



This newsletter is the first of many we'll be producing in the next few years. It will contain the history and current progress of two major projects for Koala Conservation Australia (KCA).

The first project is the Wild Koala Breeding Program (WKBP) facility. Through the generous donations by thousands of people during the devastating bushfires of 2019/20, both locally and from around the world, the KCA is able to bring forward what was a long-term goal – to develop the world's first wild koala breeding program.

The second project is to redevelop the Port Macquarie Koala Hospital (PMKH). The hospital has been on its current site since 1973. Over the years it's had many additions and 'add-ons' and is in need of a major refurbishment.

These are both multi-million dollar projects that will increase the tourism offers in Port Macquarie. They will create employment opportunities and bring visitors to the area all with the goals of increasing knowledge and care for Australia's iconic koalas.

I invite you to join us on this journey.

Sue Ashton, President

THE STORY SO FAR...

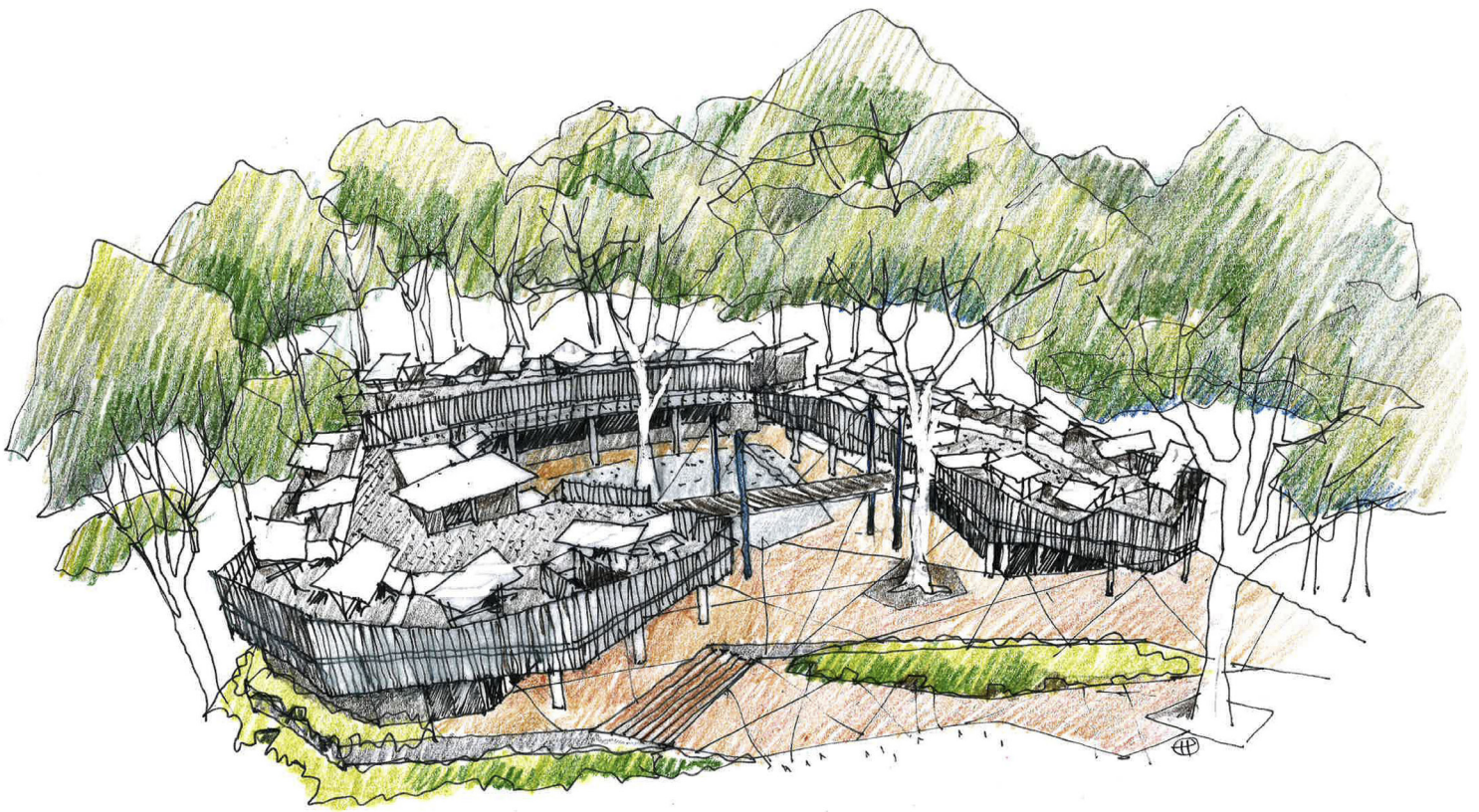
Obtaining the PMKH Redevelopment grant

In August 2018, the local member for Port Macquarie, the Hon Leslie Williams, MP, approached the Port Macquarie Koala Hospital with the suggestion to apply for a grant. The NSW government had introduced a program, 'Restart NSW', which was offering grants to develop tourism in the regions.

An 'Expression of Interest' was prepared in just thirty days and then we waited, waited and waited! In December 2018 KCA were invited to submit an application for the grant, again with a short timeframe of 14 days. This was submitted and then the waiting game started again.

A concept design was developed by Allen Jack + Cottier Architects for the grant application. One of the sketches is shown on the following page; and will change when the design is developed.

Other than a couple of early requests for additional information, KCA heard nothing for 10 months. Having almost given up hope, in October 2019, Leslie Williams announced the KCA had been successful and was receiving a \$5M grant for the NSW government to redevelop the Koala Hospital with a:



- » Raised walkway through trees
- » New rehabilitation and permanent resident koala yards
- » Training, research and education spaces
- » Retail shop
- » Koala museum and theatrette
- » Interpretive signage
- » Lifts to access walkway
- » New clinic and administration area
- » Indigenous storytelling space, and
- » Education nature walk.

With the Funding Deed finalised in April 2020, the project could get formally underway. This project is now proudly funded by the NSW Government's Restart NSW Regional Growth - Environment and Tourism program in association with KCA.

Planning and Investigation

The project included the a full-time program manager. Matt Whatman was successful and commenced work with KCA in June 2020. Project planning was completed to document how the project will be managed and reported.

