

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER



Busy times in the LLRI

NEWS & FEATURES

Landholder highlights

PAGE 2

Pest Features
LLR Native Species
Profile

PAGE 3

What's happening at
Hidden Vale?

PAGE 4

Upcoming events

PAGE 4

The last few months have been a busy time for the LLRI. Recently, members met for a fire management workshop run by the Ipswich City Council in partnership with Qld Fire & Biodiversity Consortium and the Qld Fire and Emergency Services (Fig 1b). Attendees were provided with extensive information on the ecological role of fire and the impacts of landscape level bushfires. Landholders were provided with property maps to assist in planning fire breaks and planning mosaic burns. Attendees were able to physically draw a fire management plan while identifying assets to be protected. The workshop was extremely informative and highlighted the importance of understanding the regional ecosystems on your property and how fire interacts with your landscape.

If you missed this workshop but are interested in creating a fire management plan for your property, keep an eye out for this workshop being run next year.

We have recently completed the deployment of detection dogs across 13 properties in the range where most properties showed signs of koala presence. This is only the first step in understanding the presence and distribution of the koala across the LLR.

One of our major goals is to develop a better understanding of our many locally rare and threatened species, including the koala. We wouldn't be able to achieve this without you all - our members. Keep an eye out on ways you can become involved in future projects across the range.



a)



b)

Fig 1. Landholders at the LLRI Koala habitat restoration workshop (a) and the Fire Management Workshop (b) hosted in 2022

Landholder highlights: Danny and Robbie Henry “Danroben” Mount Mort

We purchased our small property in 2002 with a view to spending our weekends, away from busy lives in Brisbane. We purchased a small cottage from a neighbour and moved it to our 55 acre scrub block, and began our journey as “Hobby Farmers”. Around 2005 we were approached by The Department of Natural Resources who were looking at creating and maintaining a Koala corridor. We investigated our commitments and benefits to us and our existing wildlife and proceeded with a 5 year plan which meant locking up an area of our land ,fencing it off ,and planting 1000 eucalypts. We also constructed an area for our dogs and worked on eradicating as many weeds as could be managed.

We were then approached by Ipswich Council staff to join the Land for Wildlife scheme and enjoyed their assistance with advice on attracting wildlife with a compatible habitat including further weed eradication. We deployed cameras and identified wildlife and pests that we were unaware we had. The koalas visit more frequently and we are delighted to share our home with them



Fig 3. Robbie releasing 'Hunter' - a large healthy boy that is part of the Hidden Vale Koala Project.



Fig 2. The Henry's supporting native wildlife in every way possible.

The contacts with staff and like-minded neighbours enabled us to engage with the community and when we moved here permanently (on retirement) it was a seamless Tree Change. I was asked to participate in the LLRI as a representative of the local community and have enjoyed watching the growth and involvement with our neighbours and the education of all in the area

The field days on Weeds, Fire protection and Wildlife habitat have been and are excellent value and we encourage all our neighbours to take advantage of these excellent initiatives and get involved with Nest box monitoring etc

These days have enabled us to get to know the staff and management at the Hidden Vale wildlife centre and have receive great enjoyment when we are informed and are able to track a Koala moving around or through our place. We are happy to provide access to the trackers who are respectful and happy to share their knowledge of what's happening on our patch and look forward to future projects with our neighbours.

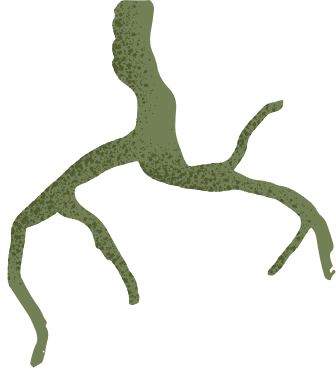


Fig 3. Photo capture by the Lockyer Upland Catchment Group in conjunction with the University of Queensland and Lockyer Valley Regional Council.

Pest features: Feral pigs (*Sus scrofa*)

Feral pigs are quickly becoming one of the worst pest animals in South-east Qld. We are getting reports of increased activity and presence across the LLR. Feral pigs are known to degrade soil, spread weeds and destroy important habitat. Feral pigs have devastating impacts on one of the Little Liverpool Range's very important regional ecosystem: semi-evergreen vine thicket. Trampling through the bush, this cloven hoofed animal destroys the habitat on which it walks.

Feral pigs (as shown in Fig 3.) look quite distinct from their domestic counterparts. They are often smaller and more muscular than the domestic pig with a coat that is black, buff or white with black spots. Pigs are found in family groups consisting of females and juvenile individuals or male pigs may be found as solitary individuals.

