

Lost koala on Gold Coast building site 'not an oddity': wildlife group

<http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/queensland/lost-koala-on-gold-coast-building-site-not-an-oddy-wildlife-group-20151014-gk9gkw.html>

October 15, 2015 **Kim Stephens**

Ash is photographed on a Gold Coast development site. *Photo: Wildlife Australia Inc*



An animal rescue group has posted pictures of a disoriented koala wandering a desolate Gold Coast development site, saying the iconic Australian mammal represents countless native fauna left homeless by land clearing.

Wildcare Australia president Karen Scott said volunteers rescued the young koala from the site on Monday, after she was found wandering amid a cleared parcel of land in Pimpama that, until six weeks ago, was covered by bushland.

The koala, named Ash by her rescuers, was reported by builders working on the site.

"I think a lot of people see cleared areas and they realise in the back of their mind it was once habitat for wildlife but until you see a photo like that, you don't realise that a koala, which is supposed to be an iconic Australian species, has no home left," Ms Scott said.

"And its not just koalas, every species that lived there, possums, gliders, carpet pythons, all of those animals have either been killed or lost their homes."

Ms Scott said while wildlife conservation plans instituted by the Gold Coast City Council were largely effective prior to the arrival of bulldozers, they did not account for habitual species such as koalas, which were often left disoriented by the loss of their homes upon their return weeks later.

"When you look at a photo like that, you can see that while birds can fly away, a lot of smaller, slower moving animals, like frogs and echidnas, are not going to move away," she said.

"Koalas are habitual, they know where their favourite trees are, so when she gets there, there's nothing left.

"We're getting them in because they are hit by cars and attacked by dogs, a number of koalas are found wandering frantically across highways and into suburban backyards."



The young koala was rescued by wildlife carers.
Photo: Wildlife Australia Inc

A spokeswoman for Gold Coast City Council said the Pimpama area had been identified as a major regional activity centre in the South East Queensland Regional Plan 2009-2031.

She said the council had adopted the Koala Conservation Plan for East Coomera in July 2014 and a number of measures to protect native fauna had to be undertaken by developers as part of their agreed development application requirements.

"Conditions of approval require a vegetation management plan, fauna management plan and a pre-clearing fauna assessment," she said.

"A spotter catcher and koala spotter are required to be on site during the vegetation clearing process.

"Works are to cease for a radius of at least 25 metres to 30 metres if a koala is located within a tree.

"Clearing of remnant vegetation is restricted to a maximum two hectares per day."

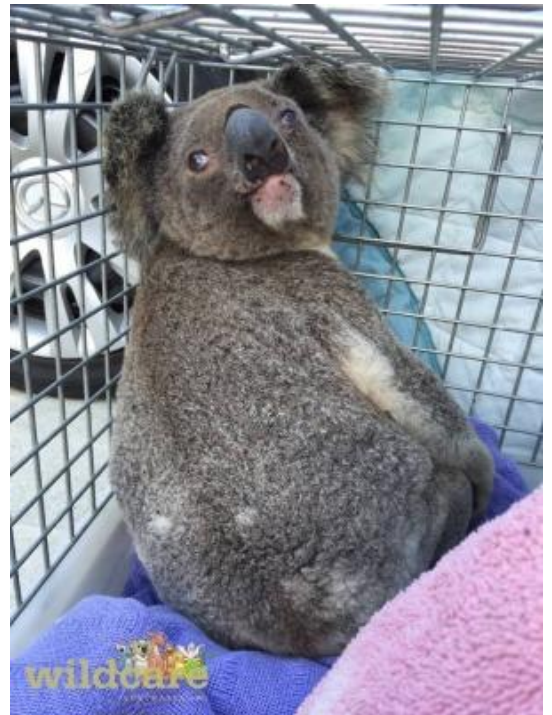
Ms Scott said the young homeless koala found at the site was far from alone.

"It's not an oddity, this is just happening everywhere," she said.

"On development sites, once it's cleared, there's nothing for the animals to go back to.

"Where there are large amounts of land being cleared, a lot of animals are being displaced and found in areas that they typically wouldn't be found."

Ash was taken to Currumbin Wildlife Hospital for treatment.



Disoriented koala Ash was found wandering a Gold Coast development site.
Photo: Wildlife Australia Inc