

Koalas and Domestic Dog Guide

One of the top reasons koalas need to be rescued in Ipswich each year is injury caused by domestic dog. Koala movements often involve venturing into yards that are adjacent to or between patches of bushland habitat. This frequently involves encounters with domestic dogs, especially where they are allowed to roam free at night.

Just a single dog bite can seriously injure or kill a koala. Signs of a bite may not be visible to the naked eye, however they may have significant internal damage or develop a life-threatening infections as a result.

It is important that koalas that survive a dog attack are examined by the Ipswich Koala Protection Society. They may need to be transported to Moggill Koala Hospital if long term hospitalisation is required.

Important facts

- Most dog attacks on koalas take place inside backyards.
- Koalas tend to be most active during their breeding season, between August and February.
- If there is more than one dog in a yard, a koala attack is more likely.
- Koalas have very sharp claws and powerful jaws and are capable of inflicting nasty injuries.

Koala movement

Koalas need to regularly move around their home range to visit preferred food and shelter trees, and to delineate their territory, as well as for social interaction and breeding. Juvenile koalas may need to disperse for



several kilometres to locate a suitable area to establish their own home range. Most koala movements between trees involve travelling along the ground, mainly between dusk and dawn. With a few simple pet ownership actions, the risk of dog attacks on koalas can be greatly reduced.

By following the guide outlined below, you can help to create a koala friendly environment.

Guide for responsible pet ownership

Keep your dog confined at night time

- Koalas are most active between dusk and dawn so ensuring your dog does not have free access to roam your backyard during these times will help to ensure safe koala movement.
- If possible, keep your dog indoors at night or confined on a veranda or garage area. Smaller enclosures or runs are also suitable for night time use, or your dog may be comfortable on a long lead.



Do not let your dog roam freely

- It is an offence to allow your dog off leash in any public area other than a designated off leash dog area. This includes all paths leading up to an off leash area.
- In some suburbs koalas commonly use habitat trees within dog exercise areas. If you see a koala on the ground in this area, please place your dog on a lead until the koala climbs up to safety.

Install koala friendly fencing

- Fencing which allows koalas to easily get out of your yard will assist them if they do encounter a dog.
- Koala friendly fencing design includes:
 - ☑ Thick planks that allow the koala to walk across the top of the fence.
 - ☑ Small gaps between panels to allow the koala to grip and climb.
 - ☑ Trees or sturdy shrubs close to the fence can provide a natural ladder.
 - ☑ Provision of a pole or plank leaning at no greater than a 60 degree angle against the fence can allow for escape.
- Don't assume your dog is friendly. When approached by an unfamiliar animal in their own backyard a dog may feel threatened and might react in an unexpected manner.
- When choosing a dog breed, consider a smaller sized dog.

What to do if your dog has injured a koala

- Immediately remove your dog from the area.
- Do not touch the koala.
- If possible, place a box or washing basket over the koala and place a weight on top. This will contain the koala and help to keep it calm.
- Call Ipswich Koala Protection Society on 0419 760 127 or 0412 541 611.

For more information

To find out more about how you can help protect populations in Ipswich visit Ipswich.qld.gov.au/koalas



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