing more trauma and destruction.

Because of the loss of so much bushland with the fires, koalas especially need the protection and food from trees still remaining.

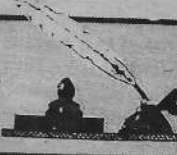
If houses are built, the danger of fires will worsen. The human element in a sensitive area like Wedderburn will cause utter chaos.

I have no good wishes to offer this developer.

Name and address supplied.

HAVE YOUR SAY

Write to Box 234, Campbelltown 2560. Keep letters brief and include name, address and phone number for checking. (Names and addresses may be withheld on request.)



Defeat in final battle for koalas

McAd. 16/1/91

CAMPBELLTOWN police moved in yesterday morning to break up a picket line of protesters attempting to stop bulldozers moving into bushland near the Wedderburn koala colony.

Report by
JEFF MCGILL

However after the police cleared the way, a truck moving into the site drove straight over the top of the trees.

of a small section of original application it was "a long way from total defeat".

As a result, Mr Primrose said council would be seeking legal advice to take action against the developers.

Unwilling

Ald Kremmer said the only body now able to stop development was the State Government, but so far it had been unwilling to help.

Last hurrah

But on the whole, most have conceded this protest is only a "last hurrah" and, as far as the bounds of the law is concerned, the developers have won the long three-year battle.

A heavily-emotional Sue Dobson of the CKA implored the developers to halt work until money could be raised somehow to buy the land, but her calls were ignored.

Ald Kremmer said Council had already spent \$80,000 fighting against the developers in the Land and Environment Court, but now the court had approved the plans to build housing.

She even issued a plea to the Premier's wife, Kathryn Greiner, to intervene and persuade her husband to step in.

He conceded the court approval was not a victory, but because the court only approved development

Rent-a-crowd

The contractor hired by the developer, John Neal, called the protesters "rent-a-crowd" and

said he was disgusted children had become involved.

"Every tree or shrub or piece of ground I touch is checked by council every day to make sure everything is right," he said.

● MORE pictures and how the koalas survived the Wedderburn bushfires: Page 2.

No arrests were made, but many have now conceded that the developers have won the battle to build homes on the land verging on Sydney's last disease-free koala colony.

passionate protests and picket lines, the situation climaxed yesterday when Mayor Jim Kremmer, deputy mayor John Hennessey, alderman Colin Broadbridge, and local State MP, Peter Primrose, joined the protest.

Despite union greenbans on any development at the site, contractors for Yap Yan Pin Pty Ltd have brought in heavy earthmoving equipment and cleared roadways in the scrub this week.

Before the developers arrived, they planted a row of native trees in front of the gateway to the site, hoping to stop the vehicles passing through.

Members of the Campbelltown Koala Association (CKA), Macarthur branch of the National Parks Association (NPA), various State conservation groups, the Building Trades Group, and local aldermen have since rallied at the bushland site in an attempt to stop the work.

This is because Council has a special tree preservation order which prohibits any unwarranted removal or damage to trees.

When police arrived they declined making any arrests and Sgt Neville Ticehurst spoke at length with the politicians and protesters, ordering them away from the gateway.

Climax

After a week of

Koala supporters fail to stop the earthmovers

By COLALLISON

Despite union green bans, heavy earthmoving equipment moved into bushland at Wedderburn, near Campbelltown, yesterday to begin clearing home sites adjacent to one of Australia's last remaining disease-free koala sanctuaries.

Local residents and their children, holding placards and chanting "developers go home, save our koalas" swarmed over the trucks and a bulldozer, but three squads of uniformed police soon removed them from the site.

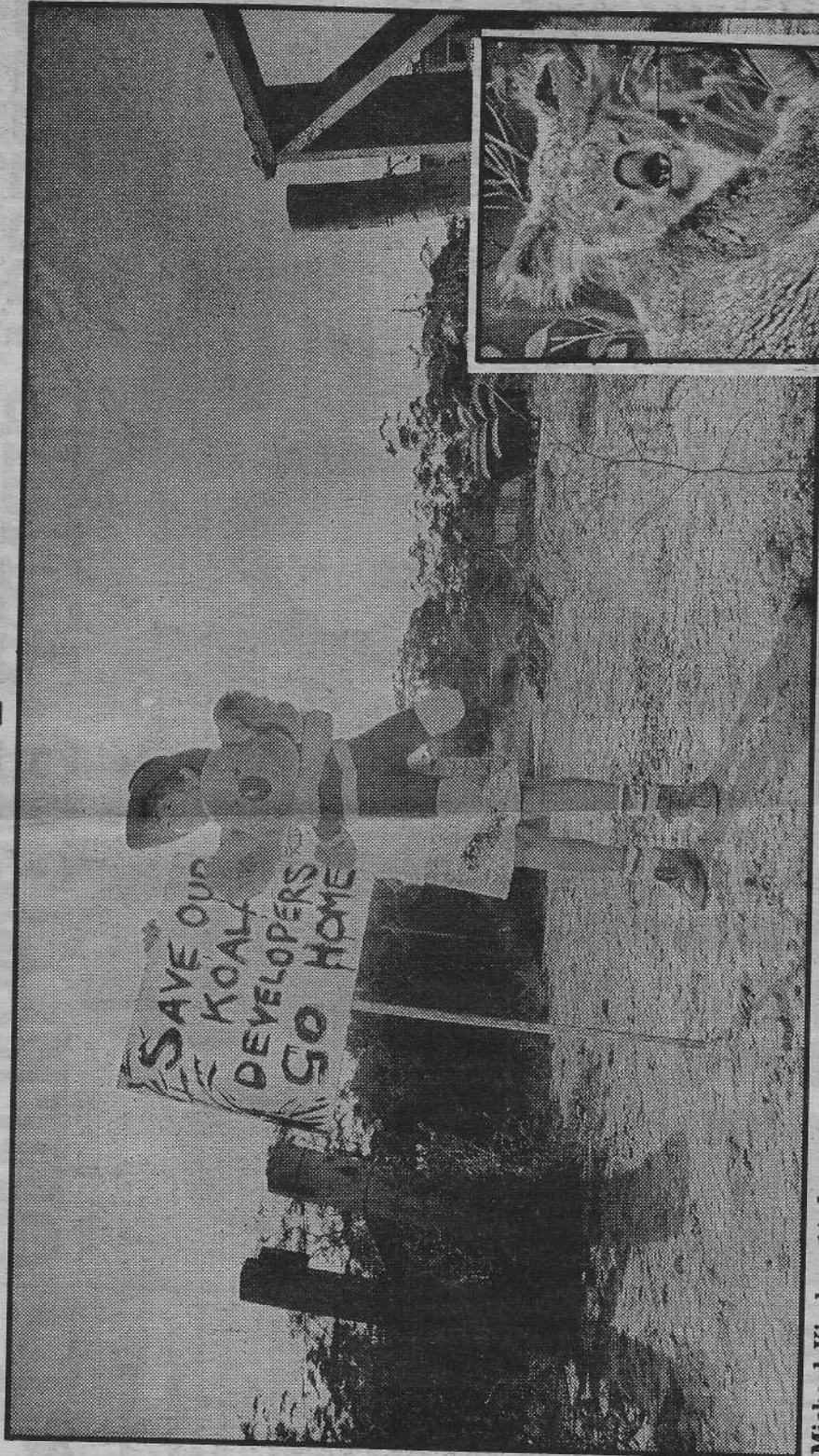
Non-union plant operators arrived at the site at 7 am and were initially prevented from starting work by about 30 protesters.

The Mayor of Campbelltown, Alderman Jim Kremer, his deputy, Alderman John Hennessey, and the local State MP, Alderman Peter Primrose, planted five small wattle trees across the dirt track leading into the fenced-off development site. They defied workers to remove them and break Campbelltown City Council's tree preservation order.

But police held back the protesters — members of the Campbelltown Koala Protection Association — and truck drivers employed by the developers, Yap Yan Pin Pty Ltd, either ran over the seedlings or drove around them.

The earthmovers were hard at work by late yesterday as the residents packed up their gear and their signs, deflected by the recent events, but still determined to continue their fight.

"We're not giving up yet," said



Michael Kimber, 11, brought a toy koala to yesterday's protest as a reminder that only the toy ones may remain if habitats are not protected.

Picture by DAVID PORTER

Mrs Sue Dobson, foundation president of the association. She has fought for almost three years to protect the eucalypt habitat for about 300 koalas which is centred on nearby O'Hare's Creek. She calls the area the "lungs of the Georges River".

be stopped," Mrs Dobson said. "If the koalas are pushed back into the areas of charred land, many of them will die."

But barring a miracle, the protest appears doomed.

A koala at Wedderburn.

Picture: Macarthur Advertiser

Greenbans fail at Wedderburn

DESPITE union greenbans on any development at the Wedderburn koala colony site, contractors for Yap Yan Pin Pty Ltd moved in with heavy earthmoving equipment last week.

By JEFF MCGILL

A large group of members of the Campbelltown Koala Association (CKA) and Macarthur branch of the National Parks Association (NPA) joined forces and quickly rallied at the bushland site.

The unions have also demanded a halt to work, while Campbelltown's Acting Mayor John Hennessey called the machinery workers "a mob of scabs".

Since the earthmoving equipment was moved to the gateway of the proposed housing estate on Thursday, protesters have pleaded for a halt to work.

The koala saga has continued for nearly three years and came to a legal climax late last year when the Land and Environment Court approved the proposed developments (minus four blocks), despite the constant rejections by Campbelltown Council.

The only thing stopping developers starting work were the union greenbans on the site, placed in 1988, but last week machinery finally moved in.

Sue Dobson of the CKA was close to tears and condemned the developers for moving in when most union and wildlife organisation personnel were on holidays.

"With the New Year we were launching our full-

forts to stop this breaking of the greenbans."

Ald Hennessey said he will request council vote to support the CKA and NPA in lending a hand to help raise funds to buy the land occupied by the koalas.

Both Labor Mayor Jim Kremmer and local MP Peter Primrose earlier vowed to stand in front of bulldozers if the greenbans were broken, but Ald Kremmer is on holidays, while Mr Primrose has been elsewhere in the State.

Tony Westrip of the Federated Engine Drivers and Fireman's Association (in conjunction with the Building Trades Group) said he wants to meet with the contractors and negotiate.

"We will go down to the site and try to stop any further work until we can arrange discussions and come up with some agreement in the protection of the area," he said.

The *Advertiser* approached Peter Lean of

BEHIND a banner reading "Don't kill koalas", and in front of the machinery recently moved onto the Wedderburn site . . . from left, Julie Shepherd, of the NPA; Campbelltown's Acting Mayor John Hennessey; and koala campaigner, Sue Dobson.

development consultants for Yap Yan Pin, Lean Lackenby and Hayward, only to be told that he was no longer in charge of the development.

Mr Lean advised us to call another man, who was unavailable for comment.

Ms Dobson said since the Wedderburn fires destroyed part of the koala habitat, the animals would need as much land as possible to survive.

Mrs Dobson is calling for volunteers to man "dozer lines".

Those interested can contact the CKA on 25 1281 or 25 5198.

Macarthur Advertiser 9th January, 1991



Chronicle 8/1/91

Fires: Bush devastated

CAMPBELLTOWN and Wollondilly Councils declared a State of Emergency as fire wiped out 117sq/km of bush and threatened the Wedderburn koala colony.

Dozens of volunteer bush fire fighters missed out on Christmas dinner as the blaze spread from Appin and Wedderburn through Wollondilly shire.

Firemen were lowered over a cliff face at Wedderburn for back burning which saved the area's only koala colony from the main fire front.

Crews worked through the night in their battle to save the koalas.

The blaze, which started on December 23, destroyed 68sq/km of bush in Wollondilly shire and 49sq/km in Campbelltown in five days.

Fire crews from as far as Sutherland and Shell Harbor joined local brigades in the fight to contain the blaze.

Campbelltown fire control officer John Deblanken said the fire started in Appin, sweeping through the West Cliff Colliery area.

by MANDY PERRIN

It then jumped some of the main roads, burning through bushland in Wollondilly shire.

Mr Deblanken said extra fire fighters were sent to Wedderburn when its small airport was threatened during the blaze.

"The airport was saved and fortunately there was no property damage or serious injuries reported," he said.

Wollondilly fire control officer Jack Wilton warned the risk of another fire was extremely high.

"The large amount of fuel is extremely dry," he said.

"The situation is very serious, particularly as we have had no rain. I would urge people to obey the fire restrictions and not to do any burning off."

Mr Wilton said the Appin fire was being treated as "suspicious".

Acting Campbelltown Mayor John Hennessey paid tribute to the fire fighters: "Close to 400 people gave up

their Christmas to fight the fire. They are the unsung heroes of the area," he said.

"Without their dedication and hard work, Campbelltown could have suffered much more in terms of lost property and livestock."

The State Government is offering rewards of up to \$10,000 for information on bushfire arson.

Penalties include 12 months imprisonment and/or a \$5000 fine.

The Chronicle 8th January 1991

Sound fire management and luck save Wedderburn koalas

Macarthur Advertiser 10th January, 1991



PETER Primrose plants a native tree in front of the bulldozers.



PROTESTERS join forces.



DR Robert Close.



POLICE Sgt Neville Ticehurst speaking with Sue Dobson and other protesters yesterday.

● From page 8

with the 68th sighting made in the first week of June 1988.

Responding to the mounting public interest, Environment Minister Tim Moore visited the site and ceremoniously nailed an Interim Protection Order to a tree in front of an array of media representatives.

The order announced that under the National Parks and Wildlife Act the animals' habitat would be protected for 12 months, putting a freeze on the housing estate until a full assessment was made.

The widely-applauded order was the first of its type in the State and because it had to be gazetted, Mr Moore instructed the Government Printer to publish a special edition at midnight on Friday, June 3, 1988.

Despite the early success, environmental applause for the State Government was to turn quickly to abuse.

Mr Moore announced a sudden turnaround on his decision and announced a new "conservation agreement" with the developers, lifting the Interim Protection Order he had issued only weeks earlier.

Mr Moore said the order would be replaced by a "voluntary covenant" which would allow subdivision development in the area of the koala habitat to proceed.

He said the covenant would strictly control land development, with tree-felling and clearance to be severely restricted and residents with dogs would

be required to keep them under strict supervision on their own land.

Furious environmentalists slammed the move.

NPA branch secretary Julie Sheppard said Mr Moore was "selling out the Wedderburn koala colony" and called the covenant "virtually worthless".

Ms Sheppard also branded Mr Moore's earlier guarantees as a hollow gesture and said that relying on the goodwill of future landowners was not a good enough safeguard for the future of the koalas.

Campbelltown Council argued that conservation agreements of this type were impossible to police.

19th July, 1989

"How do you force a landholder taking his dog for a stroll to keep it on its leash, and how do you tell a dog that has been dumped in the bush to go home and get a leash?" one alderman asked.

In July, the NPA began a public appeal for funds to save the colony from destruction, with the donated money to be used to buy the affected part of the planned subdivision.

They were supported in their efforts by the council, the initial plans being to persuade the Government to acquire the koala habitat land and include it in the proposed Dharawal Nature Reserve.

However, the Government denied responsibility and refused to contribute any money towards

● Continued page 10

"BACK-burning, sound fire management strategies and a dose of luck" saved the Wedderburn koala colony in the bushfire that ravaged the area last week, says a local environmental expert.

Dr Robert Close of the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur, said fire was a major problem to koalas and had the gorge been totally alight the major part of the colony would have perished.

He has recently been working with the community in researching the actual habitat of the koalas and hopes to publish a preliminary report on his findings later this year.

"At this early stage it seems the flames did not affect the main colony of koalas in the O'Hares Creek gorge area and this was mainly due to obliging winds and effective back-burning by our local fire fighters," Dr Close said.

"What we haven't been able to ascertain is whether the koalas were affected by the blanket of smoke that covered the gorge and this will require checking on the ground when things clear up."

"Koalas do tend to suffer quite badly in fires and a likely scenario is that they headed as high as they could."

Dr Close estimates up to 40 koalas may live in the colony and stresses the recent bushfires

Without a doubt, the most controversial and emotionally-charged issue of the past year has been the fight to save the endangered koala colony at Wedderburn. It all began in May 1988 when the almost-unique, disease-free colony was discovered in thick bushland about to be developed into a new housing sub-division. The developers, Indonesian-based Yap Yap Pin Pty Ltd, proposed the construction of 26 blocks on a 360-hectare site known as Yeomans Estate. Since then, conservationists and Campbelltown Council have joined forces in fighting to preserve the koala habitat from destruction. In this special feature, reported over two weeks Macarthur Advertiser reporter JEFF MCGILL traces the origins of the row.

6 - THE COURIER-MAIL

Activists lie down for koalas

SYDNEY: Environmentalists will stage a lie-down protest today to stop developers moving into forestland harboring what is believed to be the last disease-free koala colony in Sydney.

"We have been fighting this for three years but when the bulldozers move in tomorrow we shall lie down in front of them and chain ourselves to the trees to try to stop them," Campbelltown Koala Association leader, Ms Sue Dobson, said yesterday.

Their action is the climax of a battle fought in the courts and local council to prevent the land at Wedderburn, south-west of Sydney, being carved up into lots.

Their stance is supported by the Fund for Animals, other conservationists and labor unions.

"We are not radical greens and our action will be peaceful," Ms Dobson said.

She said some koalas were lost in bushfires during the past few weeks but estimated there were about 80 breeding marsupials in the Wedderburn colony.

"The government and others talk about the koala as a national emblem but the way they keep hacking away at them there won't be any left by the year 2000."

Koalas in the west

HIGH up in the weather-beaten forks of eucalypts south-west of suburban Sydney lies one of nature's best kept secrets - koalas.

Until four years ago it was thought that the koala colonies of Campbelltown had fallen to the combined effects of hunting and the development that began at the turn of the century.

But in 1986 the creatures surprised everyone and reappeared after an apparent absence of 50 years.

Since then, the National Parks Association, Campbelltown branch, has been gathering a list of sightings, but little is known about the colony of mysterious marsupials, apart from the fact that they are living in the region.

Now people living in the area have been enlisted to try and help unravel the mystery.

Dr Robert Close, of the University of Western Sydney Macarthur, has a koala questionnaire for people who would like to help pinpoint their habitat.

Almost 200 people are craning their necks upwards in the quest for the tell-tale ash-grey bundles of fur.

And they are also keeping an eye on their eucalypts for fresh claw marks - a sign that one of the creatures has been there.

Although the observations will be somewhat second-hand, Dr Close is relying on them to provide the material needed for research into Australia's unofficial mascot.

"We know koalas exist in the area but we know nothing about them," Dr Close said.

"We need to find the answers to a few basic questions such as how many koalas live in the area, what is their breeding rate, how extensive is their habitat, how far do they move and are there any links between other colonies in the south-west.

"I believe we can be helped by the community in answering these questions."

KOALAS are basically nocturnal animals. They spend 14.5 hours a day sleeping, 4.8 hours awake and resting, 4.7 hours feeding and just four minutes travelling.

Because of their laid-back lifestyle, koalas are very difficult to spot and Dr Close believes his helpers stand a better chance of seeing them than he would have working with one assistant.

He said community assistance was invaluable in compiling information.

He hopes that anyone living in the south-western region - even if they haven't received a questionnaire - will contact him if they spot signs of koalas.

"Hopefully, the people who have been sent questionnaires will

Koala sightings are rare, which is why an enterprising researcher, Dr Robert Close, moved fast to quiz Campbelltown residents who say the sleepy-heads have reappeared for the first time in 50 years

By RACHEL BROWNE

keep an active eye on the movements of koalas," he said.

"As the people live in the area they are more likely to notice things like fresh scratchings on the trees which indicate a koala's recent presence.

"The community has a much greater potential to cover a large area."

The community has thrown its support behind Dr Close and his colleagues in the quest to discover more about the koalas.

"I sent 170 questionnaires out about four weeks ago and so far 22 have come back. It usually takes a while for people to reply to these things - they come in dribs and drabs," he said.

"Most responses have been very good. Some of the ones we have received report fresh scratchings and many residents said people from the university were welcome to come out and work on their property.

"Some say they haven't seen any koalas but even that information is helpful because it gives us an indication of where not to look.

"Once the majority of questionnaires have been returned we should have a rough picture of where the koalas are moving."

Campbelltown residents are fiercely protective and proud of the local koala colonies.

In 1989 a petition to protect a koala colony at Wedderburn from development by an Indonesian company collected 13,500 signatures.

Residents set up a lobby group to protect the colony and are still trying to buy the land where the koalas were living.

Dr Close said: "I believe the community is very interested in the koalas and is becoming actively involved in this project."

An academic with a deep interest in Australian animals, Dr Close has been working at the University of Western Sydney for the past four years.

He used the survey format as a method of gathering information for a study on rock wallabies in

1984 and it was so successful he decided to repeat the winning formula with the koalas.

"I sat down with the telephone book and a map and got the names of all the people who owned (livestock) stations in the area I was researching.

"I recorded their addresses and sent each one a questionnaire.

"If several people in one area gave a positive reply I would have a good idea of where to start looking.

"I got a 65 per cent reply rate to that survey and it was such a terrific response I thought - why not do it with the koalas?"

DR Close believes most of the surveys will be completed and returned by the end of the year. Then he and university students will begin to look at other aspects of koala life.

"After the questionnaire is returned we have a lot of small projects lined up for next year," he said.

"We intend to tag the juvenile koalas with tiny transmitters and trace their movements by radio.

"Once the koalas reach about 12 months they are weaned, and about a year later are kicked out by their mothers, so we'd like to find out where they go."

All this painstaking research will finally help to conserve the valuable koala colony.

"Saving the koalas will hopefully be the end result of the project," Dr Close said.



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The Chronicle 1st January, 1991

Homes in da as flames sp

by ROMA CURTIS

THREE children seen at a Wedderburn swimming hole just before bushfires engulfed the region have been cleared of blame by police investigating the cause of the blaze.

A state of emergency was declared at 6pm on Friday after fire in Wedderburn Gorge spread out of control south towards Appin.

It is believed the fire was deliberately lit.

Hundreds of volunteer bushfire brigade members from as far away as Wollongong spent all weekend attempting to contain the blaze.

Residents in the Wedderburn and Appin townships were warned to be ready to evacuate.

The bushfires were finally brought under control on Sunday afternoon after cooler temperatures and light rain helped firefighters.

More than nine square kilometres of bush and farm land were burnt out.

Acting Campbelltown

Fire fighters suspect arson caused blaze

Appin Rd near Wedderburn.

POLICE FILE

Mayor John Hennessey said reports that Wedderburn's koala colony perished in the blaze were "totally unsubstantiated".

"Rangers and fire fighters were asked to look for and report any koala sightings," Mr Hennessey said.

"No dead koalas have been found, no koalas have been sighted at all."

Late Sunday afternoon, about 60 fire brigade members were still fighting the main fire.

This fire was located between O'Hares Rd and

Macarthur Advertiser 31st October, 1990

Uni orders koala study

A \$10,000 study of the Campbelltown koala population has been commissioned by the Macarthur campus of the University of Western Sydney.

Under the management of Dr Robert Close, well-known for his local research into environmental matters, it hopes to determine exactly where the koalas are, their numbers, and migration patterns.

The study will involve field identifications and extensive research into habitat.

Dr Close seeks the help of local residents who know anything about the koala movements or location, and has prepared hundreds of questionnaires.

He wants to find out whether the animals are only concentrated around Wedderburn, or have spread into Appin and if they use a corridor stretching to another known colony near Avon Dam.

Those with information can contact Dr Close at the university or through PO Box 555 at Campbelltown.

The only other study done of the koalas was a six-week CSIRO report, which merely concentrated on a small section of Wedderburn and was largely inconclusive.

Local koala campaigner Sue Dobson has welcomed this new university study, as has Campbelltown deputy mayor, John Hennessey, who described it as a "gift from heaven".

The Wedderburn koala

issue has dragged on for more than two years.

Recently, the issue finally went to the Land and Environment Court, where the judge ruled the development could go ahead, but only at half the original size and minus four blocks on the escarpment.

Technically, developers can move their bulldozers in anytime to start work, but union "green bans" on the site have prevented this.

FOR

DEVELOPERS Yap Yan Pin insist they are "pro-koala" and despite attacks by the environmentalists stress the koala colony will not be hurt by the planned development.

The project manager is surveyor Peter Lean, who is a senior partner with Campbelltown's Lean Lackenby and Hayward Pty Ltd.

Far from being an aloof bureaucrat, Mr Lean lives in the bush and is a committed conservationist, whose knowledge of the Wedderburn site is second to none.

"As a resident of Wedderburn, and an avid bushwalker, I appreciate the unique bushland in our area and I am particularly thrilled by the presence of the koalas," he said.

"My personal effort has been to preserve the koalas, and I appreciate and applaud the efforts of the National Parks Association to establish the O'Hares Creek nature reserve.

"I do not believe in any way that this two hectare development will affect the koalas' habitat."

Mr Lean said a small number of the koalas were situated north of the site, but most of them lived on army land.

The main food of the koalas is the *eucalyptus punctata*, and these trees are only found in only small clumps on the west of the gorge, from the northern boundary of the site, up to Kentlyn.

All land belonging to Yap Yan Pin where koalas have been seen will be transferred to Campbelltown Council as public reserve, as well as another 90ha buffer zone where koalas have no habitat.

It is also true that previously established subdivisions in Wedderburn are far closer to the koala habitat than the disputed-site is.

Mr Lean said much of the debate had been fuelled by the emotional feeling for koalas, but when the facts had been exposed, both the CSIRO and the Land and Envi-

ronment Court supported a controlled development.

Mr Lean's stance has been supported by the bulk of Independent and Liberal aldermen, who argue that since council can't afford to buy the land and the Government won't, this is the only option.

In regard to the subdivision, the court has ordered Yap Yan Pin to follow an extensive conservation agreement, which will make it by far the most environmentally friendly housing site in Campbelltown.

Mr Lean and a team of experts have already scoured the area to ensure every significant site is protected but invite conservationists to police their actions.

Many environmentalists claim uncontrolled dogs from the subdivision would endanger the koalas, but Mr Lean says there are already dozens of nearby properties with dogs roaming through the area, yet there has not been one report of a koala killed.

"They also make great mileage of the comments from the CSIRO report which admitted dogs, bushfire, and changes in nutrient or water regimes could affect the habitat," Mr Lean said.

"But they always forget to mention the report concluded that the development control plan and voluntary conservation agreement by Yap Yan

Pin was sufficient to minimise the risk of such adverse consequences."

A fire control expert told the Land and Environment Court there was no significant bushfire danger for the subdivision, as it was surrounded on three sides by developments and on the other was subject to moist winds.

Mr Lean said the roadway would be well blocked off, stopping "hoons" from driving cars through the bush tracks or damaging the koala habitat.

The road would be laid carefully following existing tracks and damaged scrub will be replaced.

He also pointed out the area to be built on was not virgin bushland, as the entire site was cleared by the former owner 20 years ago for cattle grazing, and the only bushland now present is regrowth.

Mr Lean also said claims of increases in siltation were wrong.

Under the conditions of approval, Yap Yan Pin have to prevent transmission of soil, sediment and waste products from the land by construction of sedimentation fences acceptable to the Soil Conservation Service of NSW.

To preserve water quality and regulate effluent disposal, the developer will insist the subdivision include individual aerobic treatment systems.

"While some witnesses cast doubt on the effi-

ciency of such systems, I am satisfied by the evidence . . . that the system is adequate and capable of controlling biological degradation to an acceptable standard," Justice Stein said in his judgement.

Because of fears of water quality, the four blocks closest to the creek have been disallowed and thereby "all but eliminate any detrimental nutrient effect on the important O'Hares Creek gorge".

On the blocks themselves, residents will only be allowed to build on a small section, guided by

tight environmental rulings.

"I feel sorry for the developer, who bought the land in good faith, only to find later there were koalas near the site," he said.

"Yap Yan Pin complied with all rules, fought to do the right thing and transferred free of charge most of its land to council for environmental management.

"We have abided by our responsibilities, now it is up to council."

"I am sure the council will not shirk its responsibility," Justice Stein said.

Macarthur Advertiser 23rd May 1990

over Wedderburn koala country

AGAINST

"THE environment at Wedderburn is on such a fine balance that it just can't take any more development."

So says Sue Dobson, the head of Campbelltown Koala Association (CKA), who has become the figurehead of the fight to stop subdivision near the controversial koala colony.

Also active in the fight is the Macarthur branch of the National Parks Association (NPA) and Campbelltown Council (the six Labor aldermen, and Independents John Hennessey and Colin Broadbridge).

The movement has also gained the full support of nearly every major environmental group in NSW.

But now the Land and Environment Court has supported development, they are prepared to fight, form picket lines, and stand in front of bulldozers.

Many of the issues the environmentalists argue are the same as Yap Yan Pin's, except they have experts with totally different opinions.

Mrs Dobson said the people of Campbelltown do not want the site to be developed, evidenced by the enormous public petition of 20,000 signatures objecting to the development.

"Why should we allow our local environment and disease-free koala population to be placed in danger, just to pad the wallet of the offshore developer?" she said.

"The threat to the koalas is paramount, but threats to natural environment also come from clearing, increases in siltation environment, pollution, septic systems, pesticides, introduced weeds, fertilizers, rubbish dumping, and human intrusion.

"Vandalism to nearby Aboriginal sites, and fauna is at risk due to vehicles and domestic pets."

The opponents have slammed the environmental conditions of development, saying the safety of the koala habitat will hang on "ifs" and "maybes."

The CSIRO report said the koalas' habitat would not be in danger "if and only if the conditions are adhered to and enforced . . ."

In the Land and Environment Court, Justice Stein said: "If one can be reasonably satisfied that the land can be sensitively developed . . ."

With the Wedderburn environment, Mrs Dobson said these insecurities and voluntary agreements are not good enough.

"If they break the conditions, there is nothing we can do except keep on taking them to court, and who's got the money for that?" she said.

"With voluntary covenants in place, how will council ascertain what constitutes a sensitive person as opposed to an insensitive person?"

"Will guidelines be drawn up which are provided to the developer to ensure what personality traits are necessary for an appropriate purchaser?"

The CKA has put together pages of criticism of the CSIRO report.

"The report states openly that researchers were not able to survey country surrounding the study site, and that the extent of koala habitat and numbers of koalas south of the study area remain to be investigated," the group stated.

"They point out that currently numbers of koalas present in and around the study site are unknown, nor are their movements and home ranges recorded.

"This statement is critical to the future survival of this colony."

Mrs Dobson says one of the major problems was that the court made its decision without a full study on the koalas.

There have been studies on trees, habitat, and water quality but no concerted effort on the koalas themselves.

North coast campaign-

er Sue Arnold told the Advertiser a new koala development plan operated by University of New England scientists had already been adopted by Lismore, Byron Bay, and Tweed Councils.

"It is now possible to draw up koala management plans which would make the CSIRO report look like a ballpark guess, but these were not considered by the court.

"Developments on the north coast similar to Wedderburn have led to the decimation of our koala colonies."

Dogs are also seen as a major problem and although it is claimed there are already many dogs in the area, Mrs Dobson said this was heresy, and the fact is more houses would bring more dogs.

"It is also claimed the koalas only eat *eucalyptus punctata*, but we disagree and so do many experts," she said.

"It is not the only food, merely the preferred food, and my understanding is that koalas eat up to 60 species of gum trees."

This refutes the CSIRO report and expert Dr Steven Cork, who found Wedderburn koalas were "strongly associated" with *punctata*.

Mrs Dobson agreed there were many properties closer to the koala habit than Yap Yan Pin's land, but said they were settled earlier, and her concern was to stop any more development.

All parties believe Yap Yan Pin should be compensated, but claim the company does not have the right to "destroy" the local environment.

Graham Douglas of the NPA is concerned with the potential impact of nutrients, saying they will introduce weeds and have other environmental effects.

Mr Douglas feels the koala habitat is larger than most people believe.

A "green" Campbelltown Council wants the area to stay that way.

Judge Stein said coun-



SUE Dobson.

cil should appoint rangers, but environmentalists say that is merely off-loading the responsibility from the State Government to council.

Mayor Jim Kremmer is unsure council could afford a ranger, and even then the ranger would have little real power and absolutely no power to prosecute on private land.

Labor MP Peter Primrose has repeatedly said it is not the council's responsibility, legally or morally, and the State Government was merely looking for a scapegoat.

New battle for koalas

Wed / May 23 / 1990

Advertiser

23/5/90

McAd

By JEFF MCGILL

DESPITE more than two years of protests, the Land and Environment Court last week gave official approval to the construction of a housing subdivision on land near the Wedderburn koala colony.

This move has infuriated local environmentalists, unions and Campbelltown aldermen, all of whom have vowed to fight the decision.

The court said there was no reason that the planned residential developments should not go ahead, providing four blocks along the O'Hares Creek escarpment were removed.

Opponents claim the decision will threaten one of Australia's last remaining disease-free koala colonies.

Developers, Yap Yan Pin, are now legally free to move onto the site to begin work, but a union "green ban" is preventing this.

Environmental groups are now organising picket lines, the unions are contacting members and local politicians have vowed to "stand in front of bulldozers".

The approved development will involve 22 lots of two hectares being constructed, with Yap Yan Pin transferring 275ha to Campbelltown Council as open space reserve.

To date, council has refused to grant development consent, saying any development would have an adverse effect on the koala colony, bushland, and rare plant species.

After these refusals,

Yap Yan Pin appealed to the court.

On Friday, Justice Stein said approval of the 2ha subdivision, as it stood, involved too great a risk to the koala colony and was alone sufficient to justify refusal.

However, he said that if the developer removed the four escarpment blocks, (which Yap Yan Pin will now do), the proposal would then be an "acceptable development".

"The deletion of these lots and their dedication as public reserve, will, in my opinion, adequately protect the koala colony," Justice Stein said.

"It is difficult to see why consent should not be given to a reduced 22 x 2ha subdivision."

He stated that whereas the koalas would be best protected by no development, neither the State or Federal Governments had made any effort to acquire the land.

Therefore, he said, the best solution is for "sensitive development".

In this event, Justice Stein said the responsibility for the koalas' welfare

would lie with council and the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS).

He said there was also an obligation on both bodies to strictly police the area and enforce any breach of the conservation agreement — if necessary, in the Land and Environment Court.

Sue Dobson, of the Campbelltown Koala Association (CKA), described the decision as "totally unacceptable".

She has also appealed to people to contact her to volunteer for protests and picket lines to stop the development.

The Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association (FEDFA) has pledged to continue their building trades group "green ban", preventing

any development on the site.

Project manager, Peter Lean, said he would be meeting with Yap Yan Pin later in the week to discuss the issue.

Campbelltown Mayor, Jim Kremmer, and local MP, Peter Primrose, have told the *Advertiser* that they will stand in front of bulldozers if the green bans are broken.

Federal MP for Werriwa, John Kerin, has also said he would join in any protests, if the matter had to be "fought on the ground".

Major environment groups are also geared up for a fight, with the head of the Australian Conservation Foundation, Peter Garrett, being informed about the proceedings.

LOCAL environmentalists and politicians have joined in a final plea to the State Government to intervene and buy the Wedderburn land from the developers.

This follows the approval of development last week, and protesters say Government action is the only way to

stop picket lines, union action and arrests.

To date, the State Government has refused to buy the land, saying the whole issue was none of their responsibility.

In the Land and Environment Court, Justice Stein said, "In my opinion the colony is important not only to the local area, but to the State as a whole."

Environmental groups say surely the State's environment is the responsibility of the State Government.

When contacted by the *Advertiser* a spokesman for Environment Minister Tim Moore said that it was not his responsibility, but the Planning Department's.

However, the spokeswoman for Planning Minister David Hay had failed to respond by the time of going to press.

Sue Dobson of the Campbelltown Koala Association (CKA) said the developer does not want the problems of protests, arrests and green bans, and may be willing to accept a settlement payment — probably of around \$2 million — for the site.

"Yap Yan Pin bought the land in good faith and should be reimbursed, money which would be a drop in the ocean for a State Government," she said.

Campbelltown alderman, Peter Primrose, said that the State Government had always said the issue wasn't their responsibility, yet bought land occupied by koalas on the north coast — in a Coalition electorate.

Graham Douglas, of the National Parks Association, has called on the State Government to make the area a part of the proposed Dharawal Nature Reserve.

"Clearly it is disappointing, but what is important now is that as much land as possible be dedicated as a nature reserve," he said.

"The court has given a clear message to the Greiner Government that the koalas warrant the best protection."

● HAVE your say on Wedderburn. Pages 10 11

Macarthur Advertiser 23rd May 1990

HOMES BEFORE KOALAS

A JUDGE has overruled Campbelltown Council and agreed to Yap Yan Pin Pty Ltd proceeding with a rural type housing subdivision in the general area of the Wedderburn koala colony.

However, leading environmentalist Sue Dobson told *The Chronicle* yesterday that the decision did not offer koalas any protection.

Sue, speaking on behalf of the Campbelltown Koala Association, said she was unhappy with the judgement, which in no way negated the dangers to the koala colony from urbanisation.

"The subdivision of the land will bring with it the risk of fires, vandalism and uncontrolled pets," she said.

Ms Dobson said the association would fight on and rely on union bans to stop the proposed housing development.

"The whole thing has become political — the trouble is we live in a Labor stronghold and have a Liberal government," she said.

Judge Paul Stein in the Land and Environment Court last Friday gave consent to Yap Yan Pin developing a subdivision of 22 lots of 2ha on what was formerly part of the Yeoman's estate.

The subdivision site is several kilometres

by ALLAN CLEAVER

away from the nearest known koala habitat and is confined to the southern section of the land owned by Yap Yan Pin.

Under the terms of the judgement, the company will have to give 283ha of its total holding of 371ha to council as public reserve.

In making his finding, Judge Stein virtually upheld an appeal by Yap Yan Pin against the refusal of its subdivision proposal by Campbelltown Council.

This proposal was for a subdivision of 26 lots of 2ha, but the judge granted consent for subdivision of only 22 lots — deleting four lots which he regarded as being too close to the koala habitat.

The four lots are now included in the 283ha which the company must give to council as public reserve. The 2ha subdivision proposal was a compromise to an earlier proposal by Yap Yan Pin — also rejected by the council — for a subdivision of 26 lots each of 4ha.

This earlier proposal was also before Judge Stein on appeal, but he refused consent on the grounds that its potential impact on the koala community was unacceptable. Although the court had only

limited information on the koala population, it was clear that the colony was a significant one, he said.

He said the colony was important not only to the local area, but to the State as a whole.

Judge Stein said approval of the 2ha subdivision as it stood involved too great a risk to the koala colony and this was sufficient to justify

□ TO PAGE 2

Koala case

□ FROM PAGE 1
refusal of the application.

The only acceptable development was of 22 2ha residential lots, excluding four of the lots.

The judge said the deletion of four lots would adequately protect the koala colony provided the owners acted sensibly in their occupation of the land and council strictly enforced conditions of consent and properly managed the crucial public reserve areas.

"Ideally, it may well be said that the koala can best be protected through no development," he said.

"But the zoning remains which permits rural residential subdivision — indeed, subdivision development far greater in extent than that contained in the 2ha application."

Project Manager for Yap Yan Pin Peter Lean said he hoped all parties would accept the umpire's decision.

"I hope they will work with me in ensuring that the development proceeds with all the environmental protection required by Judge Stein and further assist me in the management of the area set aside for the protection of the flora and fauna," he said.

The Chronicle 22nd May 1990

Professor Brian Andrew
Dean
FACULTY OF BUSINESS &

DISTRIBUTION, POPULATION SIZE AND DISPERSAL OF KOALAS AT WEDDERBURN, NSW

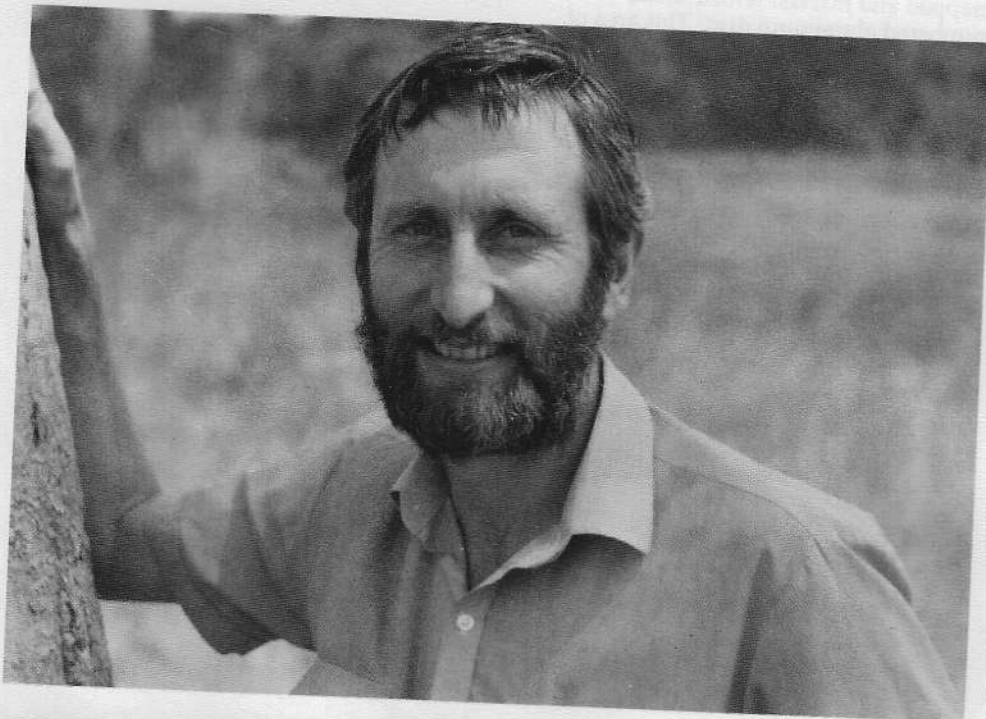
DR ROBERT CLOSE

One of Australia's native marsupials, which was shot in large numbers in the early 1900s, came under the spotlight again in 1990, but for a vastly different reason. While large numbers of koalas were shot for their skins, colonies in the Campbelltown area have slowly returned after an apparent absence of 50 years - prompting Dr Robert Close, senior lecturer in biological sciences at UWS Macarthur, to commence a study focusing on one of Australia's best ambassadors.

"At Campbelltown, like many other areas throughout the eastern coast, it's thought

that the combined effects of land clearance and hunting destroyed koala colonies," Dr Close said. "In June 1986, however, the animals were rediscovered and since then the Campbelltown branch of the National Parks Association, has been accumulating a list of koala sightings.

"Apart from these sightings, the only other consistent records of koalas between Sydney and Nowra since 1975 have been 120 sightings in the Avon Dam area. This scarcity of koalas in the South and the proximity of the Campbelltown koalas to Sydney makes the Campbelltown colony especially valuable," Dr Close said.



Dr Robert
Close.

More Sydney bush earmarked for sale

By ALEX MITCHELL

THE State Government is poised for another major sale of Crown land for residential development along the banks of the Georges River, south-west of Sydney.

The sell-off of 500 hectares of open space bushland has been recommended by Purdon Associates Pty Ltd, a Canberra-based consultancy, in a report to Planning Minister David Hay.

The area earmarked for residential development, commercial recreation and tourist accommodation is almost a quarter of the Georges River Open Space which stretches between Liverpool and Appin.

The consultant's report has stirred widespread opposition from environment groups, Campbelltown Council and some local residents.

Campbelltown Mayor Jim Kremmer said yesterday: "The Government should keep its hands off our open space.

"It is only in this for the \$70 million it will get out of selling it.

"I call on the Premier to override the Minister for Planning (David Hay) as he did in the recent North Sydney dispute.

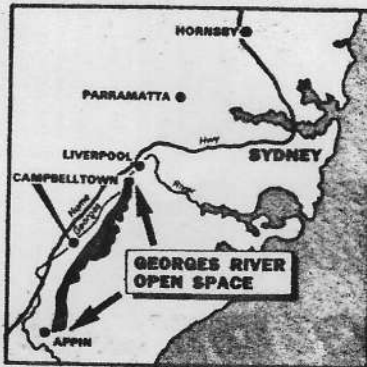
"I expect councils across Sydney and also the environmental groups to support us in this issue and express their concern to the Government."

Mr Kremmer said there were a number of very important reasons for opposing the land sale.

"I see the Georges River Open Space as not just the lungs of the southwest, but part of the lungs of Sydney," he said.

"Some of the fauna here are endangered. For example, there are platypus, lyre birds and wedge-tailed eagles, and this area is close to the Wedderburn Koala colony.

"There is also the inevitable



pollution of the Georges River itself from the run-off from medium density housing so close to the river. There was no discussion of the Government's report with the council throughout its preparation and it has been presented in a very unacceptable manner."

The Georges River Open Space covers half the length of the Georges River and extends from Appin to Casula with a river frontage of 46 kilometres. It has a total area of 2,345 hectares held in public and private ownership.

Undisturbed

A series of reports prepared for and endorsed by Governments since the days of the late Premier Sir Robert Askin have recommended the preservation of the area's natural bushland and its gradual extension through a continuing Government-funded acquisition program.

One such report, prepared by Croft and Associates in 1983, recommended that the area be taken over by the National Parks and Wildlife Service as a State Recreation Reserve.

The Croft report endorsed the 1968 Sydney Region Outline Plan which "designated a belt of bushland adjoining the headwaters of the Georges River as the location for a major new open space zone.

The area was selected because of its largely undisturbed condition, the high recreation value of the river and its proximity to the Macarthur growth district."

However, Mr Hay's Planning Department is now seriously considering the recommendations of the recently released Purdon Report which includes the sale of 499 ha, the non-acquisition of 112 ha, the retention of 953 ha and the acquisition of 188 ha.

Concerned local residents have formed the Save The Georges River Campaign to fight the Government's sell off plans.

The campaign's convenor, Alderman Anne Penn, of Campbelltown, said: "This is the greatest threat to our local environment.

"It is pristine bushland with lots of wild life. There are few areas in Sydney that have these characteristics outside the National Parks.

"The Government is in for a huge fight if it proceeds to sell this land off for profit," said Ald Penn.

Gabrielle Kibble, director of the State Planning Department, has rejected criticism of the Purdon Report and argued that the environmental value of much of the Georges River has never been questioned and is not under threat.

She also said she hoped the report would be the basis of "rational debate".

"No final decisions will be taken without further consultation with the Campbelltown Council," she said. "We are committed to retaining a major portion of the open space area."

However, Dr Robert Close, lecturer in biology and environmental science at the Macarthur Institute, remains concerned.

He said the river was a delicate eco-system supporting a wide range of native animals which would be placed under severe pressure by the proposed development.

efficient . . . and then let all the good work languish on the docks.

There is ample evidence to show that even modest reforms on the wharves would streamline operations and that drastic changes would have a dramatic impact on Australia's earning capacity.

But instead of action, the wharfies continue to plod through the day - shutting up shop for tea breaks and lunch breaks - while trucks and ships are left idle.

The cost of these shenanigans is borne by all Australians and contributes directly to the problems causing so much industrial and personal anguish across the land.

Our trade imbalance cannot be brought under control until our exporters have a clear path to the world; and until exports rise appreciably there is little hope of interest rates falling.

In the meantime, the trucks wait, the ships wait and the nation waits . . . until the wharfies finish their afternoon cuppa.

Victims of crime

NIKOLA Djuric showed commendable courage when he tried to stop two men he caught ransacking his house. But instead of being praised for his initiative he found himself on the wrong side of the law.

He was charged with attempted murder, malicious wounding, assault occasioning actual bodily harm and two charges of common assault.

This unfortunate state of affairs was resolved yesterday when a magistrate discharged all matters, ending seven months of anguish for Mr Djuric.

Although the law has been proved to be sufficiently flexible by freeing Mr Djuric from any culpability, the rights of citizens to protect their own property are far from clear.

A modern set of guidelines is necessary so the victims of crime do not also become victims of the law.

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The 'experts' should try the basic wage

MR "Greedy-grasping" Greiner seems hellbent on lowering the Australian working man's standard of living to equal the living standards of "third world" countries.

What with sticking his grubby little fingers into petrol, registrations, electricity and water rates, he surely has no conscience - and no sympathy or thought for the worker who was battling to keep his head above water before these latest taxes.

All who profess to do the best for our country should spend at least two years on a "basic wage" salary so they can get the feel of the struggle the worker has to live decently.

J.M. WATSON
Budgegwoi

Bosses amiss

IF airline management have allowed the pilots to work only eight hours a week I think they should resign.

CRAIG COOK
Cheltenham

More than drivers

THE recent comparison Bob Hawke made between pilots and bus drivers is nothing short of propaganda. The general public was given a farcical idea of what pilot attitudes really are.

I am several weeks away from completing my commercial licence and the 12-month course to get me this far has been an intense trial of mind and body.

Apart from physically learning how to fly the aircraft, a pilot must become a physicist, an electrician, an engineer, a doctor, a meteorologist and learn several volumes of rules/regulations to satisfy federal law.

Unlike a regular bus licence, a pilot's licence is constantly being examined by virtue of retesting

Fat cats use cream suppliers

THE fat cats who are responsible for the pilots' strike, by not giving the pilots the 30 per cent pay rise they asked for, are in real trouble.

They have no pilots to fly their own planes, which is entirely their own fault.

Just how silly can they get?
J. FARDY
West Marrickville

pilot skills and knowledge, satisfying recency requirements and complete medical re-evaluation.

The workload of a pilot is extremely high. Before the aircraft takes off, some 100 checks have to be made as to its safety. Thorough emergency drills are rehearsed again and again.

To bring an aircraft down from 30,000 feet with 300 people on board with half a tailplane missing would give rise to a pilot stress level much higher than that of a bus driver.

A pilot lives with a possible similar emergency in the back of his mind.

Comparing pilots to bus drivers is like comparing the local football coach to the Prime Minister.

CHRIS LEE
Cessnock

On steady course

YOUR editorial (DT, September 1) is wrong in asserting that the Opposition is in any way supporting "soft options" which bow to the demands of domestic airline pilots.

The Opposition does not support the action taken by the pilots.

We have consistently supported legal sanctions on unlawful industrial action by any employer or union. The Govern-



CALL THE HOTLINE

IF you don't have time to write your letter, then phone it in on our Hotline number: Sydney 288 3591 between 9.30am and 10.30am on weekdays.

Keep your Hotlines letter to 50 words or less - and you must leave your name, phone number and address.

HOTLINE

THE anti-logging protestors' rudeness to the Premier is their true colors emerging. The public would have nothing to do with them if all their activities in the south-east forest area were published. **NAME AND ADDRESS SUPPLIED**

DERRYN Hinch on September 6 proved what we already know - that is, that the Prime Minister is careless with the truth. Hawke stated that he learned to fly an aeroplane in seven hours. Hinch checked and found Hawke did not fly solo until after he had had 30 odd hours of instruction. If Hawke handles the truth so carelessly how can he handle the responsibility of leading the Government of Australia.

HUGH McNAB
Tuncurry

RE the editorial on koala colony protection protest (DT, September 6). The only ratbag behavior over koala protests came FROM the NSW Government. On 10.7.89 a delegation from Campbelltown consisting of the mayor, town planner and Koala Association rep took an appeal to the Minister for Planning to save the Wedderburn koala colony. His excuse for not saving Wedderburn from urban development was that the people of Campbelltown had had enough money spent on them in the past 20 years. The Government is totally ignoring the destruction of the last coastal koala habitat in NSW. Also, the Australia Koala Foundation which collects money for research would be doing our koalas a favor if the money were poured into saving the koala habitats first.

SUE DOBSON
Campbelltown Koala Assoc

MRS Georgina Brown (Letter, September 6) is foolish. By not watching the Aussies bury the Poms in the Ashes series she missed out on seeing the greatest Aussie cricket team since the days of Lillee, Marsh, the Chappells and co. Get back in the kitchen Mrs Brown.

JOHN THORNTON
Rooty Hill

Cryptic message

THIS month marks the first anniversary in Australia of The Crossworders Club.

The club has more than 100 members but we are always looking for more cryptic cruciverbalists.

For details of joining send a stamped SAE to P.O. Box 17, Austral, NSW 2171.

ALAN EASON
Austral

Koalas need friends

I SUPPORT the koala colony of Wedderburn. I think we should let them live without development or pollution of their habitat.

The people of Campbelltown should support the Campbelltown Council in their efforts to save the koalas.

The NSW Minister for Planning, Mr David Hay, has given the Wedderburn koala colony the flick.

To say Campbelltown has had its share of money shows the NSW Government's lack of concern for Campbelltown residents.

No school for St Andrews, the closure of Camden Children's Ward and the Wedderburn koalas will be destroyed if more developments move in to poison their habitat. No bridge for Minto.

The NSW Government's next exercise will be to sell off Georges River, open space for developers to have a field day, possibly to the tune of \$80 million.

The NSW Government has turned off its lights on our fair city.

**Miss R Colebough,
Ambarvale Heights.**

The Chronicle 8th August, 1989

Save koalas' plan

QUITE a lot of reports on protests about the development of the Wedderburn district and the saving of the koalas in that area have been published in both the local and Sydney papers.

I have had the experience during my lifetime of over 80 years of witnessing two colonies of koalas being wiped out, and the same thing will happen at Wedderburn unless certain precautions are taken.

In my youth I worked in a sawmill on the South Coast where huge forests of trees existed.

One would often see a koala running from a tree after it was felled.

Hundreds of koalas were in these great forests.

Every few years fires would rage throughout these forests destroying most wildlife, including koalas.

Some, of course, would survive.

Since the woodchip industry started 20 years ago fire have become more frequent as many thousands of lovely trees have been hewn down and tree tops left in the bush, which is a real fire hazard.

Evidently someone brought several koalas to the Wedderburn area in the last few years.

I have spoken to some of the old hands who were born there and they declare there weren't any koalas there until recently.

Also, the council employs rangers to search through the bushland.

If there was evidence of the koalas being there, why didn't they inform the council before allowing the developers to purchase this huge area of land.

There is only one way to save the few koalas at Wedderburn.

This is to develop five hectares in several areas, leaving the same amount for the protection of the koalas.

If a bushfire did start, the residents living in the homes could immediately ring the local brigades.

These koalas must be saved and at the same approval must be given for a certain amount of buildings.

**Bon Wrightson,
Campbelltown.**

Macarthur Advertiser 16th August, 1989

Koala slaughter

The Australian koala story will not have a traditional happy ever after ending if we do not act now, not only here in Campbelltown, but in NSW as a whole.

People will never allow another mass slaughter of koalas as they have in early years, but bushfires and the clearing of forests are still major threats. Australia has less than five per cent of its various habitats set aside as National Parks and nature reserves, while farmlands are losing more and more trees.

Preserve the habitat and you preserve the animals is the basic principle of nature conservation.

The need is urgent to save remaining koala habitats. When the Europeans arrived in 1788 the koala was common in the dry forest country from the south-east of South Australia through Victoria and New South Wales into Queensland.

Their numbers were in the millions, and for some years the koala entered a halcyon period as the Aboriginal hunters were swept away by the white settlers in the all too common pattern for indigenous people around the world.

The slaughter to near extinction began early in this century and the numbers of koalas killed were staggering.

In 1908, 57,933 skins were sold in the Sydney markets and so the slaughter had become a flood and two million skins were sent out from the eastern States.

The koalas of South Australia were wiped out. The numbers in Victoria fell so dramatically that in the 1920s the estimated population was some 500. NSW also suffered a dramatic decline.

With our oldest known fossil koala being found in rocks of 15 million years ago, this animal has had a long history of evolutionary adjustment to our land.

Slaughtered for their skins and now to be slaughtered because their forests are now under massive threats from developers, we have a right to demand that the last koala habitat in this State be protected.

No development at Wedderburn should be the name of the day, from Wedderburn to Appin to Bulli it should be declared (nature reserve and a National Park area), including Crown land, water catchment area, State forest and the army 'H' range, including the Yap Yan Pin Pty Ltd development and any other private land needed to endorse the saving of this magnificent, valuable, pristine wilderness which contains koalas, Aboriginal sites, rare trees and plants, a unique wildlife basin, rare fish and many bird species.

Thousands of dollars are collected in this State each year in the name of the koala, the money goes out of NSW and is never used to save koala habitats in this State. We ask you, the people of NSW to endorse our stand on the saving of this unique area.

**Sue Dobson,
Chairperson,
Campbelltown Committee
To Save Wedderburn Koala
Colony.**

Developers battle with conservationists

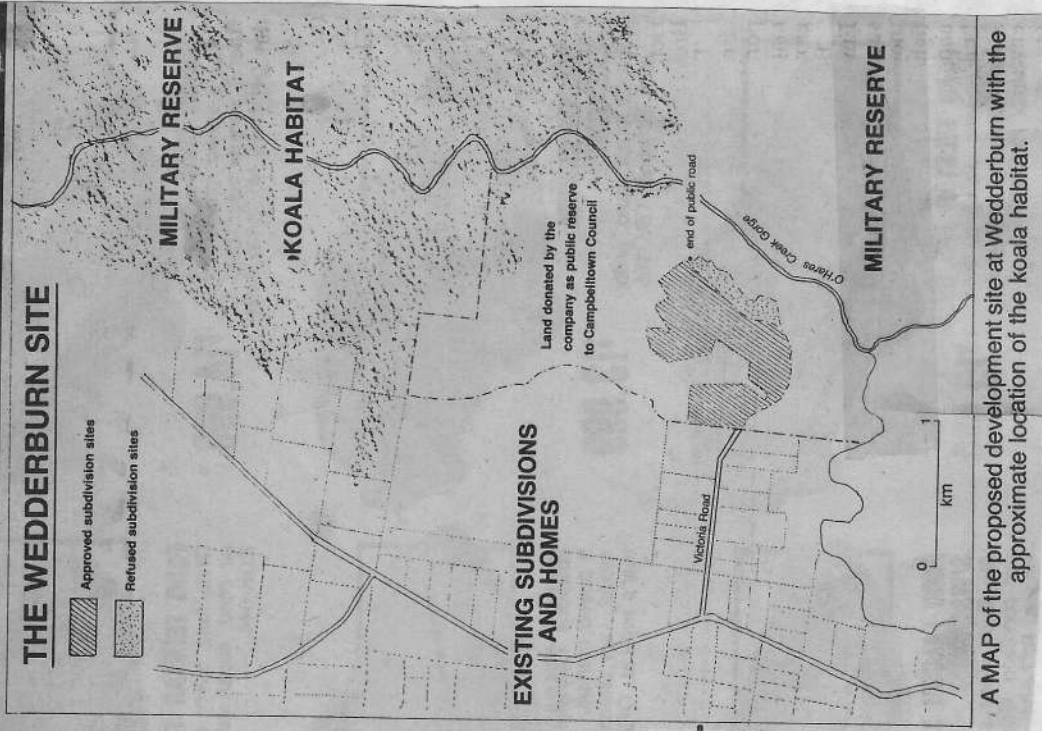
Koalas V housing

THERE are few people in Campbelltown who do not have an opinion on the controversial Wedderburn koala issue. With the Land and Environment Court approving the development last week, furious conservationists are organising picket lines and protest groups.

The only thing stopping development is union greenbans. In this "breathing space", the Advertiser has profiled both sides of the argument — for and against development — and ask our readers to give us their thoughts.

QUESTION: Given both sides of the argument, do you believe development at Wedderburn is justified in going ahead, and will not adversely affect the koalas?

To register your vote ring (046) 25 9055. Please only answer "yes" or "no".



A MAP of the proposed development site at Wedderburn with the approximate location of the koala habitat.

NEGOTIATIONS

In late January 1989, the developers' compromise "two-hectare" offer was put before the council and once again Mr Kremmer used his casting vote to defeat a motion for acceptance of the plan.

Mr Kremmer said he believed his action reflected the community's view.

The two groups at the forefront of the fight - the Macarthur branch of the NPA and the Save the Koalas Committee - were both opposed to the compromise plan as it stood.

Mr Kremmer however did state that the compromise "had a lot of merit" and praised the developers' "responsible attitude", but he was still dedicated to fight the State Government to buy the developers out.

However, In January the NPA gave the devel-

opers five conditions, which if met, would enable the NPA to agree to the compromise. These were:

- That the NPA be satisfied with the environmental assessment carried out, but not made public;

- Four blocks on the edge of the escarpment be removed from the subdivision;

- The State Government to make a firm commitment to the early establishment of the proposed Dharawal Nature Reserve in the O'Hares Ck area;

- The council to assign extra ranger patrols to the area in the interim; and

- Further consultations take place with the NSW Trades and Labor Council and relevant unions.

Julie Sheppard said the potential now existed to achieve a nature reserve, which with the inclusion of the remainder of the land originally proposed for development but now to be given over to the council, that would exceed the original nature reserve proposal.

PETITIONS, PUBLICITY

In mid-January the CCSWK began raising a petition asking the council to reject any further development schemes and continue the fight to have the area declared Regional Open Space.

During a council meeting on February 14, more than 50 outraged residents stormed into the public gallery, protesting over the development plans.

But the rage turned to cheers and laughter when Ald Hennessey arrived wearing furry koala ears.

The protesters waved placards and showed their support for Ald Hennessey with loud applause.

But the laughter subsided as serious debate got underway, with protestors jeering speakers who supported the compromise offered by the company.

Non-Labor aldermen tried to rescind the decision made at the previous council meeting.

Sue Dobson's petition of 13,500 signatures was presented to the council.

The development was again officially rejected and the public gallery

cheered wildly when the council voted 8-7 to pass the matter on to Premier Greiner, who they hoped would intervene.

BRICK WALLS

In March, Mr Kremmer re-stated his belief that rezoning the area as Regional Open Space was still "the koalas' only real chance and is rapidly gaining widespread community support".

Yet the "pro-koala" forces seemed to be getting nowhere, meeting only brick walls.

By this time the original approval for the sub-division had expired, but the developers refrained from lodging a new development application, knowing it would probably be refused.

Instead, they have opted to wait to see how the council's fight to declare the area Regional Open Space proceeds.

However, with progress slow and the Government seemingly determined not to bow down to the council and environmentalist demands, it is presumed the developers will soon make another application, this time for their original four-hectare plan.

If the council refuses this, Yap Yap Pin Ltd will probably take the matter to the Land and Environment Court.

In mid-June a spokesman for Mr Greiner said it was not necessary to rezone the site as Regional Open Space.

Mr Hay also stated that the Planning Department was initiating discussions with the NPWS and Council to organise a study to "thoroughly evaluate" the extent and condition of the koala colony, the possible impacts of development and the preferred means of protecting the colony.

At the same time, Opposition Environment spokesman Pam Allan slammed the decision of the government to export koalas to Japan while it "ignored" the threatened Wedderburn colony.

The move was also attacked by the council and the koala groups.

Mr Moore said the decision to send the koalas to Japan had nothing to do with the Wedderburn colony.

The story so far: The campaign to save the Wedderburn Koalas started on a promising note with the State Government responding to mounting public interest by issuing an Interim Protection Order putting a freeze on the housing estate.

But the Government, in a sudden turnabout, lifted this order some weeks later to be replaced by a voluntary covenant which would allow "controlled" development of the area.

Environmentalists slammed the move and the council pointed out that such agreements were impossible to police.

Efforts were made to persuade the Government to acquire the koala habitat and include it in the proposed Dharawal Natural reserve.

The Government denied responsibility.

As the public support for the campaign grew and unions imposed a "green ban" to stop any development work, a special CSIRO report was commissioned to determine what action was necessary.

On October 15, the largest public rally so far was attended by aldermen, MPs and Opposition spokesmen. Both Environment Minister Tim Moore and Planning Minister David Hay declined invitations to attend.

The meeting adopted a resolution to ask the politicians present to introduce a Bill which would excuse the housing estate from the provisions of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act and Local Government Act, and turn the estate into a nature reserve as part of a national park.

The meeting also called on the council to co-operate with the committee's solicitors in determining means to have the development declared invalid.

Mr Kremmer implored Premier Greiner to intervene.

Mrs Dobson stressed that the problem was not "that very little of the koala habitat occurs on the land proposed for

development", but that increased public access would mean more people, more dogs and cats and much greater risk to fauna in the area.

THE CSIRO REPORT

On October 18, the much-awaited CSIRO report was presented to the council, but failed to achieve any concrete results, as both sides claimed the report favoured their own arguments.

The study, carried out by the CSIRO's Wildlife and Ecology Division, said that the sub-division would not extend into prime koala habitat.

It was hailed by Yap Yap Pin as largely vindicating their position in the controversy.

It found that all areas of prime koala habitat were outside the boundaries of the proposed residential lots and none of the eucalyptus food chains was on the blocks.

However, it also stressed that undue disturbance to the koalas could result from harassment by domestic animals, especially dogs, or excessive use of the area by humans.

This was hailed by the opponents of the sub-division.

In conclusion, the report resolved that provided guidelines laid down by the National Parks and Wildlife Service were observed, the koala colony would not be at risk.

With the State Government claiming victory, the council moved decisively to quash any developments with a calculated strategy designed to foil the Asian company behind the development and permanently protect the koalas.

The council decided to:

- Prepare a new Draft Local Environment Plan (LEP) which would, with State Government consent, rezone the proposed subdivision as Regional Open Space;

- Ask Planning Minister David Hay to formally agree to the rezoning; and
- Seek expert legal advice on how to revoke the council's existing approval without incurring liability for huge compensation.

Regional Open Space zoning would prevent the housing sub-division going ahead and would mean the State Government would have to buy the estate from Yap Yap Pin.

The State Government refused the requests.

After the release of the CSIRO report, the union ban was the only factor preventing the developers from starting the road-works on the sub-division.

Because of this "green ban", it seemed unlikely

that work could start before the council's approval of the various stages of the sub-division expired between November and March.

If the council revoked the existing approval in the meantime, it could face claims for compensation running to millions of dollars.

Council asked the Government to indemnify it against any such claims, but this was refused.

Environment Minister Tim Moore said the council could revoke its development approval with the stroke of a pen, but the council argued that this was incorrect and that a laborious legal process, which was started, was necessary.

The council replied by stating that the Government could resolve the matter by simply restoring the conservation order, but a firm "no" still followed.

The developers insisted that the Government would have to purchase the land if it were rezoned as Regional Open Space.

In turn, the Government blamed the council for giving the original approval for the rezoning in 1982, but Mayor Jim Kremmer said as he was not even an alderman at the time and he refused to take responsibility.

"As Mr Moore should not have to accept responsibility for decisions made by previous State Governments, why should the present Campbelltown Council be blamed for mistakes made by our predecessors?" Mr Kremmer said.

Mr Moore accused council of "playing politics" and emarking on a "campaign of lies and distortion".

KOALA SUMMIT

In mid-November the much-publicised State Government Koala Summit was held in Sydney.

Mr Kremmer labelled the summit as a "cynical public relations exercise", which was supported by environmentalists who claimed the summit had resolved nothing.

"While the Greiner Government embarks on its expensive promotional campaign, its real attitude to koalas is evidenced by its refusing to lift a finger to save the colony at Wedderburn", Mr Kremmer said.

At this time a council-prepared Local Environment Plan (LEP) aimed at rezoning the land Regional Open Space was approved by the council.

However, Mr Hay rejected it, giving two reasons.

- The LEP had not justified the acquisition of the land for Regional Open Space purposes.

- It was understood that planning controls could be used to protect the site.

These "planning controls" were the fact that the council was now in receipt of an alternative development proposal which proposed two-hectare lots, instead of four-hectare ones, and dedicated the remaining land as local open space.

Mr Hay suggested that the council consider the planning alternatives as a means of resolving any conflict between the proposed development and protection of koalas.

In December, Mr Hay's refusal of the Regional Open Space LEP was put before the council, which decided by the narrow margin of 8-7 to reject his reasons.

With 14 of the 15 aldermen present, the vote tied at 7-7, which meant that Mayor Kremmer used his casting vote to pass the resolution.

However, several aldermen lodged a rescission motion which sought to overturn that decision, but the motion was again defeated 8-7.

Jeff McGill

Decimating bushland

I would like to ask why is council shunning its responsibility?

Why have they been so slow in securing the protection of our Wedderburn Koala Colony?

Why has the buck passing not yet stopped?

Why has no-one had the initiative and moral fibre to accept the need for a healthy alternative?

Why must we here in Campbelltown be as the blind following the blind into a ditch?

Let us stand together, let us muster the courage of our convictions, let us hold the community high, let us be proud to do so.

Do we really wish to become a replica of those

sterile cities around us?

To decimate and defile the beauty and innocence of the Wedderburn bushland would be no less than irrational and irresponsible.

Each municipality is but a microism. It seems that we, as world citizens, must work within this sphere if our earth is to survive at all.

Preserving the earth is our responsibility.

Our elected representatives must make a stand.

Take a step towards reason rather than away from it.

All that is needed is a positive quality of leadership.

Are any of you noble enough to lead the way and stop the devastation and exploitation of our environment?

If you do it will only be a matter of time before newer and less advanced council follow suit.

If this were 200 years ago we could be excused for our erroneous ways.

We could feasibly declare ourselves ignorant.

We cannot do that today, we have too much knowledge too little time.

Elected leaders are there to protect the interests of their electorates.

The rationalism of the 20th century must be drummed into the consciousness of those still unaware of it.

Can this be done any other way than by example?

Do we have any aldermen who are gallant enough to accept the challenge?

If so, there is without doubt no better place to begin than our own backyard.

Council aldermen, please tell us what commitment you are making to ensure that the Wedderburn estate will become a nature reserve for all time.

A reserve that will offer sanctuary to all the treasures which it now possesses.

**Larry Whippen,
Ingleburn.**

Mythical closure

Regarding Ald. Merry's hysterical outburst concerning the mythical clo-

sure of Moorebank Avenue.

One wonders where Mr Merry has been hiding himself.

No doubt Mr Merry is not aware of countless meetings that have taken place regarding Moorebank Avenue.

I have chaired some of these myself.

Surely one would wonder what actions would be taken by the Federal Members of this area, if Moorebank Avenue was under threat of closure.

I am quite sure they have the welfare of their constituents at heart, not only would there be concern from Federal Members but also an uprising of the many motorists who use this thoroughfare.

The solutions are as I have sought for some time, a road along side East Hills rail link.

Also that Mr Merry's Liberal colleague Nick Greiner, keep one of his pre-selection promises; that is to build the F5 freeway during his first term of Government and I would add there was no mention of toll roads when Nick made this promise.

**Mr Stan Knowles,
State Member for Macquarie Fields.**

Koala concern

At long last the people of Campbelltown are showing their concern for the koalas.

Members of the Campbelltown Association to Save the Wedderburn Koala Colony, have been working in Campbelltown asking people to sign petitions...and sign they do.

The count over a couple of weeks is very encouraging.

The whole of Australia's environment is under threat, with logging going on all over the place and politicians chasing the "mighty dollar" and al-

lowing overseas developers to buy up and destroy our natural beauty spots.

Are the people ever consulted about these decisions?

Were people consulted when waste treatment stations were built?

No I think not.

Don't allow destruction at Wedderburn by mercenary politicians - it might be interesting to speak the children of some of these people and see what they think.

Would they be allowed to express an opinion of their own?

Come on Campbelltown - Keep on keeping on with the fight to Save the Wedderburn Koalas.

**Concerned,
Airds.**

MAC AD 19/7/89
BEFORE THE CRISIS: The actual existence of the Yeomans Estate subdivision was made possible because Campbelltown Council had zoned the area for residential use.

This was after an investigation by the National Parks and Wildlife Service in 1982 reported there was no sensitive fauna in the area.

However, in 1986 the Macarthur branch of the National Parks Association discovered a koala colony in the area and began closely monitoring it.

A behind-the-scenes campaign began, as the council and the NPWS attempted to achieve some formal protection for the koalas and their habitat.

It was felt essential to maintain a "fair degree of secrecy about the koalas to avoid unwelcome intruders".

When in May 1988, the NPA learnt that the commencement of work on the sub-division at Wedderburn was imminent, the organisation went public about the existence of the koalas to draw

wider attention to the problem.

The koalas were found initially over an area of 5200 hectares, mainly on army land with restricted access to the public.

But the koalas were also found in a gully and along the edge of the O'Hares Ck gorge - both within the planned Yeomans Estate.

And here the battle to save the animals began, destined to become a subject that would dominate local news and involve the council, environmentalists, unions, developers and the State Government.

Mr Moore told the local media it was time for a co-ordinated effort to "save one of the world's most lovable creatures".

Responding to the actions of the Environment Minister, Yap Yap Pin developers made the gift of transferring 90 hectares

of the estate to Campbelltown Council as a public reserve.

However, they still planned to build the balance of the estate as 26 rural lots with a minimum area of four hectares. Eight of these blocks bordered the koala habitat.

OPTIMISTIC START

Realising the danger to the koalas if the sub-division went ahead, the Macarthur branch of the National Parks Association quickly called for State Government action to protect the animals.

Initial local interest was swiftly aroused and Member for Campbelltown Michael Knight made protection requests for the koalas in Parliament.

The colony was soon found to be more extensive than first thought

with the 68th sighting made in the first week of June 1988.

Responding to the mounting public interest, Environment Minister Tim Moore visited the site and ceremoniously nailed an Interim Protection Order to a tree in front of an array of media representatives.

The order announced that under the National Parks and Wildlife Act the animals' habitat would be protected for 12 months, putting a freeze on the housing estate until a full assessment was made.

The widely-applauded order was the first of its type in the State and because it had to be gazetted, Mr Moore instructed the Government Printer to publish a special edition at midnight on Friday, June 3, 1988.

GOVERNMENT TURNABOUT

Despite the early success, environmental applause for the State Government was to turn quickly to abuse.

Mr Moore announced a sudden turnabout on his decision and announced a new "conservation agreement" with the developers, lifting the Interim Protection Order he had issued only weeks earlier.

Mr Moore said the order would be replaced by a "voluntary covenant" which would allow subdivision development in the area of the koala habitat to proceed.

He said the covenant would strictly control land development, with tree-felling and clearance to be severely restricted and residents with dogs would

be required to keep them under strict supervision on their own land.

Furious environmentalists slammed the move.

NPA branch secretary Julie Sheppard said Mr Moore was "selling out the Wedderburn koala colony" and called the covenant "virtually worthless".

Ms Sheppard also branded Mr Moore's earlier guarantees as a hollow gesture and said that relying on the goodwill of future landowners was not a good enough safeguard for the future of the koalas.

Campbelltown Council argued that conservation agreements of this type were impossible to police.

"How do you force a landholder taking his dog for a stroll to keep it on its leash, and how do you tell a dog that has been dumped in the bush to go home and get a leash?" one alderman asked.

In July, the NPA began a public appeal for funds to save the colony from destruction, with the donated money to be used to buy the affected part of the planned subdivision.

They were supported in their efforts by the council, the initial plans being to persuade the Government to acquire the koala habitat land and include it in the proposed Dharawal Nature Reserve.

However, the Government denied responsibility and refused to contribute any money towards

purchasing the land from developers.

On July 30, more than 150 people attended a meeting at Wedderburn to protest the government's "sellout".

The open-air gathering, organised by the NPA, was held at the end of Victoria Rd beside the entrance gates to the subdivision.

It was attended by Campbelltown Mayor Peter Primrose, Member for Campbelltown Michael Knight, Labor, Liberal and Independant aldermen and concerned people from as far away as Blacktown.

Hay hits back in koala row

Mac Ad.
19/7/89

Campbelltown: State Planning Minister David Hay has urged Campbelltown Council to undertake a new environmental study on the controversial koala colony at Wedderburn.

The suggestion follows a meeting with a local Save-the-Koalas deputation.

Mr Hay said the study should properly define the koala colony and examine the potential impact of any development in the area.

The study should also consider the 2ha subdivision layout offered by developers, which reduces the proposed development by two-thirds, providing a buffer zone between the proposed homes and koala habitat.

Last week the deputation, led by Campbelltown's Mayor, Alderman Jim Kremmer, met Mr Hay in Sydney to demand the State Government declare the area Regional Open Space, which would veto any future developments.

The deputation included Campbelltown Alderman John Hennessey, City Planner Richard Meaker and Save Wedderburn Koala Committee chairman Sue Dobson.

Mr Hay slammed the actions of the group.

"The council came in with only one thing in mind, which was to seek the Government to buy the council out of the mess it had got itself into," Mr Hay said.

"The council talks about the area being Regional Open Space. However, this is just a ploy to attempt to absolve the coun-

By JEFF MCGILL

cil of any financial responsibility.

"This new subdivision layout would also dedicate to the council free of charge an area of 275 hectares, which contains all the known koala habitats.

"The council has not even considered the revised subdivision proposal."

Ald Kremmer described the new offer as "nothing special".

Campbelltown Council has already commissioned a CSIRO report and a draft Local Environment Plan (LEP) for the proposal to declare the area Regional Open Space.

This would mean the State Government would have to buy the land from the developers at a cost of about \$2 million.

Ald Kremmer said the only report left to make would be an LEP to consider the developers' 2ha offer, instead of a 4ha area.

As part of this LEP, the developer would have to prepare an environmental impact study which would be aimed at justifying the co-existence of the subdivision and the koala colony.

From page 8: The battle so far — reporter Jeff McGill traces the history of the fight to save Wedderburn's koalas.

KOALA GROUPS VOW TO FIGHT

McAd 12/7/89

Last word

The meeting was designed to be the Government's last word on the subject.

In response, the deputation took with them a final request for the Government to declare the endangered koala habitat as Regional Open Space.

This would cost the State Government about \$2 million, due to the cost of buying out the controversial sub-division planned to be built in the area the koalas now inhabit.

The land in Wedderburn was zoned residential in 1982 and sold to developers, but last year an almost-unique disease-free colony of koalas was confirmed to exist, before any building took place.

Since then Campbelltown Council and environmental groups have fought hard to stop development in the area.

A furious Sue Dobson has vowed to fight on and said the battle has simply entered another phase.

"The unions have already given us their support with a total green ban on the area, so no roads, houses or services can be installed."

Mrs Dobson says more protests will now be organised and they may even establish a "koala embassy" out the front of State Parliament House.

Groups battling to save the Wedderburn koala colony have vowed to keep fighting, despite yet another refusal by the State Government to support moves to declare the controversial area as Regional Open Space.

By JEFF MCGILL

A special deputation met Planning Minister David Hay in his Sydney offices on Monday to discuss the struggle that has dominated local news for the past year.

However, the deputation members were shocked by Mr Hay's "lack-of-action justifications" and said they were appalled by his statement that Campbelltown had already received "its fair share" of Government money.

The deputation included Campbelltown Mayor Jim Kremmer, Alderman John Hennessey, City Planner Richard Meaker and Save Wedderburn Koala Committee spokeswoman Sue Dobson.

Deputation members told the *Macarthur Advertiser* that Mr Hay gave the major reason for not supporting the Open Space theory as the fact that developers had agreed to pay a trust fund for the koalas through the National Parks Association.

However Mr Kremmer checked with the developers yesterday and found no concrete deals had been made or even discussed, and confronted Mr Hay again during a radio debate.

On the program, Mr Hay denied he had made the statement to the deputation.

Other reasons Mr Hay gave for not granting the deal was because he was waiting on the results of an Environmental Impact Study, and because the developers had agreed to limit their subdivision.

Mr Hennessey said the meeting with Mr Hay was like banging their heads against a brick wall.

"The decision to say 'no' had already been decided before we walked into his office," Mr Hennessey said.

Hard fight

"This is a crucial national issue but we had to fight hard just to meet with Mr Hay.

"We couldn't see (Environment Minister) Tim Moore because he's in Tokyo talking to the Japanese about koalas — mind you he refused to come out to Wedderburn to our koalas."

Several other groups such as the Koala Council of NSW and Greenpeace have condemned Mr Hay's refusals.

Council will now approach Federal Environment Minister Graeme Richardson for the \$2 million funding.

NEXT WEEK: The battle so far. In a special feature, the *Macarthur Advertiser* will present a report on the history, personalities and politics of the fight to save the Wedderburn koalas.

Koalas export plan hit

THE State Opposition has attacked new moves to export koalas because it claims the Government is ignoring threatened colonies in its own backyard.

Environment spokeswoman Pam Allan said the decision to again send koalas to Japan, partly for study reasons, was hypocritical while the Government ignored the plight of the Wedderburn koala colony in Campbelltown.

Ms Allan said the Government should act to protect local colonies before concentrating their efforts overseas.

"It's issues like Wedderburn that make me opposed to the lifting of the koala export ban," she said.

"This gesture is a public relations gimmick because Mr Greiner is going to Japan this month."

Campbelltown Council alderman and State Member for Camden Peter Primrose said local people fighting for the colony's survival were outraged by the move.

Mr Primrose said council would continue its fight for the colony and had a number of plans in mind to

by **DAVID BURLEY** in State Parliament

restrict proposed development in the area.

He said the Governor may be called to act or international wildlife groups urged to contribute to a fund to buy the land in question.

An appeal to Premier Greiner to intervene in the case has been turned down, with a spokesman for the Premier saying a revised development proposal now before council had the Government's approval.

Council's solution, which would have seen the Government swap development sites with the developers, had been refused.

A spokesman for Environment Minister Tim Moore said the decision to send the koalas to Japan had nothing to do with the Wedderburn colony.

What would the response of the...
What factors problems are there...
A biologist isolated an enzyme (lactase) in the chloroplasts of algae. The enzyme produces molecules of glucose and galactose. First she made up 10% lactose solution and measured the rate of galactose production (the more galactose produced) in the second experiment she prepared concentrations of lactose (See Table B).

Table A	
Lactose concn	Enzyme concn
Reaction rate	
10%	0
0	0

Table B	
Lactose concn	Enzyme concn
Reaction rate	
0	25%
0	0

Explain the relationship between the rate...
State your explanation in terms of what...
enzymes and substrate molecules...
differ and why?

MACARTHUR ADVERTISER 11/4/89

Proposal is hogwash

I write in reply to an article on Dharawal Nature Reserve (Chronicle March 28).

How good, kind and benevolent for the National Parks Association Macarthur Branch to crawl out of the woodwork and announce their presence.

This Liberal based group said and did nothing about Wedderburn because Tim Moore, Minister for Environment is their "Aldoph" and nobody messes with "Big A" if they're N.P.A.

The proposal put forward in this article is hogwash.

The Save the Wedderburn Koala Colony Association has fought all the battles for Wedderburn in this area, because they have no political affiliations and want only what is best for the ani-

mals, flora, fauna and Aboriginal sites in this vast area.

They don't want walkways and people traipsing hither and thither, they want the animals to be free as they have always been.

Greiner and Moore are not to be trusted, look at the rainforests, ocean pollution and logging up and down our coastal areas, and the proposal to build a pulp mill at the Clarence Valley River.

To save Wedderburn we have to fight fire with fire (so to speak).

How about the new air runway over the North side, Sewage Treatment and Toxic Disposal Works too.

We in the south-west are sick and tired of being the garbage dump for this government.

Pilkington Glass proved the displeasure of the people.

Nick couldn't face the music let alone the people, and rather than answer questions about the high school at St Andrews he jumped in the helicopter and took off...who paid for the helicopter?

Save the Wedderburn Koala Colony will not compromise, there are some very well educated people in Campbelltown who I am sure will bombard newspapers with letters expressing their disgust and mistrust in the N.P.A. Concerned Citizen.

Name and Address supplied.

Rezoning land

Mac AA
17/5/89

I refer to the letter from Julie Sheppard from the National Parks Association on Wedderburn.

In her letter she states that "National Parks Association's actions have been taken with full knowledge and concurrence of the executive of the Nature Conservation Council".

In fact, this is not the case.

The Nature Conserva-

Rally together

I write in reply to a letter titled "Call Koala Colony in Reserve" (Macarthur Advertiser March 28).

Who on earth are these people on the National Parks Association (N.P.A.)?

I would like these people to come forward and to answer to me personally and the citizens of Campbelltown.

Where have they been during all the koala colony action?

I believe that early on in the koala debate one person representing the general consensus of opinion of the N.P.A. was quoted as saying to another "there is nothing more we can do, if you wish to carry

tion's Council's executive has not discussed Wedderburn since the Annual Conference where it was decided that we urge the government to acquire the Yeomans Property and create the Macarthur State Recreation Area and O'Haras Creek and Dharawal Nature Reserve.

We further noted that Yap Yap Pin land should be rezoned as regional open space.

We further supported the green ban on the Yap Yap Pin development.

The Nature Conservation Council's position has not changed since that time, and we support all the above proposals which ensure the protection of the Wedderburn koalas.

We urge all conservationist groups to do the same.

Haydn Washington,
Director, Nature Conser-

the issue further than you should so via rallying the people together yourself.

Hence the said person did so.

I believe the N.P.A. is affiliated with Liberal politics.

If they had a genuine concern for the koalas why aren't they approaching both Liberal and Labor groups?

After all, the environment isn't politically biased, just in need of saving.

What does it matter as long as someone does the job?

N.P.A. suggestions that walkways be created at Wedderburn are laughable.

I would like to see a koala read a cross now sign at a walkway.

N.P.A. do something positive or sit back and do nothing.

I defend the right to life and land for koalas, flora and fauna, I don't make exhibitions of them.

I certainly wouldn't suggest greater access to an area where nature survives, because this destroys the natural habitat.

Koala Lover,
Name and Address Supplied.

Saving koalas

MAA
17/5/89

To Name and Address Supplied (Advertiser April 26).

The Campbelltown Association loves animals, so your reference to the dog with the bone gave us a laugh.

We have professional people within our group

and for inexperienced, uneducated people we have done exactly what our name implies - Save Wedderburn Koalas Assoc.

You embrace the NPA because they are the only weak chain.

Your remarks about Lester Pahl are heresy.

The National Conservation Society of NSW does not condone destruction at Wedderburn and you will need more than the NPA link to resolve what you're trying to do.

Name and Address Supplied.

Macarthur Advertiser 17th May 1989

Macarthur Advertiser 17th May 1989

DECISION DATE SET

A COMPROMISE plan to develop a subdivision near a koala habitat at Wedderburn will again go before Campbelltown Council for decision at its meeting on February 14.

Under the plan, the developers, Yap Yan Pin Pty Ltd, of Indonesia, would dedicate more than two thirds of their land to council for use as public reserve.

They would halve the size of their subdivision, developing 26 two-acre blocks instead of 26 four-acre blocks, keeping the subdivision away from the koalas.

The company's Campbelltown agents, consultants Lean, Lackenby and Hayward, believe the new plan would avoid any interference with the colony.

At the last council meeting Mayor Jim Kremmer used his casting vote to defeat a motion for acceptance of the compromise plan.

Non-Labor aldermen will try to rescind the decision on February 14.

Mr Kremmer said he believed his use of the casting vote against the compromise plan reflected the community's view.

He said the two bodies in the forefront of koala protection moves — the Macarthur branch of the National Parks Association and the Committee to Save the Wedderburn Koala Colony — were both opposed to the compromise plan.

The mayor said he agreed, however, that the compromise plan had a lot of merit and the developer had shown a very responsible attitude.

As an alternative, Mr Kremmer at the last council meeting moved a further resolution which was carried on his casting vote.

This resolution was that the council ask Premier Nick Greiner to instruct Local Government and Planning Minister David Hay to have the

Homes plan at koala colony

by ALLAN CLEAVER

Wedderburn estate rezoned as Regional Open Space, preventing any housing development on it.

A request by the council for this rezoning was recently rejected by the Department of Planning.

If the area were to be rezoned, the State Government would be required to buy it and the cost could be as much as \$1.5 million.

Part of the council's development consent for the Wedderburn subdivision has now expired and the remainder of the consent will expire in February.

"Green bans" imposed by trade unions, effectively stopping road construction, have so far frustrated the developers in their bid to go ahead with the subdivision.

Meanwhile, the Macarthur branch of the National Parks Association says five conditions would have to be met before it could agree to the compromise plan of subdivision.

These conditions are:

- The NPA to be satisfied with the environmental assessment carried out — but not made public;
- Four blocks on the edge of the escarpment to be removed from the subdivision;
- The State Government



MR KREMMER

to make a firm commitment to the early establishment of the proposed Dharawal Nature Reserve in the O'Hares Creek area;

● Campbelltown Council to assign extra ranger patrols to the area in the interim;

● Further consultations take place with the NSW Trades and Labor Council and relevant unions.

Association secretary Julie Sheppard said: "The potential now exists to achieve a nature reserve, which, with the inclusion of the remainder of the land originally proposed for development but now to be given over to council, would exceed our original nature reserve proposal."

Koala ranks reinforced

GROUPS fighting to save the disease-free koala colony at Wedderburn have gained a new ally in their struggle to stop developers of the planned subdivision.

Animal Liberation (Victoria) is offering its support and has written to the National Parks Association (NPA) urging it to oppose the Indonesian developers.

