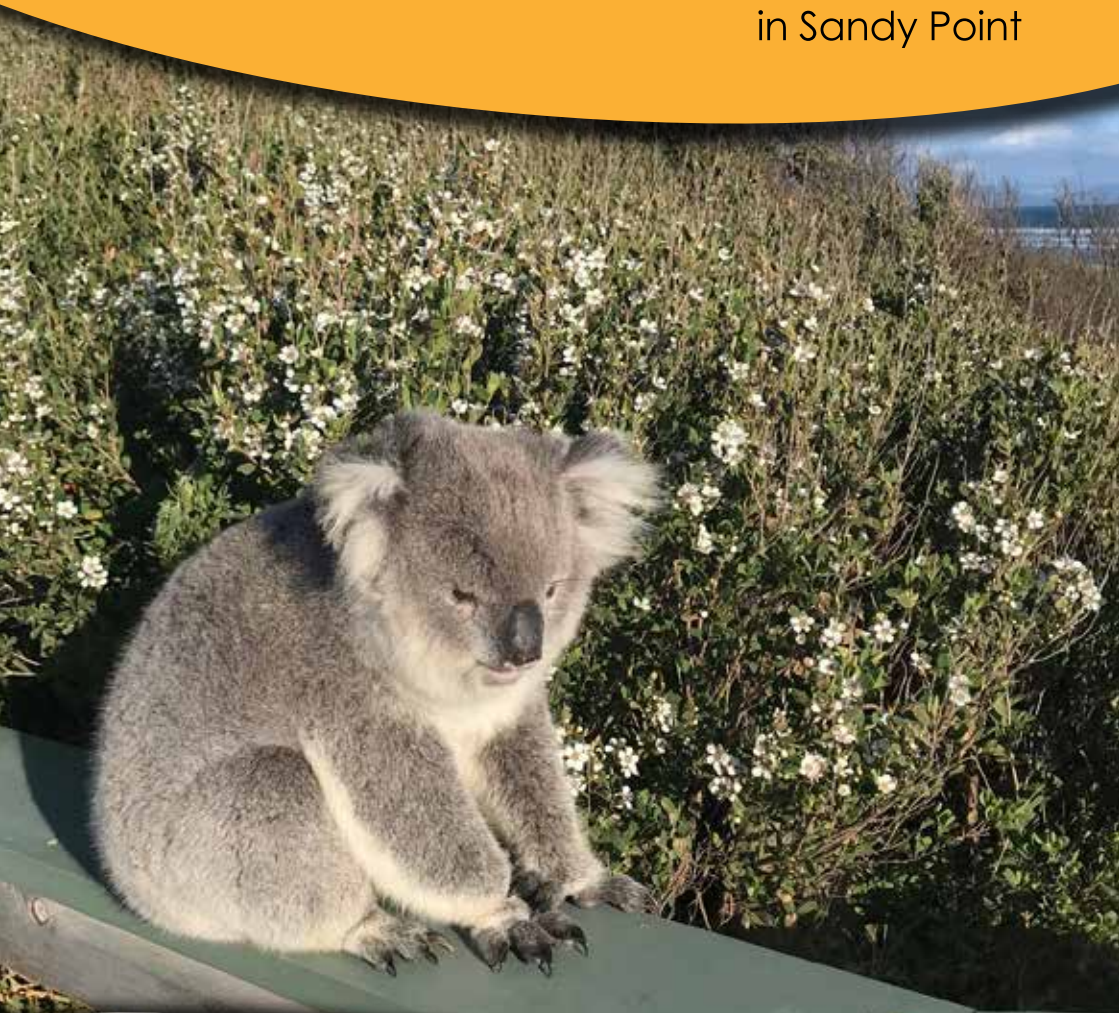


# A GUIDE TO LIVING WITH KOALAS

in Sandy Point



## KEY TIPS

Retain and plant koala food trees

Keep dogs inside, tethered or in a purpose built dog yard

Report koalas sitting on the ground as soon as possible

Drive slowly at dusk and dawn in areas where koala occur

# Sandy Point koalas

Sandy Point has a well-established population of at least 50 koalas that live within the township and in the surrounding bush, mainly in their preferred food source, coast manna gums.

