THE HIDDEN VALE KOALA PROJECT: COMBINING CONSERVATION RESEARCH AND ECOTOURISM

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Hidden Vale Wildlife Centre

"*To deliver resilient ecosystems with representative, self-sustaining populations of fauna and flora endemic to the Scenic Rim*"

HV History

- Beef cattle station since 1871
- 1921 current homestead built
- 1999 HV land bought – 4,560 hectares
- 2010 Spicers Hidden Vale Retreat

More Recent HV History

- 2018 Homestead burnt down!!
- 2020 New homestead to open!!

HV Present Day

- Luxury rural retreat
- Gourmet food
- Superb wines
- Great baths…

HV Present Day

Multi-use

- Mountain biking
- Walking
- Cattle

HV Nature Reserve

- 3091 hectares
- declared in 2007
- a regionally significant corridor
- many rare and threatened species

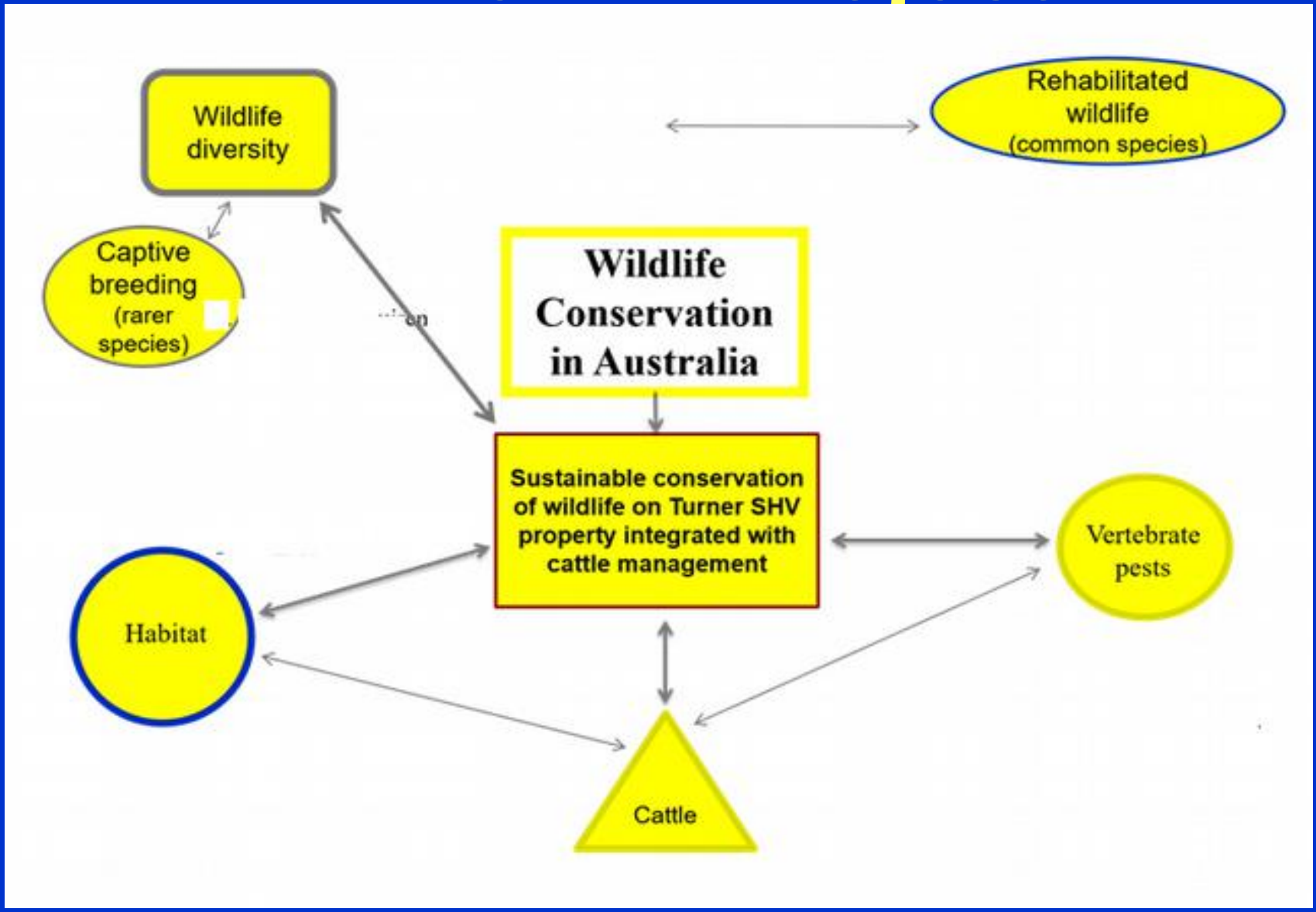
The HV Project

Overall Objective

- "***To deliver resilient ecosystems with representative, self-sustaining populations of fauna and flora endemic to the Scenic Rim***"

