

Koala lover sums up tough year

NOOSA koala preservation activist Carolyn Beaton has given a grim end-of-year reality check tinged with hope about the state of the species locally and further afield.

The co-founder with Alex Harris of the online Koala Diaries has posted this edited report to her supporters:

“Together our Koala Diaries members have continued to create an exceptional database of koala sightings, the value of which will only build in 2012.

“Without a doubt, it has again been a tough year for our koala population. In my own Sunshine Coast community the rollcall of koala deaths, sickness and injuries is long, and observations of the recruitment/birth of youngsters very few.

“I know, through the broader knowledge we have gathered this year, that this is the sad reality for many other koala populations too.

“Yet, as we look down the barrel of 2012, there might, at long last, be some respite for the koala in sight.”

The Federal Environment Minister, Tony Burke, is currently considering whether to list the koala as a

nationally threatened species.

“In his deliberations, he is also reviewing the recommendations made following the recent senate inquiry that investigated the status, health and sustainability of Australia’s Koala population.

“The senate inquiry was a watershed event, in terms of cutting through to the heart of what is really going on in koala country. I felt privileged to participate in it and witness some outstanding presentations from a broad circle of koala advocates from around Australia.”

Minister Burke will be handing down his decision by February 17.

“This year Koala Diaries has weighed into some local koala campaigns and contributed its database freely to several entities – including a leading tertiary institution, two state government departments, and three local government authorities – who are working in different capacities to try to reduce the rapidly declining koala population in south-east Queensland.”

Visit www.koaladiaries.com.au.