Females can give birth to two litters of 4 to 10 piglets in one year, meaning a population can double in the span of 1 year.

To report sightings visit: <https://www.feralscan.org.au/>

LLR Native Species Profile

Common name:
Swamp Tea Tree

Scientific name:
Melaleuca irbyana

Melaleuca irbyana can be found across the range, and is often found as a single tree (Fig. 4) or, more infrequently, in a community. *M. irbyana* is an endangered species and is of great conservation significance. Not only is the species itself endangered, but it is also an endangered community. The regional ecosystem 12.9-10.11 containing *M. irbyana* open forest on sedimentary rocks is endangered under the Qld Vegetation management Act 1999. This species and community presents great habitat for a range of fauna including small birds and reptiles.



Fig 4. *Melaleuca irbyana* (Swamp tea tree) found in the Range.

What's happening at Hidden Vale?

Written By Vere Nicholson & the Hidden Vale Team

The Hidden vale staff have been catching koalas for Chlamydia testing, health checks and vaccination. We are aiming to vaccinate as many koalas as we can against Chlamydia in order to raise the proportion of fertile animals and lower the number of infectious animals. We are aware we won't catch them all, that they aren't fenced in or out, but we believe if we keep the pressure on the Chlamydia, we will make a big difference.

The weather has been against us all of 2022 and trapping has to be paused for wet weather because you can't have a wet koala in a trap all night, nor can you keep checking all the time or they won't go into the trap. Access has also been an issue with the weather so we haven't caught as many koalas in 2022 as in 2021, yet.

A UQ research project has recently gone ahead in this early June break in the weather, and soon TFF will have access to these koalas for health checking and vaccination which may help us catch up on 2021.

A newly approved project will enable us to test rehoming koalas that have been rescued and hand reared elsewhere, onto Hidden Vale. These koalas will be health checked and vaccinated before being selected

by the Department of Environment and Science (DES) as suitable to be rehomed here.

We will transition them from captivity to the wild by first settling them in to our local gumtree types while housed at the centre (Fig. 5). Then settle them into a temporary fenced site in suitable habitat out on the property. When they appear happy in their surroundings the fence will be opened and we will track their progress with radio collars to observe the success of the process.

How many koalas are on Hidden Vale? This winter there are plans to survey using drones with heat sensing cameras (see Fig. 6). On a frosty night the koalas in the trees are little beacons of warmth that show up on camera. Because it is difficult to cover the whole area of the property, set areas will be surveyed and an estimate of the population will be calculated. We are excited that the project is starting to show positive impacts on the Hidden Vale population. Many joys have been detected in the past few months and we are looking for funding opportunities to expand the project through the LLRI onto interested neighbouring properties.

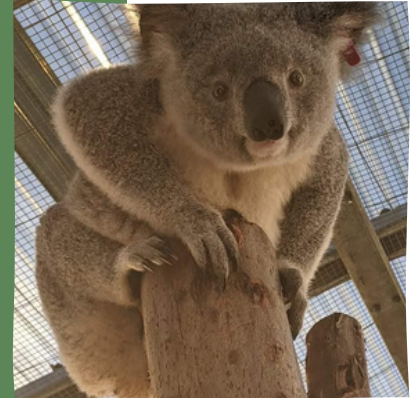


Fig 5. Wilson the koala enjoying his temporary enclosure at the Wildlife Centre before being released back onto Hidden Vale

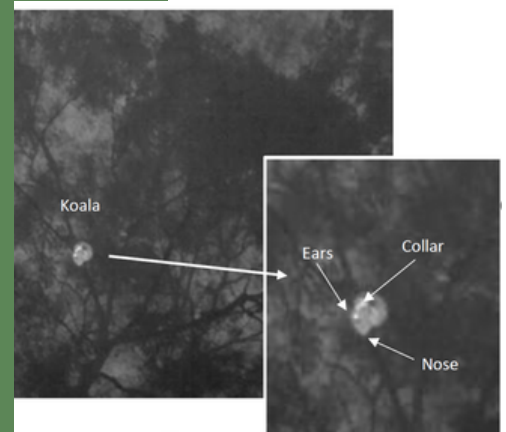


Fig 6. Koalas identified using drone technology

iNaturalist Statistics

4,514
Observations

1,393
Species identified

119
Observers

Upcoming events

August 2022 - LLRI Officer Hours and Afternoon Tea

October 2022 - LLRI Bioblitz