- "Everything we do should support and be supported by applied, scientific research"

The HV Project



1. HV Habitat Restoration

Activities

- Plantings, riparian lines
- Soil restoration
- Weed control
- Feral predator control
- Grazing management

Collaborations

- University of Queensland
- Sporting Shooters Association
- QTFN
- Community

2. The Wildlife Centre

2. The Wildlife Centre

Now occupied by animals and staff and being used for wildlife and ecology teaching…

2.The Wildlife Centre

And by visiting international students and staff…

2. The Wildlife Centre

…and research…

…and the media…

2. The Wildlife Centre

And Retreat guests and conferences…

Interpretation Room Phase 1 completed, phase 2 commenced…

1. "Real' Corner

Taxidermy animals on natural substrate, wallaby on a rock, fox/cat hidden by tufts of grass.

Must be cordoned off or displayed in Perspex box. Make the whole corner natural and cordon off?

This area set aside for the different types of nest boxes. Guests can touch and feel and look inside the nest boxes, different types of nesting material etc.
We have an old nest box that's falling apart: demonstrate that they need to be replace regularly.
Can have information on each nest on species etc.

2. Interactive Screen

Wildlife at the Centre - The current species:

Rufous Bettongs

Fat tailed dunnarts

Blue tongue lizards

ny gliders

Wildlife at The Centre

Eastern bristlebirds…

- Highly endangered
- Endemic to the Little Liverpool Range
- Currently found at Spicers Peak
- Existing captive breeding programme with Currumbin Sanctuary
- As a model for other endangered species at HVWC

Wildlife Breeding

The species to be bred…?

tailed quolls

Brush-tailed phascogales

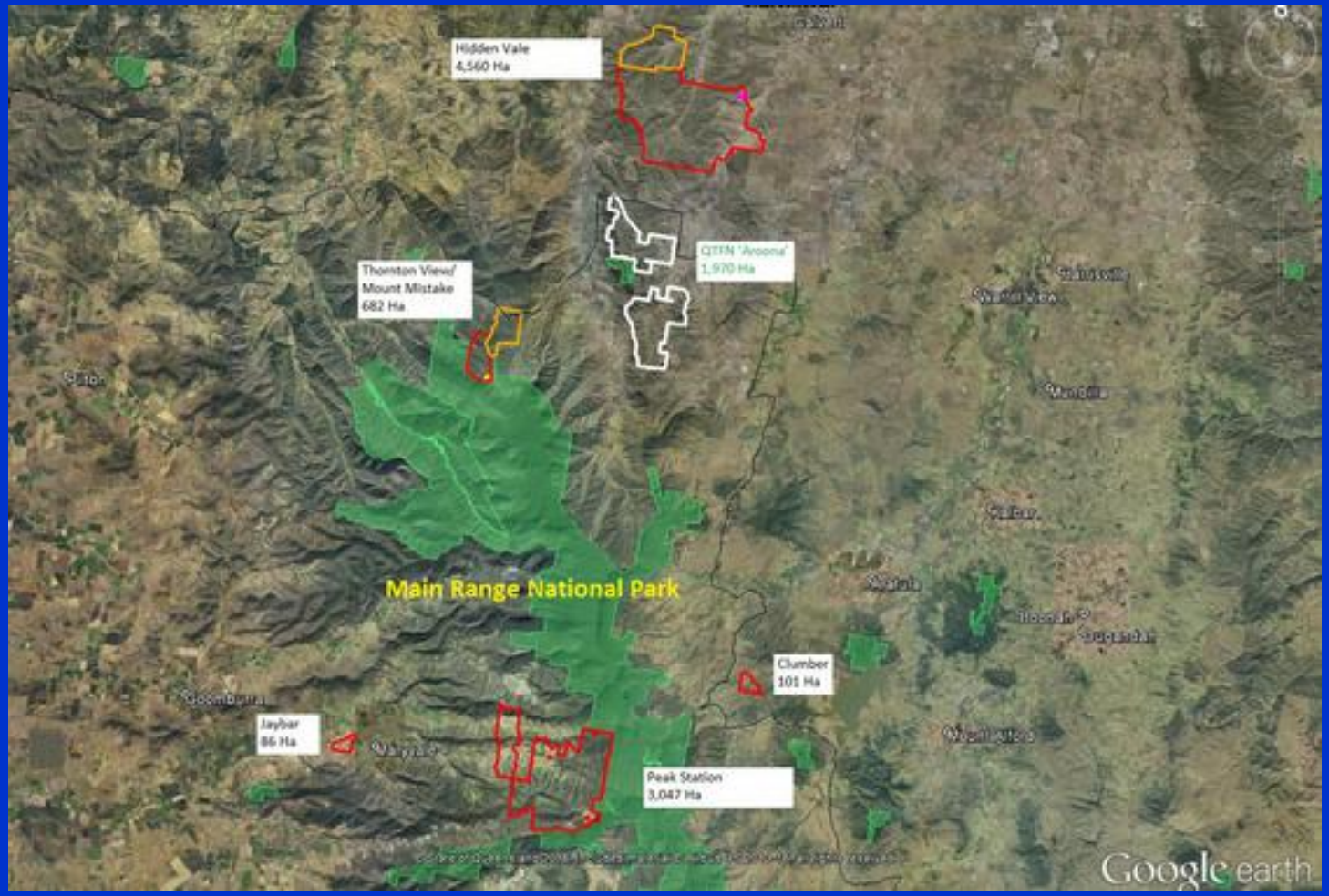
Gloss atoos

-tailed rock wallabies

Predator-proof soft-release area at HV in which to breed and release these local species…

The Bigger Picture…

The Little Liverpool Range Initiative…



The LLR…

Aim to establish an integrated management regime to tackle:

- Habitat loss
- Invasive species
- Fire regimes
- Population growth
- Unstainable practices
- Ecotourism opportunities

The Outcomes… Benefits for all

- Improve and protect the natural environment
- Support wildlife conservation
- Allow continued use of the natural resources for livestock production, ecotourism and adventure activities
- Enhance the ecotourism opportunites…

The Hidden Vale Koala Project

Aims:

- A thriving and sustainable koala population at Hidden Vale… a "**koala haven**"…
- Healthy koalas for bolstering their populations through the Little Liverpool Range… a "**koala fountain**"…

Aim to find out:

- The size of the HV koala population;
- Health status and movements;
- Current threats – predation, disease, habitat change;
- Strategies for increasing koalas at HV;

The Koala Project

Aim – Catch, examine and collar every koala in a prescribed area

How – First, find your koala…

The Koala Project

Then – ‘Flag the koala down until it is within grabbing distance…

The Koala Project

Then – Take the koala to our veterinary clinic to be anaesthetised, examined and collared…

The Koala Project

Finally – Take the koala back to the tree in which it was caught and release it…

The Koala Project

The Results: 31 koalas collared: 18 females and 13 males

The Koala Project

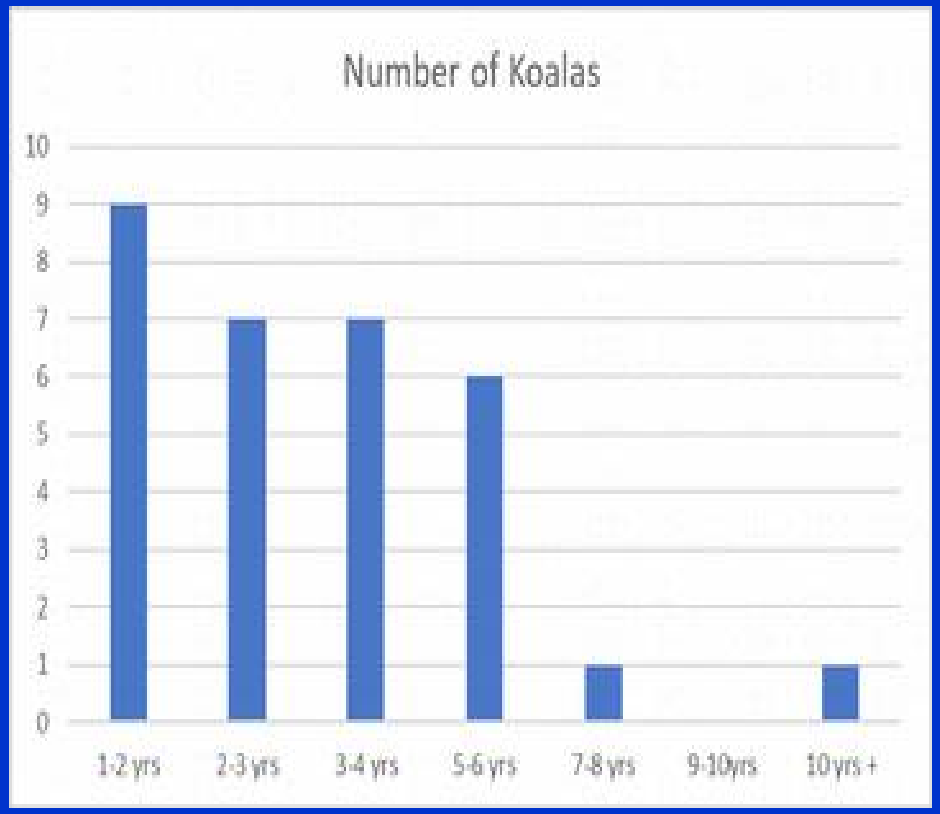
The Tracking–

1. All koalas are then tracked at least every 2 weeks;
2. We need to actually see each koala to confirm health;
3. Continue to monitor movements and health of all koalas;

