



THANK YOU TO THE UBUNTU FOUNDATION FOR YOUR SUPPORT

This report details how we have utilised or plan to utilise the generous donation of \$60,000 made by the Ubuntu foundation to the future of our organisation.

BACKGROUND

Koala Action Gympie Region Inc. was initially created in 2015 and auspiced by the Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee.

We subsequently incorporated in January 2020. The group formed to be a voice for koalas in the region and with the purpose of creating a "koala aware community".

We are a totally volunteer run organisation who depend entirely on grants to undertake our work in the community. The majority of these grants are very restrictive in terms of how the funding can be utilised, particularly with regards to administrative costs for a volunteer organisation.

Thanks to Ubuntu we were able to undertake projects that were not covered by grant funding.

Our organisation's objectives include:

- Engaging the community in contributing data on Gympie region's koala population;
- Educating the community about koalas as an endangered species;
- Initiating and supporting activities that reduce harm to koalas and to maintain and improve their habitat; and
- Working collaboratively with and providing input to key stakeholders, to improve the protection of koalas and their habitat for long-term sustainability in the wild.

Our volunteers (committee members only) average 60 hours a week volunteer work. As well we utilise other volunteers to assist with various planting projects and information projects from time to time. This contributed a further 20 volunteer hours a week on average for the past year.

Our strategic plan drawn up in 2021 indicated that we needed assistance from outside to ensure the longevity of our organisation. We needed a long-term goal and Business Plan to ensure that the organisation could continue into the future, as the majority of our volunteers are also retirees.



Our committee 2021-2.



OUR PROJECT

Our project comprised three priorities:

1. To conduct actions from our Strategic Plan including increasing membership, increasing volunteer participation in all areas of our operations, and finding ways to achieve ongoing funding.
2. Education and Outreach to the community including increased awareness signage.
3. Improving connectivity of koala habitat across the region, particularly on private land and creating bush care groups to maintain public plantings.

Priority 1

We have successfully increased our membership from 110 to 168. We continue to raise our profile both within the Gympie region and outside the region, through links with various regional environmental councils, government agencies and other koala groups Australia wide.

Most importantly, we have engaged an outside consultant using the Ubuntu donation to assist us with future funding opportunities. He is also assisting us with a Business Development Plan.

To this end we held a "conversation day" with our membership to determine our future goals and plans. The draft plan is now available for comment and will be finalised within the next month. This would not have been possible without the Ubuntu funding.



Business Development Day

Priority 2

Additional signage and awareness programs have been possible with this funding including our temporary roadside signs warning drivers of recent sightings or road fatalities in the area.



One of our road signs

We are in the process of developing 2 videos. One will be an educational video about how to plant suitable habitat for koalas including how to plant a tree, what type of trees to plant and how to maintain them.

The second video is about the general operations of our organisation, what we do and how we educate the community. We have engaged a person to make these videos and he has started taking photos and is just waiting for us to give him the final wording and do a voiceover for the second video.





Priority 3

PEEK – our project for Planting Environment for Endangered Koalas was commenced in April 2022. This was an extension of the work we had previously been doing in planting koala habitats on private and public property since 2018.

Since the implementation of our PEEK project, we have had 69 requests for planting on private land and we have completed many of these. This is an ongoing project and funding for it comes from various sources.

We will continue this work based on the availability of funding. At present we have completed 4 of these private property plantings with the Ubuntu funding and have several more to be completed in the coming months.

As part of this project, we also developed a GIS database to keep an accurate record of our plantings, including which trees were being planted. Funding from Ubuntu has been used to purchase our licences for this database. Please refer to the public dashboard showing our work available at

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/98795fe7fd3f45098a92f8945d2a495a>





One of our ongoing projects for the last couple of years has been the development of a koala and other wildlife corridor along a public trail called the Mary Valley Rail Trail. This trail is used by walkers, runners, bicyclists, and horse riders. Funding for the planting portion of this project was provided by various other organisation including the Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife, Nestles Corporation, WIRES Wildlife organisation, Gympie Regional Council and Queensland Koala Crusaders. We have worked in conjunction with the Mary Valley Rail Trail Association with this project and have now created a bush care group jointly with that organisation to maintain this planting for 2 years at least until it become self-supporting and manageable by regular maintenance from Gympie Regional Council. As part of this trail project, we used some of the Ubuntu funds to install several Microbat boxes along part of the trail. Microbats play a very important role in the maintenance of the environment by both eating insects and pollinating many of the plants in the area.

Koala Forum 2023

Our Koala Forum on 10 September 2023. This Forum was partly funded by another grant that we received from the Federal Government and partly by the Ubuntu donation. We have several fantastic guest speakers lined up for this forum. We intend to hold another of these forums in 2024 at a venue in a rapidly developing area close to town where we are constantly concerned about the urbanisation of our koalas.



Guest Speakers at our 2023 Koala Forum

Dr Romane Cristescu, Carl Scheffe, Dr Deidre de Villiers, Bree Galbraith, Rachel Lyons