Prior to European settlement, the koala population stretched around the Waratah Bay to Cape Liptrap and across to Wilsons Promontory.

Land clearing and development has led to habitat becoming fragmented and the koalas now rely on trees in the Sandy Point coastal reserve and on farms and house blocks.

Our koala population is isolated and genetically limited but recent genetic testing tells us that they are more closely related to the South Gippsland koalas than island populations.

# Koala habitat

A koala's diet consists of eucalyptus leaves. Due to their low nutrient, low energy diet koalas generally sleep between 18-20 hours per day. The rest of the time they spend feeding and grooming.

As a result of their highly fragmented habitat, our koalas have to travel some distance through town, across roads and across cleared land, where they are vulnerable to attack by dogs and stock, open to coming into contact with munge, and at risk of being hit by cars.

They also can't mix as easily with other populations to ensure a healthy and genetically diverse population.

Depending where they live, only a few species of eucalypt will be preferred by koalas. Such tree species, where they occur, are vitally important to the distribution, abundance and well-being of local koala populations.

## Koalas need trees

**Retain trees** whenever possible. Maintaining existing habitat is always better than trying to create new habitat. **Plant trees** native to the local area and plant them in the right conditions. You can get local seedlings which are grown from seed collected from original Sandy Point coastal manna gums.



### Here are some tips:

- Best time to plant - Easter to September (local seedlings are available from Easter)
- Use tree guards to protect seedlings from rabbits
- Install tin shrouds to protect young trees (>2.5m) from koalas until they're established
- Get local seedlings and information about other local species from Narkabundah Nursery, Sandy Point (03) 5684 1044, other local nurseries or your local Landcare Group.



# Create a koala friendly yard

1. *Keep fencing to a minimum*
2. *Make your existing fence koala friendly so that koalas can climb over, through or under it to reach their food trees*
3. *If you're installing new fencing make sure it is koala friendly (post and wire, post and rail, trellis)*
4. *Retain existing trees and plant trees that koalas eat, such as Coast Manna Gum*
5. *Plant other trees that koalas can use for shelter*
6. *Keep koalas safe from dogs.*



# Preferred koala food

Coast Manna Gum	<i>E. viminalis ssp. pryoriana</i>	Small tree 8-16m
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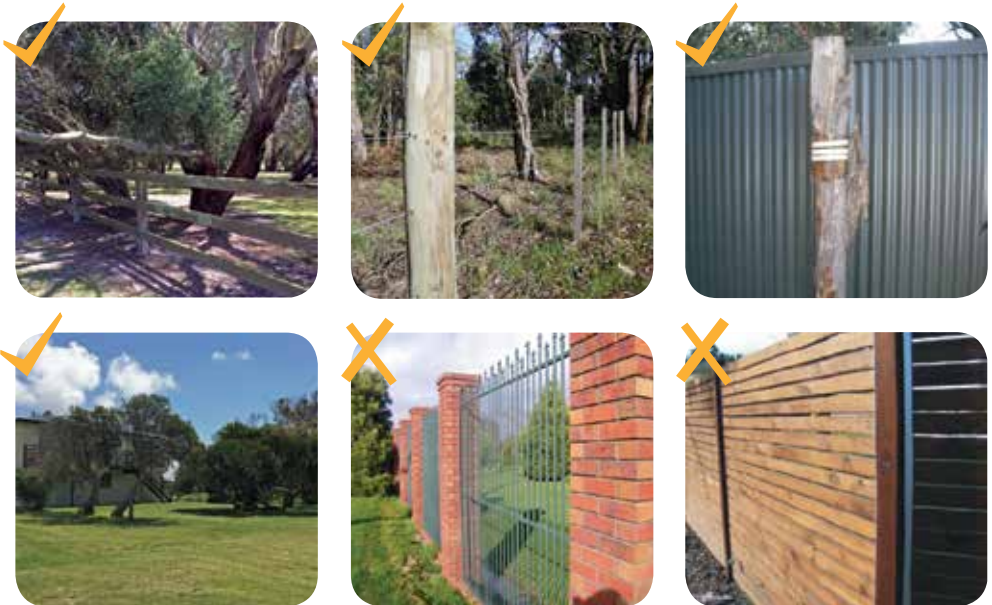
Koalas also shelter in other species, and sometimes supplement their preferred food source with other species.