The same letter was also sent to Environment Minister Tim Moore, The Chronicle and The Sydney Morning Herald.

In her letter, addressed to NPA director Graham Wells, Animal Liberation (Vic) co-ordinator Anne Smith emphasised that there was a danger in the encroachment of residential blocks into the few remaining koala habitats.

"It is our belief that conservation and animal welfare groups must take a strong stand in the protection of our national wildlife heritage," the letter said.

"To allow or appear to condone the development of Campbelltown to the detriment of the koalas is

indefensible. Any threat to a colony of koalas must be immediately stopped and to this end, we urge your association to publicly oppose any such development."

Mrs Smith said that for a government to allow development of a koala habitat, particularly in the face of increasing public opposition, was totally unacceptable.

The controversy over the Wedderburn development seems poised for another stormy year between developers and conservationists.

Macarthur Advertiser 1st February, 1989

LETTERS 1/2/89 Fight for koalas

We are continuing to do what we can to save the Koala colony at Wedderburn.

As of December 31, 1988, the development approval for stage three expired and stage four will expire at the end of February.

However, we anticipate that the developer will approach council with a second development application.

The developer has suggested cutting back the Lots to two hectares and at the same time donating stage four to the council for public ownership.

We are totally opposed to the second development application and will continue to resist any development at Wedderburn.

At the Koala Summit last year a recommenda-

tion was made for the complete protection of known Koala habitats.

The State Government has refused Campbelltown Council's attempt to re-zone the area Regional Open Space.

Thank goodness for the union movement.

And also thank you to the aldermen on council who support our stand.

The Green Bans have not been lifted and this action continues to provide Wedderburn Koalas with a measure of protection.

The State Government continues to say that voluntary conservation agreements are the answer to permitting development to go hand in hand with conservation.

Yet there are no funds available to enforce these voluntary conservation agreements.

Perhaps this is because the agreements are hopeless and totally unenforceable.

The responsibility for any enforcement is being pushed onto Local Government, setting a very bad precedent for other development proposals which will endanger other flora and fauna under risk.

We need to generate as many letters as we can to the NSW Government, especially to the Premier, Nick Greiner, to the Minister for Planning, David Hay, and to the Minister for Environment, Tim Moore.

All these letters should be addressed to Parliament House, Macquarie Street, Sydney and calling for the entire area (approx. 10,000 hectares) to be saved and to become part of the Dharawal Nature Reserve.

We also urge to write to Campbelltown Council and ask for the saving of the area.

The fate of Wedderburn's koalas will affect the remaining Koala populations in this state, it is a test case and we must do everything possible to ensure their survival and total saving of the area.

Ms Sue Dobson,
Campbelltown Association to Save the Wedderburn Koalas.

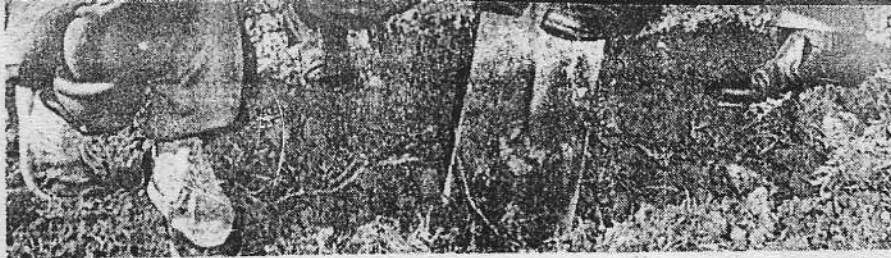
the troublesome
 Bridge. Charles
 man typified the coun-
 tagerness to replace
 bridge at such low
 saying: "If we don't
 for this we've got
 ks in our heads."
 Ald Noonan said Cam-
 en was suffering com-
 mercially because people
 from outlying areas were
 unable to get into town
 with the Cobbitty Bridge
 badly damaged.

"They take long de-
 tours to get to Camden
 and then say, 'what the
 hell, we've come this far,
 we might as well go all the
 way into Campbelltown
 for a day's shopping'," he
 said.

The council's report
 said the banks immedi-
 ately above and below
 Cowpasture Bridge were
 badly damaged and essen-
 tial services such as water
 mains, sewer trunk mains
 and Telecom wiring were
 threatened.

While there appears to
 be no serious threat to
 Cowpasture and Mac-
 quarie Grove bridges, re-
 medial measures will be
 needed to stabilise the ap-
 proach roads and the bank
 near the bridges, the re-
 port said.

— BRENDAN O'KEEFE



ENVIRONMENT Minister Tim Moore, right, and Campbelltown deputy mayor John Hennessey, were assisted by Greg Murdoch, 10, of The Oaks Public School and Rochelle Harris, 9, of Mawarra, at the planting.

propagation.
 The students were part
 of a pilot program under-
 taken by the Education
 unit at the gardens to as-
 sess the feasibility of
 teaching primary school-
 children techniques from
 collecting seeds to sowing,
 propagating and planting.
 The Mount Annan
 Botanic Garden will offi-
 cially open to the public
 on September 30.

KOALA LAND FUND SET UP

Wedderburn: The Macarthur Branch of the National Parks Association has launched a Koala Fund in an effort to purchase land occupied by the Wedderburn koala colony.

The group hopes to raise at least \$250,000 within the next few weeks to buy four blocks identified as part of the colony's habitat.

The blocks front the ridge of the O'Hares Creek valley and are considered by conservation-

By JANE HAMMOND

ists to be the most environ-
 mentally sensitive
 among those currently for
 sale in the Yeomans
 estate.

The NPA has proposed a 12-month moratorium on development of the land in an attempt to buy time to raise the funds for purchase of up to 12 of the 26 blocks offered for sale.

President of the Macarthur branch of the NPA, Grahame Douglas, said purchase of the blocks for conservation was a matter of urgency.

He described the Govern-
 ment's moves to draw
 up voluntary covenants
 with the owners of private
 land in the estate as a
 "cost-saving solution".

"In this instance we be-
 lieve relying on the good-
 will of future owners of
 these blocks is just not a
 good enough safeguard
 for the future of our
 koalas," he said.

"Therefore, because
 the NPA believes it is im-
 perative that these areas
 be brought into public
 ownership and the Govern-
 ment is not prepared
 to come to the party, it is
 up to the public to raise

the required monies by
 public subscription."

The NPA hopes the
 State Government will
 meet the funds raised on a
 dollar-for-dollar basis
 through the Sydney Re-
 gional Development
 Fund.

Deposits on at least two

of the four blocks the
 NPA hopes to buy in the
 near future have already
 been accepted by the de-
 veloper from private
 buyers.

The total cost of the 12
 blocks would be around
 \$1.4 million.

Donations to the Koala
 Fund of over \$2 are tax de-
 ductible and can be made
 C/o NPA, PO Box A96,
 Sydney South 2000.


OPTOMETRIST
CONTACT LENS PRACTITIONER
Rod Tracey B. Optom
 Hrs: Mon. Tues. Wed. Fri. 9am-5.30pm
 Thur 9am-7.30pm
 Sat 9am-12 noon
 After Hours: By Appointment
 21 DUMARESQ ST, CAMPBELLTOWN
 Ph: (046) 28 3651
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WHY? 

How many times have we heard this question? It seems like ever since we were born we have been asking questions. Questions seem to surround us. For thousands of years the desire to know more has been an integral part of our existence. Asking questions is easy, getting answers is more of a challenge.

The book of Ecclesiastes in your Bible is a book of questions. Good questions; the sort of questions that you and I might ask about life and why we exist. The unique thing about this book is that while it asks many questions it also supplies reasonable, logical, God-inspired answers.

Every Sunday morning at 10 am during the months of August, September and October we will be conducting a class on the book of Ecclesiastes.

Why don't you join us! **Kent Hartman**

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The dying koala

THE koala may become extinct in NSW before the end of the century.

A survey by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, which began in July 1986, has revealed three areas where the koala is trouble.

Eden, Avalon and Tweed Heads have few surviving koalas — areas where the marsupial was once abundant.

The survey also reveals that the current system of parks and reserves do not reflect the present distribution of koalas. Most animals are living outside the reserve system.

According to the survey, which was partially funded by *The Sun-Herald* Koala Fund, a State-wide management plan is urgently needed if the koalas' future is to be assured.

In the Port Macquarie area, dogs, cars and diseases are causing havoc with koala populations. The impact of rural housing developments around Raymond Terrace and Lismore on remaining koala habitat has been responsible for enormous destruction.

Dieback in eucalypts in the Armidale and Lismore areas has reduced food availability and the lack of regeneration of food trees and continued land clearing in rural areas has created further loss of habitat.

The newly-elected Minister for Environment, Mr Tim Moore, will not comment on the National Parks and Wildlife Service report until he studies its contents.

But there is growing concern among committee members of *The Sun-Herald* Koala Fund that neither State nor Federal Governments are willing to take any responsibility for the future survival of koalas.

Dr Russ Dickens, a veterinarian with many years experience in treating koalas and a member



MOTHER AND BABY: Soon they will have nowhere to live in NSW

Call to stop the bulldozers

● **BULLDOZERS** are threatening to wipe out a community of 50 koalas near Campbelltown.

The 90 ha site in the Wedderburn area is being cleared for a

new housing sub-division. And Campbelltown alderman, Richard Cerveny says it was approved for sub-division by the previous council without them knowing of the koalas' existence.

He is calling for an interim protection order for the land:

"Once they knock down those trees, that's the end of the koalas."

of the Fund's management committee, is worried by this lack of action.

"I am extremely concerned by the lackadaisical attitude of governments," he said. "And that includes local councils.

"There seems to be a complete lack of will to prevent further habitat destruction or to protect the few remaining habitat areas.

"No one can argue over the need to plant feed trees for koalas, yet there has been no attempt to provide funds for these activities.

"Field studies, which look at population dynamics of the remaining koala populations, are vital."

The Sun-Herald Koala Fund has raised more than \$55,000

READERS can assist the work of *The Sun-Herald* Koala Fund by taking advantage of a Koala Kit specially designed to appeal to children.

The Kit contains a poster, badge and sticker as well as a definitive pamphlet which highlights the problems facing koalas.

Readers can obtain Koala Kits by sending \$6.00 to: *The Sun-Herald* Koala Fund, PO Box 600, Redfern, 2106.

Donations to the Fund can be sent to the same address. All donations will be acknowledged in *The Sun-Herald*.

from readers in the past four years and a great deal of this money has been raised by school children.

Camden High School pupils have raised more than 2,000 feed trees which have been planted in the Lismore area. Dozens of schools have raised seedlings to help *The Sun-Herald* Koala Fund's campaign to regenerate koala habitat.

The Fund provided \$10,000 to the NSW Koala Preservation Society to enable the first koala hospital to be built in the State. A second hospital is now being planned for Koala Park, Pennington Hills.

Alan Forsyth, chairman of *The Sun-Herald* Koala Fund is presently negotiating with Japanese authorities to encourage support from Japanese school children for the koala.

"We urgently need public help if we are to continue our attempts to ensure the survival of the koala," Mr Forsyth said.

The Sun-Herald Koala Fund has requested that the NSW Government provide up to 30,000 feed tree seedlings to the project as a matter of urgency.

Handwritten note: death sit.



Suzanne Rhydderch, 5, of Terrey Hills with 18-month-old koala Sooty in Martin Place yesterday
 Pictures: DAVE HANCOCK

PREMIER Nick Greiner was loudly jeered and left speechless during the launch of a koala education kit for schools yesterday.

Mr Greiner had just been introduced to a large lunchtime crowd in Sydney's Martin Place amphitheatre when the sounds of chainsaws and shrilling whistles filled the air.

Anti-logging protesters from the South East Forest Alliance shouted



Nick Greiner grimaces at the force of

By Environment Reporter
MARCUS CASEY

down the Premier and drowned him out with the whistles and recorded chainsaw sounds - forcing him to abandon his speech.

Residents from Wedderburn, near Campbelltown, also shouted at the Premier, saying he was ignoring the plight of a koala colony in their area which is threatened by urban development.

The protesters then cheered a group of schoolchildren who spoke about the plight of the koala.

The Australian Koala Foundation had invited the Premier - and welcomed the presence of the other conservation groups - to the public release of the kit which will be offered free to every school in the State.

Mindless

The Premier later accused the protesters of ratbag behavior.

"My Government is doing more than any other government in the history of this state for the koala," he said.

"I don't think that sort of mindless activity adds anything to the debate or helps the koalas.

"There are no koalas in danger in the south eastern forest.

"That sort of ratbag behavior (in Martin Place) does nothing to further the cause or help the koalas."



This is nature's way of telling you to see Roland Bleyer.

Those loose hairs in your comb could be the first symptom of a serious hair problem. One that, without an effective answer, can leave you worrying about looking bald.

But don't panic. Simply make an appointment for an examination and consultation at the Bleyer Clinic. Here you'll find expert, scientific advice from

Daily Mirror, 26th Oct., 1988.

KOALA COLONY

'AT RISK'

Report backs fight against development

A KOALA colony in Sydney's south-west could die out if a residential development earmarked for the site goes ahead, a report has found.

A CSIRO report on the habitat of the Wedderburn koalas has shown the creatures risk extinction from pollutants and a loss of their natural environment. If buildings are introduced to the area.

Asian property developer Yap Yan Pin Pty Ltd has been given approval to develop the site and subdivide it into 26 rural home blocks.

A lobby group of residents and unions in the Campbelltown region has been battling the State Government in an effort to save the koalas and other endangered species in the area.

Already a number of unions, including the powerful Building Trades Group of the NSW Labor Council, have imposed a green ban on the development — but it is feared the developers may hire non-union labor.

The CSIRO report confirms fears that de-

veloping the bushland could spell death for the colony.

The 220ha estate is believed to be one of the biggest and healthiest koala colonies in NSW and local naturalists say it is also the home of other endangered species like the eastern pygmy possum, the

feathertail glider, the spotted tail quill and 11 rare plants.

Campbelltown mayor Jim Kremmer plans to submit the CSIRO findings at the next council meeting.

"The report confirms what those of us concerned about the local environment have been saying for so long," he said.

"It would be outrageous for the State Government to allow the development, especially as it is making such great political play about its koala summit."

Habitat

"To see the unique habitat destroyed because politicians refuse to lift a finger will be a black mark on our generation forever."

Mr Kremmer predicted much debate over the issue.

"Council officers will provide a detailed analysis of the report for council consideration, but the bottom line lies with the State Government," he said.

"The State Government should put a protection order over the site."

Buy the land for koalas

A COLONY of koalas at Wedderburn, near Campbelltown, may be moved because an Indonesian company has bought some of the land for hobby farming.

These koalas are free of the disease chlamydia. If they are moved, they may die as most koala colonies have this sickness.

The Government cut funds in our Bicentenary year for medical research into this disease. On this same parcel of land there is a plant claimed to grow only in this little part of Australia and an Aboriginal cave drawing.

Oct 18th
Leader On behalf of Endeavour High School pupils.
J. WUNSCH,

The Leader 18th October 1988



THREATENED: This cut-off tree signifies the plight of the koala

KOALA COLONY DANGER

A BATTLE has erupted over an Asian company's plan to develop bushland in Sydney's west which is home to koalas and other endangered Australian wildlife.

Unions have joined residents and conservationists to stop property developer Yap Yan Pin Pty Ltd's plans to subdivide Wedderburn Estate, near Campbelltown, into 26 home sites.

The Building Trades Group of the NSW Labor Council has followed other unions and imposed a green ban on the area, but it is feared the developers may hire non-union labor.

The 220ha estate is inhabited by "the biggest and healthiest" koala colony in NSW.

And local naturalists say the eastern pygmy possum, feathertail glider, spotted tail quail and 11 rare plants, four of which are unique to Wedderburn, are threat-

ened with extinction.

Sue Dobson, who heads the Campbelltown Committee To Save Wedderburn Koala Colony, today slammed the State Government's inaction over the threat.

She said it had the "power to save the area but refused to act".

Ms Dobson met Envi-

ronment Minister Tim Moore last month to ask for a 12-month protection order on the area, but was refused.

Worthless

Mr Moore previously had placed a preservation order on the site but the order was lifted six weeks later after a voluntary conservation agreement was negotiated with the developer.

Ms Dobson said the agreement was worthless because it could not be policed.

Campbelltown Mayor Jim Kremmer said: "We (the council) lack the financial means to order

Battle to stop developer

a new Land Environment Plan which would effectively revoke the initial development consent.

"But alternatively, if the Premier was to indemnify Council against any compensation claims, I would within minutes of receiving written confirmation order a new LEP."

Mr Kremmer said he had received support from 30 other NSW councils who had vowed to lobby the Government into assisting.

"I believe the company should be compensated, but we simply cannot afford to do so," he said.

SMT 20/10/88

Council rezoning to protect koalas

By PAUL BAILEY,
Environment Writer

Campbelltown City Council has moved to protect the koala colony at Wedderburn from a proposed residential development.

The council has resolved to alter its Local Environment Plan to rezone the proposed development land as regional open space. This would allow it to revoke previous development consents for the Wedderburn land.

The koala colony is principally on Crown land but residents argue that a major development on adjacent land would ruin the koalas' habitat.

In July, the Minister for the Environment, Mr Moore, lifted an interim protection order he had placed over the development.

Mr Moore had negotiated a voluntary conservation agreement with the land developer Yap Yan Pin Pty Ltd which, he said, would protect the koala colony. But residents have attacked the Minister, accusing him of hypocrisy.

Campbelltown City Council subsequently asked the CSIRO to prepare a report on the koala habitat as a response to further public opposition.

The CSIRO found the koala habitat would not be adversely affected by the proposed development provided that planning controls, including the voluntary conservation agreement, were adhered to and enforced.

But the Mayor of Campbelltown, Alderman Jim Kremmer, and local residents believe that these controls cannot be strictly enforced.

The CSIRO report found that the proposed residential development does not extend into the prime koala habitat area.

