

# Fleet too ill to survive operation

A KOALA that was shot seven times with an air rifle has died during an operation to remove one of the pellets that was lodged in his head.

Fleet the koala won the hearts of Queenslanders after he was found peppered with slugs high in a tree at Kipparing, north of Brisbane, last October.

Although Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital vets had been able to remove just three of the seven pellets lodged in Fleet, they had hoped he would make a full recovery.

However, Fleet died on Wednesday during an operation to extract one of the remaining pellets, which was lodged in his nose, vet Amber Gillet said.

The pellet had given Fleet a life-threatening infection in his nasal cavity.

The six-year-old marsupial was weakened already when his heart stopped during surgery and could not be revived, Ms Gillet said.

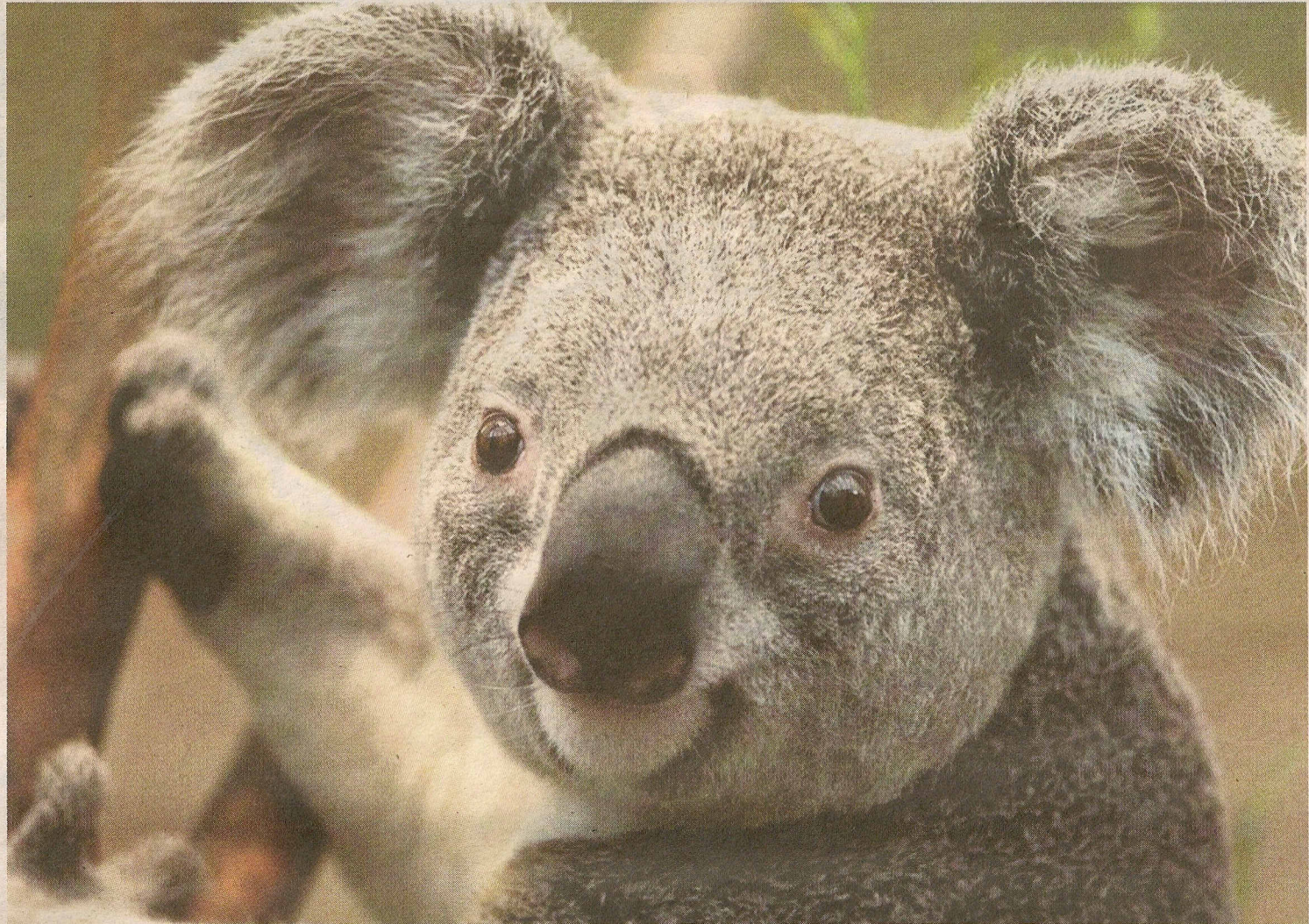
"Unfortunately we were in a situation where we had no other option other than to try and remove that problem (the pellet)," she said.

"Unfortunately the infection, and the problems that he had, led to his demise."

Ms Gillet said Fleet had been popular with zoo staff as well as the public.

"To lose him is exceptionally emotional for all of us," Ms Gillet said.

- AAP



**BATTLE LOST:** Fleet the koala, who was found peppered with slugs in a tree last October, has died during an operation.

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED