



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT

Koala citizen science survey - Narrandera and adjacent habitats

RESEARCHERS:

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- Hayley Stannard BAnimSc, BSc(Hons), PhD, GCLTHE. E: hstannard@csu.edu.au
- Geoffrey Dutton BSc; BVSc, PGDipSc (Cons. Biol.), PhD, GCULT. E: gdutton@csu.edu.au

INVITATION

You are invited to participate in a study on the koalas present in Narrandera and dispersing into surrounding regions.

The study is being conducted by Joanne Connolly, Hayley Stannard and Geoffrey Dutton from the School of Agricultural, Environmental and Veterinary Sciences at the Charles Sturt University. Charles Sturt University is an Australian University, TEQSA Provider Identification: PRV12018. Charles Sturt University CRICOS Provider: 00005F Before you decide whether or not you wish to participate in this study, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish.

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this research is to conduct a community-based koala survey in the Narrandera Shire and adjacent regions and to collate information gathered to obtain a picture of koala occurrence and relative abundance across this region. A further aim is to increase community awareness of koala conservation and the importance of this population. Koalas were introduced into the Murrumbidgee Valley National Park at Narrandera in the 1970's and there is little information on distribution, abundance or health of this population, aside from the annual Narrandera koala count.

The information collected by the survey will assist to:

- Identify locations where koalas are present and absent in the Riverina.
- Detect changes in koala populations at various locations over time e.g. declines, overabundance.
- Identify threats to our local koala populations e.g. motor vehicles, disease.
- Help wildlife authority conservation plans for the koala in the Riverina.

Why have I been invited to participate in this study?

Adults (18 years and over) that live in or visit Narrandera and the Riverina are invited to participate in this research.

What does this study involve?

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete a brief questionnaire about the location and details of your koala sightings. Participants are able to record up to four koala sighting locations at a time in the one survey using an online mapping tool. The questionnaire is available online using a QR code and/or weblink shown below.

Participants have the option of indicating an interest in future koala surveys or volunteering opportunities if they wish. Participants can obtain further information and be provided with the questionnaire via email if they wish. Participant's identities will be kept strictly confidential.

Are there risks and benefits to me in taking part in this study?

By taking part in this project, there is the opportunity to be involved in research that may play a significant role in the future of koalas in Narrandera and surrounding regions. The project will inform management and research to fill the gaps in our knowledge of this important koala population.

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There is minimal risk associated with this online koala survey as the questions are objective, and the survey is voluntary and confidential. Participants will be able to ask questions if they have any concerns.

How is this study being paid for?

NSW Koala Strategy, Local Land Services and Koala Regeneration Committee are providing support for this project.

Will taking part in this study (or travelling to) cost me anything, and will I be paid?

Taking part in this study will not cost you anything, it is an online survey with no travelling except your normal routine.

What if I don't want to take part in this study? What if I participate and want to withdraw later?

Participation in this research is entirely your choice. Whether or not you decide to participate, is your decision and will not disadvantage you. Only those who give their informed consent will be included in the project. The data collected cannot be withdrawn once a response is submitted.

How will my confidentiality be protected?

Any personal information collected during this study will be stored securely and accessed only by the direct researchers of this study. Your personal details will only be present on the initial online questionnaire and not used in results and publications. The data will be secured electronically for at least five years on the CSU Research Drive.

What will happen to the information that I give you?

The information you provide will be published in scientific journals, a report to NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service Koala Strategy, a distribution map and presented at wildlife conferences. Individual participants will not be identified in any reports, publications or presentations arising from the project. The data may be used in future by the researchers for another project.

What should I do if I want to discuss this study further before deciding?

If you would like further information, please contact Joanne Connolly (wildlife@csu.edu.au)

Who should I contact if I have concerns about the conduct of this study?

Charles Sturt University's Human Research Ethics Committee has approved this project. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this project, you may contact the Committee through the Research Integrity Unit via the following contact details:

The Presiding Officer
Human Research Ethics Committee
Research Integrity Unit
Locked Bag 588
Wagga Wagga NSW 2678
Phone: (02) 6933 4213
Email: ethics@csu.edu.au

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence, investigated thoroughly, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Conclusion

Thank you for considering this invitation to participate in this community-based koala survey. This information sheet is for you to keep.

KOALA SURVEY LINK : Clicking the link or scanning QR code indicates your consent to participate.

<https://arcg.is/1DueTq0>