The Koala Project

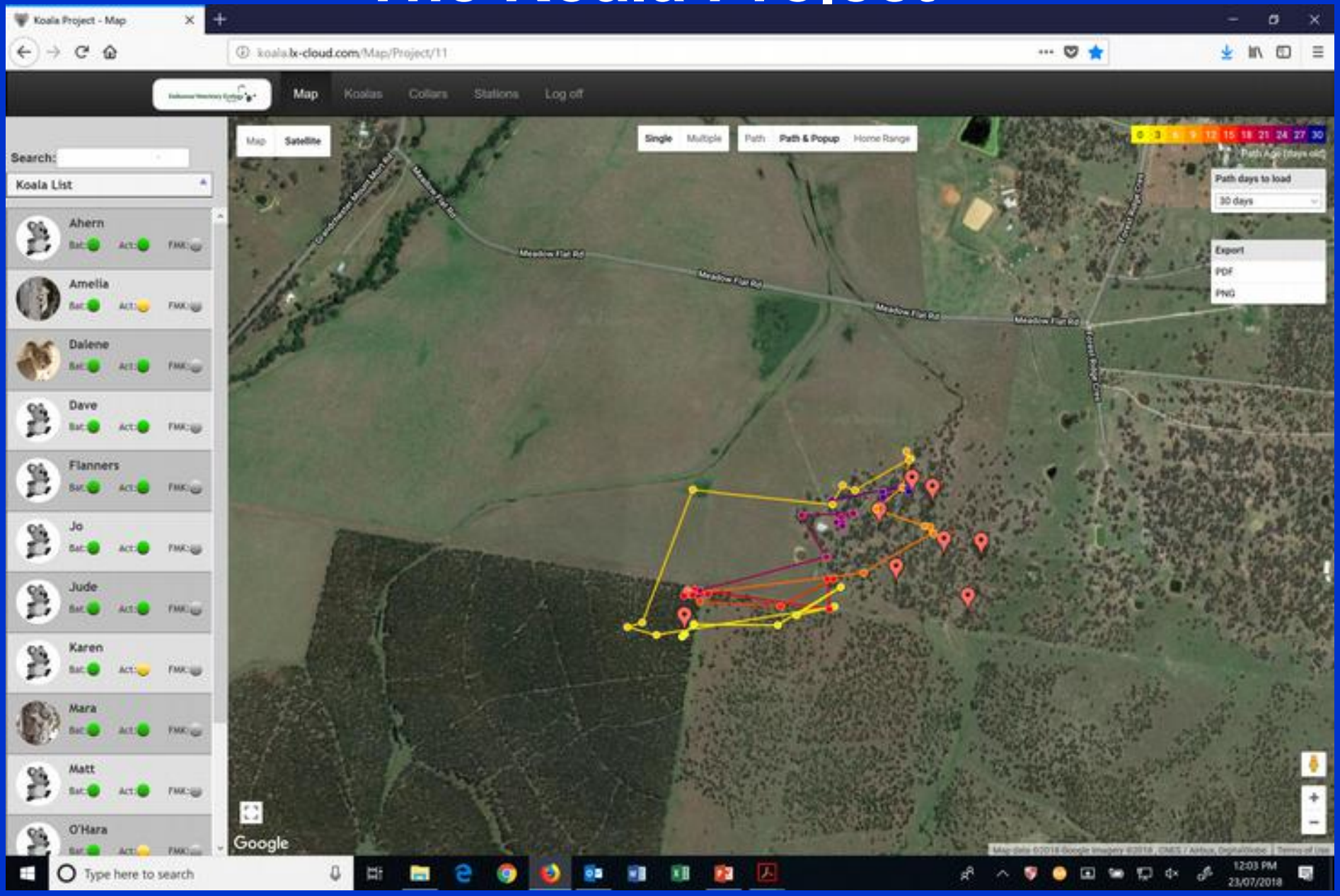
The Results: we have an unusual and valuable population:

- Most appear healthy with low level of chlamydia
- Most are young adults –few older koalas
- The population is breeding well.



Koala Event	Number
Died	4
Dropped Collar	3
Dispersed	3
Being Tracked	21
TOTAL	**31**

The Koala Project



The Koala Project

The Next Steps –

1. Plant more trees!!
2. Monitor the use of these plantations;
3. Look for potential interactions with cattle;
4. Continue to monitor movements and health of all koalas;
5. Links with the Retreat –

develop "Koala Safaris"...

The Koala Safaris ...

- available to Retreat Guests, at a cost;
- money raised goes back to the Koala Project;
- allows discussion of koala conservation;
- encourages guest participation in the Project

The Koala Safaris …

attract considerable media interest…

Questions?