Some initial site investigations have been completed including a topographic survey and an arborist report.

Three arborists submitted quotes and the one selected, Pete from Port Tree Fella, is well known to many at the PMKH. Pete is the arborist who during the fires, went on search and rescue, day in, day out, to help Port Macquarie Koala Hospital teams search for injured koalas.

Architects shortlist

Thirty two architects were reviewed and a prequalification conducted on five to ascertain their ability to work with the KCA on these two projects. They were selected for their experience in ecological sustainable development, working in a natural environment, iconic architecture, tourism and their alignment with the KCA's vision. The scope of the architects will include all architectural, structural, mechanical, electrical, civil engineering, interior design, landscape architecture and construction cost estimating services for the design and construction documents. It will include all site investigations and design requirements to obtain development consent for the works through requisite approval pathways, followed by some construction support.



Step 1 of the Port Macquarie Koala Hospital's (PMKH) redevelopment.
Last week representativ... [See more](#)



Photo: Lindsay Moller Productions



UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Architect tender

A formal tender was released to the five selected architects. The tender closed in October 2020. A 'Tender Evaluation Panel' consisting of five people, was established to review the technical and commercial components of the proposals and make recommendations to the KCA Management Committee on which architect to appoint. An appointment is expected December 2020.

Tree management - early works

The Arborist's report identified some works that need to be carried out on existing trees at the PMKH. This work will be done to manage the safety of visitors, volunteers and staff on site and continue the management of the existing trees. When the work is done, the site may feel different, with a lot of the existing canopy removed or pruned. Long-term, the plan is to create a second, lower canopy and ensure the long-term viability of the existing trees, some of which are suffering severe die-back.

Land ownership

In late October, the NSW government announced it was transferring ownership of the 0.6 hectares (6,000m²) of land on which the Koala Hospital is built, from National Parks and Wildlife Service to KCA. This gift is recognition of the work the organisation has performed, and continues to do, in koala care and conservation since 1973. The transfer of ownership will make the redevelopment, including development approvals, much simpler.

NEXT STEPS!



PROJECT CONTACT:

For further information about this project contact or visit us at:
programmgr@koalahospital.org.au