

# School's help for sick koalas

A NEW eucalyptus plantation is being nurtured by pupils at Pullenvale State School, in Brisbane's west. More than 100 blue gum trees were planted recently. In two to three years, they will provide food for sick and injured koalas at the nearby Moggill Koala Hospital.

Koalas are losing their natural habitat through land clearing and they are losing their lives from increased traffic and pet attacks.

Greater fragmentation of the habitat that does remain means they are stressed from having to travel further to find food and mates.

This also contributes to sickness and diseases such as conjunctivitis, pneumonia and urinary and reproductive tract infections.

The Moggill Koala Hospital treats up to 30 koalas at a time until they have recovered and are well enough to be released back into the wild.

The fussy eaters need fresh young eucalyptus leaves that are collected by hospital staff, who often travel up to two hours to find suitable food.

It can take up to 1500 trees to provide enough young shoots to feed each koala patient.

This is where Pullenvale State School will help.

The trees at the school will be kept short, just 2-3m tall, so young branches can be easily harvested.

The new initiative between the school and the Moggill Koala Hospital is sponsored by the Australia-Japan Wildlife Conservation and Education Foundation and supported by the Japanese Club of Brisbane.

"One major objective of AJWCEF is to educate people in Japan and Australia about Australia's unique wildlife and contribute to conservation

efforts," AJWCEF managing director and CEO Dr Tetsuo Mizuno says.

"The school grounds' close proximity to the koala hospital and the keen students makes it a perfect site for the new plantation."

Japanese teacher Stephanie Madden says the new project is a win-win situation for all involved. Educational opportunities arising from the venture include examining the environmental impact of modern-day life on wildlife habitats, conservation issues and increased awareness of Japanese culture and language when Japanese students and volunteers visit the school to assist in the project, she says.



**DIGGING IN:** Some recent Japanese visitors plant trees with Pullenvale students and the blue gum trees (left).



**WORKING TOGETHER:** Tetsuo Mizuno (AJWCEF), Allan McKinnon (Moggill Koala Hospital), Fred Hardman (principal), Stephanie Madden (Japanese teacher) and students Jensen, Kai and Austin.

## FEELING THE HEAT

The United Nations Climate Change Conference is currently being held in Cancun, Mexico.

Representatives from 194 countries are calling for immediate action on the causes and adverse impact of climate change. Those attending a similar conference in Copenhagen last December failed to create a binding global agreement to curb carbon emissions. According to the findings of a recently released UN report, current emissions reduction pledges made by countries around

the world fall well short of what is needed to keep global temperatures from rising by 2100.

Results from the Global Carbon Project supported by CSIRO's Marine and Atmospheric Research Division also warn that global dioxide emissions contributing to atmospheric warming show no sign of abating.

There are high hopes that an agreement at Cancun will help to effectively curb a global temperature.

Learn more: United Nations Climate Change Conference <http://cc2007.org/>  
Global Carbon Project: <http://www.globalcarbonproject.org/>