

## Saving our Species - Northern Tablelands Koala Partnership Project

Draft interview transcript – for publication

<b>Interview date</b>	21 January 2021
<b>Project/Research Title</b>	Bush Blocks – Living with Koalas and Australian Wildlife
<b>Participants Name</b>	Michael Pearce
<b>Description of Project</b>	To provide a case study that explores the relationship of rural residential living for people, wildlife and the environment.

### 1) Why choose Invergowrie?

*As a former Police Officer, I moved to the area and lived firstly in Guyra. It was by chance that my wife was speaking to someone who had a place for sale in Invergowrie. We looked at this house separately and both fell in love with the place. There was no hesitation, we've been here 16 years in May. Its peaceful and quiet.*

### 2) What are some examples of local wildlife?

*Here we've had koalas, kangaroos, wallabies and echidnas.....the occasional snake! It provides peace and tranquillity, and we are still close to everything. It's the bush as much as the house that bought us here. I was born and raised in Sydney and spent half my life there.*

### 3) Were you aware of the wildlife in Invergowrie before you moved here?

*We didn't expect to what extent, there is an abundance of wildlife. It's funny you become blasé living here. When we have visitors from Sydney they will say "Oh look, a kangaroo! There's a koala!....and we won't be surprised, we're used to it. We always enjoy seeing the animals but it's almost second nature. Our 'travelling Koala' - we call him "Kenny" - when he comes back, we watch him in the trees and he knows we won't harm him. We've helped Koalas in dry times by providing water buckets at the base of these trees. You really feel part of nature by helping animals when they're under stress.*

### 4) So how often do you see koalas out here?

*We've been here 15 years and each year we still see what I believe is the same male. We've had males and females mating in the trees here before. We've had mothers and babies. One time we had a mother trying to get a baby koala to climb a tree while it was very windy. My wife and I were so concerned we stood close to the tree in case they fell. In the end they were OK. Because we don't have dogs, Koalas seem to understand this is a safe haven.*



5) Have you had much interest from ecologists and researchers regarding local Koala populations?

*Word of mouth works well in this area. People who have lived here a while have often seen koalas and shared their experience with other residents. Many people seem to be aware that this is a koala corridor.*

6) Do you think that koalas need more help from residents to survive in the local area?

*Personally, I think the people living here know koalas are here, so everyone does their best to keep them as safe as possible. A few places have dogs which I think would be the main concern.*

7) What ways can we give koalas and other wildlife a hand?

*Probably more signage on roads would help. I know there is one Koala sign already but currently we get a lot of tourists coming in from other directions. More signs might help make people aware that there is wildlife here. I think the tranquillity attracts people out here and they are well aware of the local 'natives' – kangaroos and koalas for example. People appreciate their role in keeping wildlife safe.*

*Michael Pearce, thank you very much for the interview.*