

## OUR KOALA CORRIDOR PROJECT – WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

Koalas in South East Queensland face threats every day. By far, the biggest threat to koalas is habitat loss. As habitat patches become smaller and more fragmented, koalas are more likely to move through developed areas. In developed areas, koalas have to cross roads and move through properties where they may be attacked by dogs or drown in backyard swimming pools. While Koalas are on the ground, they are at great risk of harm or death from cars and dogs. They may need to cross busy roads to find food trees, and they may get hit by cars. Unless they have a safe area of undisturbed habitat where they can move to and where there aren't already any Koalas living, they are very likely to be killed or get sick and die. Source: <https://www.savethekoala.com>

However, not all is doom and gloom, St Paul's School is a place where we can make a positive difference.

For the past 12 months, Mr Mackenzie-Smith, Head of Learning (Global Sustainability) has researched & collaborated with various experts including Koala Research Scientists from the University of the Sunshine Coast, Habitat Brisbane (Brisbane City Council), Land for Wildlife (Brisbane City Council), former Facilities Manager, Mr Sweeney (whose vision it was to have a safe place for Koala) and The Bald Hills Bushies (a local community environmental group) in order to coordinate, plan, develop and take steps to implement habitat regeneration projects at St Paul's. The overall aim has been to increase the biodiversity of the school environment and to reintroduce the native species of animals and native species of plants and to create a 450 metre long Koala Corridor from South Pine River to Canterbury Park.

Along the way Mr Howes has helped to drive the process, supported by Mr Grant, the Secondary School's Service Learning Committee, Mrs Slade, Mrs Casablanca, the Junior School Tangalooma Ecomarines students, staff representatives from the Science Curriculum Area and members of our Facilities and Property Management section have come on board. They have been inspired to join the movement and are keen to positively change the school's landscape. These projects have also been planned to transform our students' thinking about their interconnected role in this world and demonstrate to them that they can make positive, real-world change. Mr Mackenzie-Smith is working to involve as many of our students as possible by incorporating ties to the Australian Curriculum in different year levels and a number of learning areas to give students real-world, authentic, hands-on learning experiences.



Recently, a large representative group kicked off the project with a tour of the proposed project sites and were taught about invasive weeds, how to recognise existing native plant species and which plants were beneficial to introduce to our school campus. (Pictured left).

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECTS

We will be working with Land for Wildlife and our students and staff on the following projects:

**SITE A :** A project to create habitat connectivity for Koalas by the planting of a 450 m long corridor of Eucalypts between the St Paul's Riverside area (behind the golf driving range and Eastern Oval area to link up with Canterbury Park and the Barungwarra Bushland Reserve. Amongst the eucalypts, denser plantings of rainforest species would help shade out the dense sward of introduced grasses, develop a leaf-litter layer that is important for reptiles and invertebrates, and create suitable habitat for gliders and forest birds.

**SITE B :** The restoration and reinstatement of remnant vegetation along a section of the South Pine River corridor mapped as the endangered regional ecosystem - Gallery Rainforest on Alluvial Plains

This area is valuable wildlife habitat with a resident population of Koalas, gliders, and diverse forest bird species.

**SITE C :** Students and teachers will work towards regenerating the wetlands at the northern border of the school to encourage various species of frogs, small animals and waterbirds.

There is so much more to come and we need you!

We need your support to help our cause: we need community assistance in the forms of human manual labour, financial support, machinery assistance, environmentally-minded thinkers, landscapers, lobbyists and moral supporters. Please contact [C.Mackenzie-Smith@stpauls.qld.edu.au](mailto:C.Mackenzie-Smith@stpauls.qld.edu.au) or [C.Howes@stpauls.qld.edu.au](mailto:C.Howes@stpauls.qld.edu.au) if you can assist in any way or if you would like to be involved in our projects. I'm sure the children would be so proud to see more adults come on board.



In addition, The Service Learning Committee has launched a line of reusable St Paul's coffee cups. The aim is to minimize the use of single use cardboard cups within our community while at the same time raising funds for the creation of The Koala Corridor. The cups are available at the Retail Shop at the price of just \$7:00. The coffee cups have been a wonderful community initiative with the cups sponsored by local councillor, Amanda Cooper, so all funds raised will go directly to the Koala Corridor project. Many thanks go to Mrs Sarah Slade who has been a wonderful help to the committee in sourcing the sponsorship and the provider.

### Charles Mackenzie-Smith

Head of Learning (Global Sustainability)