

Wildlife In Sandy Point group meeting 10 July 2021

Attendees: Merryn Bevis, Jill Treeby, Jan Hallas Penny Furphy , Christy Feier, , Kerrie de Cort , Georgia Roberts and Venessa Weaver

Apologies: Di Cornwell, Di Cooper

Thank yous: Sue Barbour -\$350 (beanie sells for koala count); David Healy \$150 (for koala count); \$40 from Jill, Merryn and Venessa masks sells.

1. Christy Fejer welcomed everyone including Venessa Weaver who is a new to Sandy Point. Christy gave an overview of where things were regarding the handover and discussed priorities over the next twelve months with a view of what might be long-term objectives or issues to address. It was agreed that ensuring that the koala population is stable and supported and expanding the reach, of the group to include wildlife, would be the primary focus of the next 9 to 12 months.

Action: Include Venessa Weaver in distribution list

2. Christy Fejer offered masks with animal irons on to the attendees to get their opinion on whether they were good give aways for donations over \$10 (the masks were donated by a dress maker who had made too many – her advertisement is the benefit to her). As noted above three members donated and the group endorsed the masks. However they are to be presented at events, as opposed at or near the general store, so it doesn't compete with Bass Coast Rescue. It was agreed proceeds would go to the mange fund. More of the discussion is recorded under Item 5.

Action: Christy to ensure masks are offered at the Koala Count and look for other opportunities to present them.

3. Rescue was discussed at length. It was agreed the most currently trained (in May 2020) would form the call out tree. Christy Fejer to provide support to Jan since she is the primary contact for Sue Moore. It was decided that high rescue is too hazardous for WiSP members and that it will be handled by an expert in the future. Therefore funding will be prioritized to produce a reserve for elevated rescue. Jan gave insights into her experience of rescue and how difficult mange has been with 18 koalas dying from mange in a two year period at one stage. Jan also pointed out we need new baskets with handles urgently. We also discussed 2 extra kits. Welding leather gloves were identified as the type of glove wanted. Duplicate set up as what's in the shed was accepted for the two extra kits.

Penny offered the case of the micro bat as an example of the broader rescue network. Part of expanding the view and impact of the group will need to ensure competent rescue of other species besides those we are most focused on now. Penny made the point that understanding animal behaviour is important in all rescues. It was acknowledge that training was a benefit to the community and would be offered more broadly and that in-services should be provided to help broaden animal rescue.

A mentoring and or training program, to support the group rescuers and any individual wanting to rescue on their own, was intimated from the discussion and should be explored.

Action: Arrange an expert to conduct elevated rescue. Christy to contact Jan over rescue support and basket replacement. Christy to update call out tree and contact Penny regarding expanding rescue. Christy to procure other kits. A koala training course needs to be arranged as refresher and for new comers. Identify potential in-services.

4. The September 26th Koala Count was discussed. Two additional organisers and 10 marshalls are needed. Having rescue ready in case of mange affected koala or injury was also discussed. Jill and Merryn put the hands up to help with the count. Kerrie and Georgie will be available for rescue. Venessa offered to involve her workplace. \$400 of the money recently received will be set aside for donation to Bass Coast for help with the rescue program.

Action: Christy to start the project task list as outlined in the koala count manual and recruit organisers and marshals (contact Jill, Merryn, 2019 volunteers and others). Sue Moore and the arborist to be contacted to plan rescue backup and potential talk at Koala Count.

5. Jan offered that more needs to be done towards fund raising. She described how there used to be markets and more donation tins. Christy briefly outlined Facebook fund raising and it was acknowledged that a coordinated effort was required. Venessa Weaver offered to be involved in community fund raising with her link to the general store.

Penny generously presented wildlife articles from the local newspaper as a medium to promote our events and ask for donations. She reminded the group of Sandy Point Snippets that Sally used to publish in the paper.

Christy brought up that the Sign Committee has proposed a third information display regarding the Koala Project to the Shire to be installed at the picnic area if approved. The cost is estimated to be \$600. The group agreed that they would fund the display if its approved,

Action: More tins need to be purchased. Jan has the labels for the tins so they can be combined and distributed. Tins need to get picked and distributed to new locations. Potential fund raising activities need to be identified and brought to the group for feedback or participation. The newspaper needs to part of our marketing plan and the status of 'Snippets ' needs to be determined.

