

# THE REHABILITATION OF KOALAS AT THE AUSTRALIA ZOO WILDLIFE HOSPITAL

**CLAUDE LACASSE, DVM, MANZCVS (Wildlife Medicine)**



**VETERINARY SERVICES MANAGER  
AUSTRALIA ZOO WILDLIFE HOSPITAL**



**AUSTRALIA ZOO  
WILDLIFE  
HOSPITAL**

# Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital

- Opened in 2004; moved to new facility in 2008
- Currently treats up to 7000 patients annually – all species
- Average of 70-80 koalas in care at all time (700-800/year) – on premises
- Open 24 hours/day; 365 days/year
- Staff –
  - 4 veterinarians
  - 15 veterinary nurses
  - 2 admin staff
  - 1 cleaner
  - 4 part-time keepers
  - 1 volunteer coordinator
- Many volunteers



# Main Treatment Room



# Theatre



# ICU



# Public Gallery



# REASONS FOR ADMISSION – KOALAS

## 1) DISEASES

- Highest cause for admission
- Past five years has made up 44% of admissions
- Primarily Chlamydiosis (32%)
- Other Disease processes (12%)
  - Neoplasia, leukemia, renal disease
- Often underestimated as a threat to wild koala populations
- Potentially related to retrovirus (AIDS-syndrome)
- Need more research funding



# CHLAMYDIOSIS

Conjunctivitis

Cystitis

Reproductive disease - sterility





# Both of these koalas have Chlamydial disease...

**Overt disease**



**No visible signs of disease- but has reproductive cysts**



# VETERINARY DIAGNOSTICS

High standard of veterinary diagnostics



Blood

Ultrasound

Chlamydia Clearview test



Bone marrow

Urinalysis

Abdo tap

Radiographs



# REASONS FOR ADMISSION – KOALAS

## 2) HIT BY CAR

- Past 5 years has made up 26% of admissions
- Often hit and run
- Often results in major trauma



# REASONS FOR ADMISSION – KOALAS

## 3) DOG ATTACKS

- Past 5 years has made up 10% of admissions
- Easy to miss – often no external injuries



# REASONS FOR ADMISSION – KOALAS

ORPHANS – to wildlife carers

OTHERS



# MAIN LOCATIONS



- Moreton Bay Regional Council 1686 (46.1% )
- Redland Shire Council 347 (9.5%)
- Gold Coast City Council 353 (9.6%)
- Sunshine Coast Regional Council 190 (5.2%)
- Out Of State 267 (7.3%)

# AGE GROUPS

## Age groups

Age Group (yrs)	% of admission
< 1	5
1-2	13
2-3	12
<b>3-5</b>	<b>33</b>
6-9	25
>10	6
Not aged	6%

## Sex Ratio

%male	% female	unsex ed
51	48	1

# RELEASES

- Approximately 33% of koalas admitted are released





# RESEARCH

AZWH is a great resource for researchers: easily accessible pool of animals

Main areas of research:

Chlamydia - male reproductive disease, vaccine

Collaboration with: QUT, UQ, Griffith University, Gold Coast city council,  
University of Adelaide, University of Sydney, Murdoch university



# WHAT WE CAN DO

- Slow down on the road at night
- Report any injured/sick koala – 1300 ANIMAL
- Plant eucalypt trees
- Keep dogs inside at night
- Donate to the AZWH (Wildlife Warriors)



# Thank you!