It says residential lots have few or no eucalypt trees on them, since they were cleared in the past for grazing. Those which contain eucalypts are of poor quality.

And the report names the consequences of the development which would affect the koala population as fire, harassment by humans or dogs and changes in the nutrient or water regime near the prime habitat.

Ms Sue Dobson, of the Campbelltown Committee to Save the Wedderburn Koalas, said yesterday that the CSIRO report had proved that the koalas were at risk since there was no way that the development controls could be enforced.

Sydney Morning Herald 20th October, 1988

The Chronicle 22nd November, 1988

Study bid on

A GROUP interested in the preservation of koalas may establish a Koala Research Centre in Campbelltown.

Mayor Jim Kremmer had discussions with a leading member of the group at the Koala Summit held last week in Sydney.

He later accompanied him on a visit to the Wedderburn koala habitat.

Mr Kremmer said that on this visit they found a koala in a tree in the area of the proposed subdivision.

He said he would like to see the group — a foundation — establish a compound at Wedderburn for a study of koala biology.

Mr Kremmer said the group intended to definitely establish a koala research centre in NSW and he felt the council and people of Campbelltown would be anxious to see it come here.

He said he expected council would make a formal submission as to why Wedderburn was an ideal site for the research centre.

LEGAL ACTION THREAT

Wedderburn: Yap Yan Pin Pty Ltd has refused to co-operate with a council request for a three month moratorium on the development of land at Wedderburn near a colony of koalas.

The company has also threatened to take legal action against the council, its officers and individual aldermen in an effort to prevent any further delays to the development.

The Campbelltown City Council requested the moratorium to allow consultants time to study the koala colony and prepare a management plan for the area.

A special meeting of the council was called last night to discuss alternative ways of protecting the colony at least for the duration of the study.

At the time of going to press the meeting was due to debate a proposed course of action which included appeals to the Minister for Planning, David Hay, to intervene to prevent work at the site and to indemnify the council against any claims for compensation resulting from delays to the development.

The council was also due to debate whether it would prepare a Draft Local Environmental Plan for the area with the specific purpose of protecting the koala colony.

The developers are currently unable to begin excavation work at the site because of a union Green Ban.

It is understood that two companies previously

By JANE HAMMOND

appointed to start work on clearing the area have withdrawn their contracts due to public opposition to the development project.

Project managers, local firm Lean, Lackenby and Hayward, said in a letter to the council that Yap Yan Pin Pty Ltd was not prepared to hold up work on the site for a three month period but as an act of good faith would not start on phase four of the development until the release of the management study in six weeks.

Mc As 31/8/88
The developers have also offered to assist the council to fund the \$20,000 management study with a \$5,000 grant.

The company's development consent expires on February 27 next year and it has expressed concern that delays to work at the site would mean that the council would have cause to refuse to renew the application.

The mayor of Campbelltown, Peter Primrose said the issue was becoming "hideously complicated" and the company was following a predictable course of action in threat-

ening to sue the council and Campbelltown aldermen.

"It is what we said would happen when we started to take this course that Mr Moore (the Environment Minister) suggested."

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President, Macarthur Conference, Liberal Party



SOME of the larger-than-life koalas who attempted to enter Parliament House last week in order to draw attention to the fate of the Wedderburn koala colony.

'Koalas' protest

McAs 7/9/88

CAMPBELLTOWN: Residents donned koala suits and marched on Parliament House last week in protest at imminent plans to develop land abutting the habitat of the Wedderburn koala colony.

The larger-than-life koalas were refused entry into the house but maintained a 2½-hour vigil on the steps, drawing the attention of office workers, shoppers and schoolchildren to the plight of the colony.

Deputy mayor John Hennessey was among the koala-suited protesters and said the demonstration was "small but very effective".

The Committee to Save the Wedderburn Koalas plans to stage another demonstration in Sydney within the next two weeks and Alderman Hennessey said the point to the protest action was to bring pressure to bear on the State Government.

He said the Minister for Planning, David Hay, was the "man in the box seat" with the power to stop the development by imposing an interim conservation order on the site.

Ald Hennessey said bulldozers could move in and start clearing the area at any time if the developers found workers willing to break a union Green Ban currently in place over the site.

He said the committee was ready to stand in front of the dozers and had a list of more than 40 people willing to risk injury and arrest to prevent work.

The list includes local aldermen, State politicians, union members and other conservationists.

"I really don't think the developers understand the resolve of the people in the western suburbs to save this colony," Ald Hennessey said.

The usually faction-riddled Campbelltown City Council is unanimously opposed to the Wedderburn development proceeding before the completion of a full management study of the area.

A special meeting of the council last week moved to request Mr Hay to prevent any immediate development works at the site and place an interim conservation order over the area.

KOALA LAND UNDER PROBE

McA 24/8/88

Wedderburn: The Campbelltown City Council has engaged a team of consultants to undertake a study of land proposed for development at Wedderburn near a colony of koalas.

The study, thought to cost around \$20,000, will be conducted by the CSIRO's division of wildlife and ecology.

Contracts for the work were signed late on Monday afternoon and the study is already underway.

The study will result in a report on the development proposal and its likely impact on the Wedderburn koala colony and

By JANE HAMMOND

is scheduled to be completed by September 30.

The Mayor of Campbelltown, Alderman Peter Primrose, said the consultants were a neutral group and their study would include liaisons with the developer, local conservationists, koala experts and council officers.

The council resolved at its meeting last week to seek a three-month moratorium on work at the site from the developer to allow the study to go ahead.

At the time of going to press, developer Yap Yan Pin Pty Ltd had not informed the council of its decision to accept or reject the request for a moratorium.

Ald Primrose said if the developer refused to grant the council a three-month breathing space, a special

meeting of the council would be called for next Tuesday night to discuss alternative moves to protect the koala colony for the duration of the management study.

Meanwhile the Minister for Planning, David Hay, has said he would not place an interim conservation order on the Wedderburn site.

The refusal follows requests to the minister to place an order on the site by the Total Environment Centre in Sydney, the Campbelltown City Council and the Macarthur branch of the National Parks Association.

In a letter to Environment Minister Tim Moore, Mr Hay said ICO's came under the Heritage Act and would in future be used exclusively for the protection of areas or buildings of historic or cultural interest.

He said interim protection orders under the National Parks and Wildlife

Act were the appropriate orders to use with regard to flora and fauna protection.

Local conservationists and the council have been pushing for the placement of an ICO on the land at Wedderburn in an attempt to protect the Wedderburn koala colony from an impending development proposal.

Renewed calls for an ICO followed the lifting last month of an IPO placed by Mr Moore on the site in June this year.

It is understood that the minister cannot legally reimpose an IPO once it has been lifted.

The Total Environment Centre in Sydney applied for 432.5 hectares at Wedderburn — an area including the land proposed for development to be considered under the Heritage Act on the basis of its recreational, conservation and heritage value.

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Campbelltown office:
305 Queen Street,
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Sydney office:
Suite 505,
3 Small Street,
Broadway, 2007.
Ph: (02) 212 5311.
Fax: (02) 281 1174.

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WEDDERBURN WORDS WAR!

Wedderburn: The Campbelltown City Council faces the possibility of claims for compensation amounting to millions of dollars if it goes ahead with a proposal put by Environment Minister Tim Moore to stop the Wedderburn development. M.L. 17/8/88

By JANE HAMMOND

Mr Moore claimed in a statement released last Saturday that the council was "using the Wedderburn koalas as a political football" and that by a "simple majority vote at a council meeting" it could stop the development.

"If local residents are still concerned about the fate of the koalas, they should take their protests straight to the council and force them to stop the development," Mr Moore said.

He said the State Government had done what it could to buy time and protect the koalas and it was now up to the council to stop the development and face the possible legal consequences of that action.

Campbelltown Mayor Peter Primrose said before the council had the power to revoke the

development consent for the sub-division it first had to have in place a Local Environment Plan which provided guidelines for the protection of the animals.

Alderman Primrose said no such plan existed and even with a new LEP the council and individual aldermen would face the possibility of huge compensation claims from the developer if council consent for the sub-division was overturned.

He said if the State Government could indemnify the council and individual aldermen against compensation claims then the council would be more willing to do as the minister suggested and use its powers to stop the development.

"I think that the minister realises he has made a mistake (in lifting the protection order) and is looking to the Campbelltown Council to fix it up," Ald Primrose said.

He said the simplest solution would be for the State Government to impose an interim conservation order on the site at least until a management plan to protect the koalas' habitat had been drawn up.

Meanwhile the Macarthur branch of the National Parks Association is seeking legal advice as to the possibility of declaring the development null.

President of the branch, Grahame Douglas, said his group was hoping to take the developer to the Land and Environment Court in an attempt to protect the koala colony from the sub-division.

HOW YOU CAN HELP THE KOALAS

Campbelltown: Organiser of last Saturday's Save the Koala rally, Sue Dobson, has appealed for help to protect the Wedderburn colony.

Ms Dobson urged interested members of the public to write to the Minister for Environment, Tim Moore, and Premier Nick Greiner expressing their concern for the plight of the Wedderburn koalas.

She said volunteers were also needed to take part in any possible sit-ins to prevent bulldozers starting work on clearing the site.

Volunteers can register

for the sit-ins by phoning (046) 25 5198 after 5pm.

Ms Dobson said petitions to save the colony were also being circulated in the Campbelltown area and supporters were urged to sign.

Donations to the Koala Fund for the purchase of

land at Wedderburn can be sent to PO Box 792 Campbelltown.

The fund is being administered by the Macarthur branch of the National Parks Association and donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

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Campbelltown office:
305 Queen Street,
Campbelltown.
Ph: (046) 25 5122.
Fax: (046) 28 4155.

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3 Small Street,
Broadway, 2007.
Ph: (02) 212 5311.
Fax: (02) 281 1174.

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KATE Chisholm, 8, and Susan Dibley, 8, joined Gumnut the Koala at the Koala Rally in Mawson Park on Saturday.

Sydney Morning Herald 10th August, 1988

Green Ban on Wedderburn

Wedderburn: The Federated Engine Drivers and Firemens Association has placed a Green Ban on the Wedderburn Estate in a bid to save the Wedderburn koala colony.

The ban follows a request from Campbelltown residents and has the effect of preventing all work at the site by members of the FED and FA — the union representing bulldozer drivers and earth movers.

Further Green Bans are also being considered by the Building Trades Group — a body representing five unions and including the FED and FA, the Building Workers Industrial Union, Metal Workers, Plumbers and Painters unions.

State representative for the FED and FA, Dick Whitehead, said the ban meant a moratorium on work at the site until the impact of the sub-division on the koala colony could be fully assessed.

Mr Whitehead said his union was "disturbed" by the possible threat to the koala colony from the sub-division.

He said even without the Green Ban his members would not be driving bulldozers at members of the public trying to save the colony.

"We see this as a major public issue," Mr Whitehead said.

The FED and FA was the first union ever to impose a Green ban when it moved to save Kellys Bush.

Similar bans were imposed to save Sydney's historic Rocks area and parts of Woolloomooloo in the 70's.

"We will call on trade unionists to respect the ban and not carry out any work on that site or the project," Mr Whitehead said.

"This is the first time my union has been called upon to save wildlife in NSW.

"This is a unique situation and I don't know of any other colony that is disease free and growing, so close to Sydney."

Mr Whitehead said there were very few earth-moving companies that employed non-union labour and none that would be capable of undertaking the roadwork at the site covered by the Green Ban.

Local koala conserva-

tionist, Sue Dobson, said she welcomed the support of the trade unions.

"This is excellent news - we need all the physical and financial support we can get at the moment."

The ban was put into effect at 5pm on Monday night.

Protesting at rally

Campbelltown: A protest rally to save the Wedderburn koala colony will take place this Saturday, at 1pm, in Mawson Park.

Rally organiser, Sue Dobson, said a large crowd was expected to attend the rally and express its concern for the plight of the colony.

She said unless the subdivision of the animals' habitat could be stopped the colony would almost certainly die out.

The rally will be addressed by the Member for Campbelltown, Michael Knight; National Parks Association representative Jule Sheppard; the Mayor of Campbelltown, Peter Primrose; deputy Mayor John Hennessey and other concerned citizens.

The rally will be preceded by fund-raising activities throughout Campbelltown.

"The purpose of the rally will be to show the NSW Government that the people of Campbelltown are not prepared to let this koala colony die out," Ms Dobson said.

"We hope that a big turn-out will bring pressure on Tim Moore (the Environment Minister) to save the colony.

"The bottom line is that



Stories by JANE HAMMOND

if the development goes ahead it will destroy those animals.

"There is no doubt that if we let it proceed we will be granting the koalas a death sentence," she said.

"The koala colony needs a buffer zone around it to protect it.

"The koalas can't come out and fight for their land rights; we have got to do it for them."

Ms Dobson said the koalas were not the only species threatened by the development and the area contained a wealth of native flora and fauna.

POLL RESULT

Campbelltown: More than 95 per cent of local residents want the government to buy land occupied by the Wedderburn koala colony for a nature reserve.

This was the finding of last week's *Macarthur Advertiser* public opinion poll.

Just over four per cent of respondents said they were in favour of the current rural-residential sub-division going ahead.

A technical fault with the poll line meant that respondents were unable to get through until late Friday.

The line opened for three hours on Friday afternoon and again for business hours on Monday.

When the poll closed on Monday afternoon a total of 93 calls had been registered, 89 in favour of saving the colony from the development and four in favour of the development proceeding as planned.

The *Macarthur Advertiser* apologises to anyone unable to get through on the poll line on Wednesday, Thursday or Friday last week and regrets that the technical fault limited the size of the survey sample. The fault has been rectified for future polls.

Union promise: 'No bulldozing'



ABOVE: DEPUTY Mayor John Hennessey was decked out for the occasion and brought along his mate "Wally" the koala. The words of his sign, held by mayor Peter Primrose, were chanted by the crowd. Left: Part of the large crowd.

Nick Greiner, to intervene in the dispute and force the minister to invoke the order.

Alderman Primrose said the council had also sought an undertaking from the Premier that all of the land required for the protection of the colony be brought into public ownership.



Campbelltown: A crowd of more than 600 turned out in Mawson Park last Saturday afternoon to protest at what they say is the State Government's sentencing to death of the Wedderburn koala colony.

Rally organiser, Sue Dobson, said she was pleased with the turn-out and the public response to the campaign to save the koalas.

The gathering was told by a representative from the Federate Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association that his organisation would "make sure that the bulldozing for the

By JANE HAMMOND

development would not take place."

Peter Lane from the Building Trades Group - a body representing five unions - announced that the BTG had followed the FED and FA in imposing a Green Ban on the Wedderburn site.

"Even if the developer is successful in getting the site bulldozed there will be no building taking place there," Mr Lane said.

He described the lifting of the interim protection order over the site as "one of the biggest mistakes the Greiner Government had made since coming to office."

The Member for Werriwa, John Kerin, told the rally that he believed the world would find it difficult to comprehend that in 1988 anyone could contemplate the possibility of wiping out a koala colony on the edge of a city.

Campbelltown Mayor Peter Primrose said the council had called on the Minister for Planning David Hay, to immediately impose an interim conservation order on the site.

He said he would be calling on the Premier



MAYOR Peter Primrose addressing the protest meeting at Wedderburn on Saturday, flanked by the Member for Campbelltown, Michael Knight, and deputy mayor John Hennessey.

SAVE OUR KOALAS!

Wedderburn: More than 100 people turned out on Saturday morning to protest at the lifting of a protection order placed on the Wedderburn koala colony. *McA 3/8/88*

By JANE HAMMOND

The meeting unanimously resolved to call on the Minister for Environment, Tim Moore, to reimpose the protection order for at least 12 months.

Protest meeting organiser, Sue Dobson, said the meeting was a spontaneous reaction to the State Government's "betrayal" of the local koala colony.

She said the protection of the Wedderburn koalas was particularly important because the colony was disease-free and currently breeding.

Ms Dobson said the local community would endeavour to protect the koalas at all costs, including standing in front of bulldozers to prevent clearing of the area.

At the time of going to press yesterday, Campbelltown residents were due to meet Mr Moore to discuss the issue and had planned another protest rally on the steps of Parliament House.

"We want the whole development stopped. We don't want any more compromises — there have been too many already," Ms Dobson said.

"We have got to let Tim Moore know that he has sold out on these koalas."

The Mayor of Campbelltown and Member for Camden, Peter Primrose, told Saturday's meeting that if the council was unable to stop the subdivision he would be among those standing in front of the bulldozers.

The secretary of the National Parks Association, Julie Sheppard, said her group was examining all possible legal avenues to prevent the carve-up of the colony's habitat for subdivision.

She said the NPA needed time to raise the funds by public subscription for the purchase of the land.

Ms Sheppard said it was outrageous that the Minister had removed the protection order after such a short time, and she described Mr Moore's suggestion that the colony be relocated as "ludicrous".

"Why should these koalas be moved? They were here first," Ms Sheppard said.

She said the local community was angered by the lifting of the protection order and by the fact that no studies had been undertaken to assess the extent or nature of the colony's habitat.

Campbelltown City Council has moved to get the Federal Minister for the Environment, Senator Graham Richardson, involved in the issue and has invited him to inspect the site.

A spokesman for Mr

Moore said his Minister would be discussing the issue of the Wedderburn koala colony with the Planning Minister, David Hay, later this week.

He said Mr Moore still believed a voluntary conservation agreement was the most appropriate method of protecting the colony, as the Government was unable to find the \$10 million to \$12 million needed to buy the area and turn it into a national park.



TROY Hunter (9) and Robbie Landscombe (9) at Saturday's protest meeting.

Macarthur Advertiser 3rd August, 1988

PAGE 2
How to help koalas

Koala removal long term possibility

Wedderburn: The National Parks and Wildlife Service will look into the feasibility of moving the koala colony from Wedderburn, according to the Minister for Environment, Tim Moore.