6. It was decided that the Private Facebook Group as a library for members was not supported since many do not use Facebook. However people did want the articles and reports etc digitally. Minutes will be posted on the webpage.
7. Three meetings and a workshop annually were agreed to. Other gatherings such in-services, working bees and events were also discussed. See forward meeting dates.
8. A Children's education program was discussed. Ideas from the discussion: 1) Establish a school based program to inform and capture young hearts and minds regarding conservation and appreciation of the natural world. 2) Have a summer holiday program at Sandy Point. This could also feed into the Art Show. Georgie offered there were kids programs in Sandy Point during summer holidays historically. We agreed that there were be opportunities to do something in

this space. Georgie suggested for this year we have a Wildlife category for kids in the Art Show. It was agreed that was the best approach for this year.

Action: Put the ideas for the Children's Program on the agenda for the workshop in June 2022. Talk to Di Cooper regarding category or child participation in the Art Show.

9. The idea of a hospital was discussed. Jan offered that there are horrendous circumstances for the animals with mange and its been distressing over the years to see them suffer and die. Out of the discussion it was clear the mange program needs to be bolstered and more resources and support need to be identified and or procured. It was agreed that mange is to be a priority. We also discussed rescue and care continuity and that the community and group needed to ensure that we do as the best we can for the animals. Therefore some sort of plan for rescue and care needs to be developed with all involved. It was assumed the idea for the hospital was addressing the longer view that care need to be continued.

Action: A select group to start the consultative processes on what continuity (and expansion to include all wildlife) of rescue and care looks like and how it will be managed and resourced. Christy to organize.

10. Reporting

Finances: Current balance \$1223; change since last report \$490 (see thank yous above).

Earmarks for the Koala Count, duplicate kits, baskets, elevated expert for high recues and the koala informational display.

The rescue register and number and times of cases was discussed to reconcile information.

Since the first of the calendar year there have been 10 rescues with 3 koalas successfully treated for mange and released. We had 5 koala deaths – 3 manage, 1 collected by car and one unknown though no mange. Tags when issued need to be recorded as well as a better location so that a drop pin map can help identify clusters etc.

Action: Christy to update register (including naming Lilibet and recording her tag 004007). Christy will also transfer the most current information to excel spreadsheet with the longer goal of transferring all data.

11. Other discussions

Christy discussed the Facebook page and the desire to have a session to Storyboard the content (including sighting), messages and layout with interested members of the group.

The group talked about other potential longer-term goals beside that of continuity of care. Christy raised cataclysmic event planning which would address a rapid decline in koala population or a spread of disease within koalas or other targeted animals. And it could address immediate acute risk of fire or flood etc which could see evacuation as the only way to protect the animals. During the discussion the Fish Creek koalas were raised. It was concluded that is would be advantageous to know how many there are, their health status and how closely related they may be to Sandy Point. It was surmised they could represent a close relative and might be the most desirable group to population share.

Some sort of vegetation plan for the village was discussed. Christy raised the view that too many manna gums within the village (along with all the tea trees) could represent a fire risk. Not all agreed with this premise and it was discussed that perhaps a tree inventory could be done to determine how many koala gums exist in the area. A rule of thumb that 20 mature trees per koala needs to be confirmed. A simple plan would be to ensure enough trees for an estimated 60 koalas (estimated as of last count) and ensure that the majority of them are outside the main village since

human and pet activities and unnatural structures increase animal stress and increase the risk of injury. Biodiversity to attract smaller animal wallabies and birds was also discussed.

Also discussed was the group having an active role in providing information about undesirable plants so people can take the information and apply it to their own properties if wanted. We also discussed the vegetation maintenance program and having another working bee. Collaboration with other coastal communities was discussed. Christy also mentioned a RSPCA project that might be relevant to coastal community collaboration.

Action: Christy to record potential long-term goals or projects for discussion at next workshop. Christy to provide updates on the RSPCA project when they become available.

12. Meeting closed at 3.25 pm.

Forward dates of interest - Meetings, Events, Workshops Working Bees etc:

29 August 10:00-11:30 am - Koala Count organizing meeting

26 September starting at 9:30 - Koala Count

28 November 10:00-11:30 - Meeting

27 February 10:00 – 11:30 - Meeting

26 June 10:00 – 11:30 - Planning Workshop

For consideration:

Working Bee – Sometime in October (?)

In-service - early November (?) Potential subjects – sharing info provided from Koala workshop held by Deakin Uni and understanding animal behaviour for rescue.

Comments edits or addendums to Christy Fejer