Good local tree and shrub species to plant are:

Heath-leaved Banksia	<i>Banksia integrifolia</i>	Tree up to 15m
Sweet Bursaria	<i>Bursaria spinosa</i>	Small tree 5-10m
Coastal Tea Tree	<i>Leptospermum laevigatum</i>	Small tree 6-8m
Black Wattle	<i>Acacia melanoxylon</i>	Small tree 10-12m
Swamp Paperbark	<i>Melaleuca ericifolia</i>	Small tree 4-9m
Scented Paperbark	<i>Melaleuca squarrosa</i>	Shrub 0.5-10m
Dropping Sheoak	<i>Allocasuarina verticillata</i>	Small tree 4-10m

# Koala friendly fencing

A koala friendly fence allows koalas to climb over, through, or under allowing them to move freely around their home range. The most common types of fencing include post and rail and post and wire (no barbed wire).





# Threats to koalas

Moving to or visiting an area like Sandy Point does not mean that your pets cannot come with you – your furry friends are welcome.

However, it does mean that you must take responsibility for keeping your dogs and cats away from the local wildlife.

## Six misconceptions about koalas and dogs

- 1. My dog wouldn't hurt anything.** Your dog may never have seen a koala. Most dogs feel threatened by the sight of a koala in the yard and will naturally attack.
- 2. I want my dog loose on my property for protection.** Unrestrained dogs can be baited or distracted. Your dog is much safer at the house where he or she can guard you best.
- 3. My dog would only play with it.** Even a quick bite is enough to kill a koala. Their skin is very soft and internal organs are easily punctured.
- 4. But I have a fence and no trees in my yard.** Koalas can climb most fences and often cross yards to reach other nearby trees.
- 5. It's cruel to confine or restrain a dog.** By restraining dogs, especially at night when koalas are most active, many attacks can be avoided. Dogs soon enjoy the routine of being 'put to bed' each night.
- 6. There's plenty of bush for koalas at the end of the street.** Koalas not only rely on remnant bushland, gardens within the township can also form part of their home range.

Source: Living with Wildlife: Koalas, Department of Environment and Heritage Protection, Queensland



## Koalas and cars don't mix

Roadsides are important corridors for koalas as these are often the only trees left that connect areas of remnant habitat.

Koalas are nocturnal and are most active at night when they leave their trees to move to new feeding areas.

They are especially vulnerable when crossing roads, so please slow down from dawn to dusk and watch out for koalas.

# Injured koalas - what to do?

- Animals that have been injured or orphaned are usually in shock from the pain and will be terrified of you.
- Do not mistake their easy handling as being calm.
- If not handled quietly and respectfully YOU CAN KILL THEM.
- Call for help immediately on one of the numbers below.

## Wildlife rescue contacts

- Wildlife Victoria 03 8400 7300 or use their online form at [www.wildlifevictoria.org.au](http://www.wildlifevictoria.org.au)
- Sue Moore, Wildlife Carer - Tarwin Lower Rescue Shelter 0429 016 695

## What you can do to help



- Email [wildlifeinsandypoint@gmail.com](mailto:wildlifeinsandypoint@gmail.com) to join our contact list, or join our **Facebook Group**
- Make a donation to our local wildlife shelters via Wildlife Rescue and Protection Incorporated (WRAP) [www.wrap.org.au/donations](http://www.wrap.org.au/donations) To donate to our local carer Sue Moore of the Tarwin Lower Rescue Shelter please use the reference – SM1.
- Plant local trees and have a koala friendly yard.
- Share this information with your friends and neighbours.

For more information on Sandy Point koalas and current projects visit [sandypoint.vic.au/koalas](http://sandypoint.vic.au/koalas)

WiSP is funded through grants and community fundraising through the Sandy Point Community Group Inc. and is assisted by the Foreshore Committee.



**Donations can be made to:**  
SPCG Koala Project  
BSB 633 000  
Account 161432976



**Sandy Point  
Community Group**

*This brochure is adapted from the Friends of the Strzelecki Koala (FOSK) brochure, with thanks to FOSK and South Gippsland Landcare*