Tim Moore

Mr Moore said the colony was under threat not only from residential development but also from live ammunition used at the near-by army firing range and feral cats and dogs.

Mr Moore's comments follow his lifting of an interim protection order placed over the koalas' habitat in June this year.

By JANE HAMMOND

Mr Moore said he had replaced the order with a voluntary conservation agreement with the developer of the Wedderburn estate 10 days ago in order to ensure the "permanent short-term" protection of the colony.

He said "further options would be canvassed" to protect the koalas including the possibility of their re-location.

Meanwhile the Minister for Planning, David Hay is looking into the possibility of placing an interim conservation order under the Heritage Act on land inhabited by the Wedderburn koala colony.

The Total Environment Centre in Sydney has applied to the Heritage Council to have the colony's habitat protected under the Heritage Act.

The Department of Planning had earlier considered taking action to temporarily prevent clearing of the koalas' habitat for sub-division in May when bulldozers were poised to begin work at the site.

Plans were superseded by Mr Moore's action in placing an interim protection order on the site.

The colony and its habi-

tat could be protected for a period of up to 12 months by an interim conservation order.

The Total Environment Centre applied to the Heritage Council to have more than 430 hectares at Wedderburn considered for protection.

The centre said in its application that the area was inhabited by the koalas as well as a number of other rare and endan-

gered species including the Macquarie perch, platypus, gang gang cockatoo and peregrine falcon.

The Member for Campbelltown, Michael Knight described Mr Moore's action in lifting the interim protection order as an "outrageous act" and said it would "almost certainly lead to the destruction of the colony."

Course was major help

Campbelltown: More than 80 per cent of the participants who attended the June Community Youth Support Scheme/WREP business courses have secured positions.

Many of those attending the courses had been long term unemployed youth.

CIBCO, a local firm at Ingleburn has helped two young women who attended the course, offering them full time employment and training in bookkeeping.

The next CYSS business course will start on August 1.

For further information contact Julie on (046) 25 6965.

TEXT FOR THE WEEK

Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 3.18.

COLONY KOALAS BETRAYED?

McA 2017/88



ONE of the Wedderburn koalas again under threat from sub-division.

Campbelltown: An interim protection order issued by the State Government to protect the Wedderburn koala colony may be lifted as early as next week.

An application by developers to proceed with the sub-division of land occupied by the koalas is currently before the Campbelltown City Council.

The Minister for Environment, Tim Moore, has agreed to lift the protection order subject to certain conditions being met by the developer.

The conditions include the imposition of a voluntary restricted covenant over the land to prohibit the movement of dogs off the leash, reduced speed limits and the re-alignment of some roads in the sub-division.

Tree preservation orders preventing clearing are also to be enforced by the council.

Mr Moore said the interim protection order would be replaced by a voluntary agreement with the developer.

He said the order had served its purpose which was to halt development and bring all parties to the negotiating table and it would be lifted within a month.

Mr Moore claimed the voluntary agreement

By JANE HAMMOND

would ensure the koala colony would be protected.

"The agreement strictly controls any development on the land, to ensure the safety of the koalas," Mr Moore said.

"The council and the National Parks and Wildlife Service will be able to

gesture".

She said the covenants placed on the land to protect the colony were "not worth the paper they were written on."

Project managers, Lean, Lackenby and Hayward, have applied to the council for permission to vary the original development plans to allow changes to road standards

of the council and will come before the full council again on July 26.

The minister issued a protection order over 220 hectares of the koalas' habitat last month effectively freezing the sub-division of the land.

The order was put in place for a possible 12 months in order to give conservationists and government authorities time to prepare plans to protect the colony.

The NPA have produced a report outlining a compromise in a last ditch effort to save the koalas.

The compromise deal seeks to limit the sub-division to 14 of the proposed 26 blocks.

Four of the remaining blocks would be bought by the NPA through public subscription on a dollar for dollar basis with the State Government and the development of eight others deferred for 12 months to allow the association time to negotiate for future purchase.

Ms Sheppard said it was ironic that the National Parks and Wildlife Service had not undertaken any further survey of koala presence since the interim protection order was put in place on June 4.

She said the NPWS did not seem interested in the colony or its protection.

Ms Sheppard said the association was considering an approach to Japanese business people in Koshigaya to assist with the purchase of the most environmentally sensitive blocks in the sub-division in order that they may be set aside for the koalas.



'Australians can kiss their koalas goodbye unless action is taken immediately to protect surviving koala colonies.'

**Tim Moore,
June 4, 1988.**

inspect developments in the area to ensure the special conditions are being complied with."

The secretary of the Macarthur branch of the National Parks Association, Julie Sheppard, said the minister's protection order had been a "hollow

within the Yeoman's estate.

Council approval of the changes would clear the way for the lifting of the protection order and construction of the sub-division to go-ahead.

The matter was deferred at the last meeting

Macarthur Advertiser 20th July, 1988

The association had hoped the entire area of the sub-division would be purchased by the State Government and declared part of the proposed Dharawal Nature Reserve.

Ms Sheppard said the association was now aware that the government lacked the political will to save the Wedderburn koala colony.

KOALAS SAVED!

Wedderburn: The Wedderburn koala colony has been granted a 12 month's stay of execution by the Minister for Environment, Tim Moore.

Mr Moore placed an Interim Protection Order over 220 hectares of the koalas' habitat on Saturday morning preventing the sale or clearing of the land, some of which was to have been sub-divided for rural residential development.

It is the first time the legislation, which comes under the National Parks and Wildlife Act, has been used.

proclaiming it a nature reserve.

She said the interim protection order was "the breathing space" the NPA needed to ensure the long term survival of the colony.

The Total Environment Centre and the NPA have called for an extension to the proposed Dharawal Nature Reserve to include the area covered by the interim protection order.

Mr Moore said during an address to a meeting of the state council of the NPA at Wedderburn on Saturday that while the interim protection order was in place "further options would be canvassed to permanently protect the koalas."

Failure to comply with the order renders the owner or occupier of the land liable to a maximum penalty of \$10,000 and six months in jail.

Mr Moore said present trends indicated that Aus-

tralians could 'kiss their koalas goodbye' unless immediate action was taken to protect surviving colonies.

He said a recent survey on koala populations in the state had shown numbers were dwindling and most now lived outside national parks.

The deputy mayor of Campbelltown, Alderman John Hennessey, said the council had been "embarrassed" by the issue.

He said previous councils had allowed the subdivision to go-ahead and the current council had not been aware of imminent plans by developers to bulldoze the koala habitat.

"The council has got to become more aware of when these types of developments are going ahead and become aware of the wildlife that the developments may threaten," Ald Hennessey said.

More on pages 18 & 19.

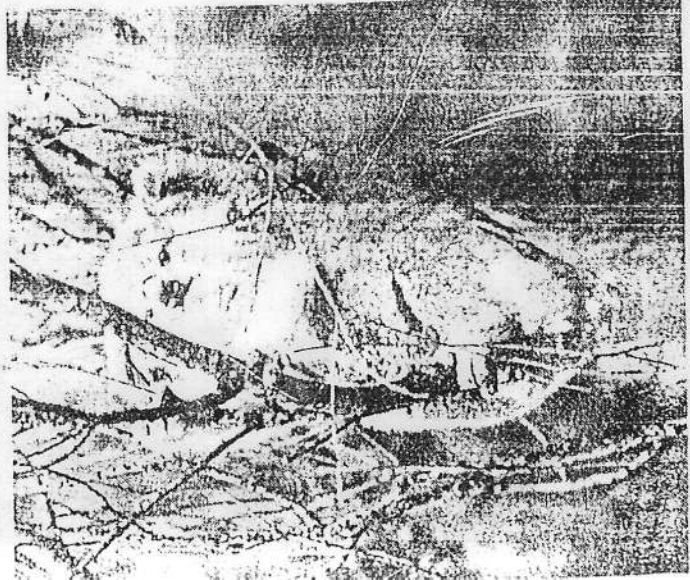
MEAD 8/6/88

Macarthur Advertiser
June 8th 1988



Julie Sheppard, of the NPA, and Keith Muir, of the Total Environment Centre, with an aerial photograph of the area.

Macarthur Advertiser 8th June, 1988



One of the threatened koalas "captured" by photographer Robert Pozo.

Conservationists' eleventh-hour effort to

Macarthur Advertiser
June 1'88

SAVE THE KOALA

By JANE HAMMOND

Wedderburn: The future of a colony of koalas in Wedderburn hangs in the balance this week with bulldozers poised to move in and clear the animals' habitat.

So say local conservationists who have called on the Ministers for Planning and Environment, to grant the koalas a last minute reprieve.

They have asked the ministers to invoke the Heritage Act to prevent bulldozers clearing bushland near O'Hares Creek Gorge for sub-division.

A spokesman for the Minister for Environment, Tim Moore, said the minister was considering the possibility of putting an interim conservation order on the area in an effort to save the colony.

The spokesman said the minister was not prepared to see the colony destroyed.

The president of the Macarthur branch of the National Parks Association, Grahame Douglas, said his information was

that bulldozers were scheduled to move in to the Wedderburn area this week to begin clearing the Yeoman's Property sub-division.

He said members of his organisation would be prepared to obstruct the bulldozers in order to save the koala colony if the ministers refused to exercise their powers to issue a protection order under section 136 of the Heritage Act.

Mr Douglas said the NPA had called on the government to issue a protection order and to enter into negotiations for the acquisition of 10 of the 24 blocks proposed for sub-division.

He said the long term survival of the colony could be ensured by proclaiming 40 hectares of the area to be sub-divided a

Continued page 6.

MARKING OUT KOALA AREAS

WEDDERBURN: Field workers from CSIRO in Canberra have been sampling and analysing leaf matter from the site of the Wedderburn sub-division in an attempt to determine the areas likely to be inhabited by local koalas.

The results of the Campbelltown City Council funded, \$20,000 study are expected to be handed down on October 14.

Senior technical officer with the CSIRO's division of wildlife and ecology, Mark Clayton, said the vegetation surveys would indicate the areas of the sub-division containing nutrients required by koalas and therefore the likely location of the animals.

The study is looking at the an area of about nine square kilometres covering all of the land of the sub-division.

Mr Clayton said a series of vegetation transects had been plotted and formed the basis of the vegetation mapping and survey work.

Leaf samples are collected from the transects,

sent to the forestry commission in Pennant Hills for analysis and the data is then fed into a computer to establish the pattern of eucalypt associations in the area.

Mr Clayton said scratch marks had been noted on the base of a number of eucalypts in the area but it was not known whether they were the marks of koalas or brush tail possums.

He said he had seen three koalas in the area but the study was not specifically concerned with counting or recording the location of the individual animals.

The study aims to assess the area for its suitability to provide koala habitat and identify the actual and potential use of the environment by the animals.

It will also make recommendations on the likely effects the loss of the habitat or restrictions to access to the habitat for the animals will have on local koala populations.

The final report to the council will also include a management plan to pro-

tect the koala habitat. As part of its brief to the CSIRO the council has instructed the consultants to obtain expert comment on the sub-division proposal and the effect on the koala colony should the sub-division go-ahead as planned.

THIS WEEKEND ONLY

TRUCK LOAD SALE

TIMBER WALL LININGS From **90¢** linear metre

We have Radiata Pine, Rimu, Western Red Cedar, Cypress Pine and Tasmanian Oak, in a range of sizes and patterns.

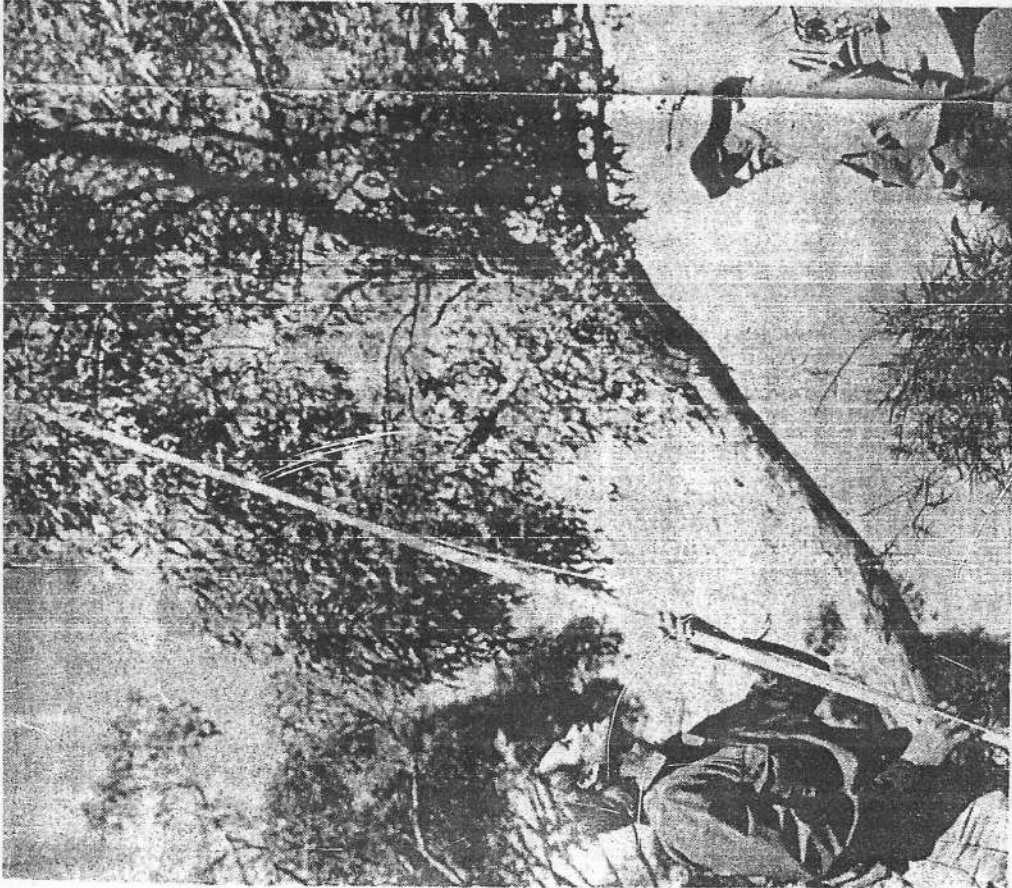
WEEKEND 8am - 5pm

Magnet Mart

HOME IMPROVEMENT WAREHOUSE

VASS ROAD, QUEANBEYAN
KELLCAR ROAD, CAMPBELLTOWN

Coliseum



MARK Clayton uses an extendable pole cutter to collect eucalypt leaf samples from the Wedderburn site. He is watched by co-worker, Laurie Adams.

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TRUCK LOAD SALE

TIMBER WALL LININGS
From **90¢**

linear metre
We have Radiata
Pine, Rimu,
Western Red
Cedar, Cypress
Pine and
Tasmanian Oak.
In a range of sizes and patterns.

WEEKEND
8am - 5pm

Magnet Mart
HOME IMPROVEMENT WAREHOUSE
YASS ROAD, QUEANBEYAN
KELLCAR ROAD, CAMPBELLTOWN

Elysium
Coffee Lounge & Restaurant

We cater for a quick meal or a full course business luncheon. Our variety and selection at reasonable prices will both impress and please you. For the man in a hurry we offer a wide choice of freshly cut sandwiches, conventional or Danish style, plus a good range of delicious small hot dishes.

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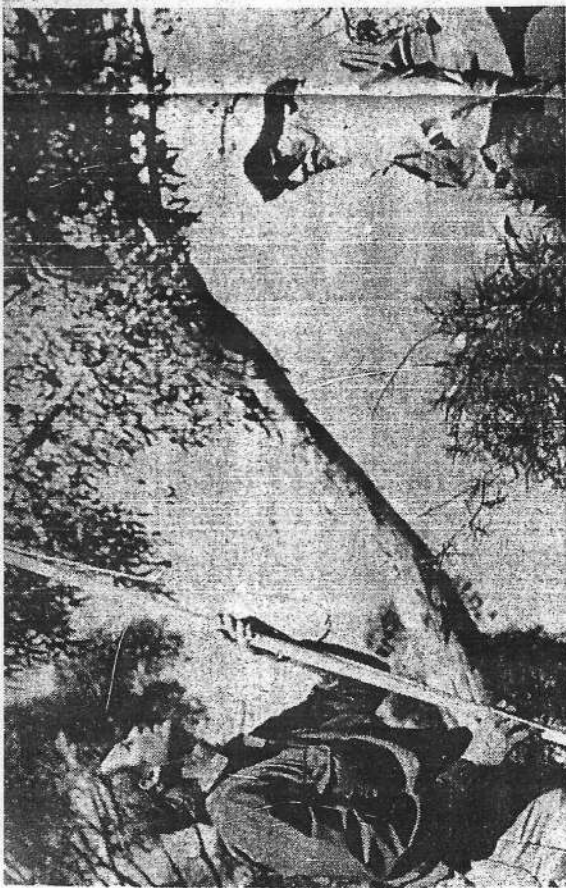
Mayor awaits study outcome

Campbelltown: The new mayor of Campbelltown, Alderman Jim Kremmer, has pledged to continue the fight to retain the city's recently discovered koala colony.

Heritage Act. "However, if Mr. Hay does not have the initiative to do so, and the Premier, Mr. Greiner, lacks sufficient concern to tell him to do so, then the Premier himself can take the action necessary to save our koala colony."

"Mr Greiner has it within his power as Premier and, more importantly, as Treasurer to indemnify Campbelltown Council against any claims for compensation lodged by the developer."

"If he does so, and I call on him to do so, will immediately instruct a city planner to initiate action that will stop the development in its track," Alderman Kremmer said.



MARK CLAYTON uses an extendable pole cutter to collect eucalypt leaf samples from the Wedderburn site. He is watched by co-worker, Laurie Adams.

Longer library

CAMPBELLTOWN: The Campbelltown City Council's central library will extend its opening hours to include Saturday afternoons, initially for a 10 week trial period.

The extended opening hours are expected to relieve the current problem of overcrowding in the library on Saturday mornings. He said many Campbelltown residents were

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