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Putting koalas on the map

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AS ONE OF Australia's best-known native animals, the koala has made its way into the hearts of those who live in the Southern Downs.

Our favourite four-legged furry grey friends have now found themselves in the middle of the proposed Warwick to Stanthorpe power line discussion.

Creator of koalatracker.com.au Alex Harris said in order to protect our local koalas from development we needed to know as much as we could.

"If we are serious about saving the koalas we have to know where they are and what they are doing," Ms Harris said.

"This is the reason I started koalatracker.com.au, so we would know where they live and what their numbers were."

Ms Harris, who privately funded the website, said it served many functions.

"It is a wonderful free resource for the public and government agencies to use," she said.

"It is important because it puts koalas on the record - where koala populations are in comparison to urban development."

The passionate koala advocate said she had spent 900 hours on the site and since it was launched in February 2010 support had grown.

"There are now more than 1700 reports in the system which is nation-wide," she said.

"We also have over 1000 members and that continues to grow."

Warwick koala advocate Kevin Thumpkin said he thought the website was a good idea.

"It can't do any harm and might do our koala population a lot of good," Mr Thumpkin said.

"If people track their sightings and there are enough koalas that need protecting the proposed power line plans would have to accommodate for that."

Ms Harris said it was not just current koalas that should be tracked but all sightings people could remember.

"Koalas have now been listed as vulnerable in Queensland, the Australian Capital Territory and New South Wales which makes it more important than ever for people to report sightings, injuries and deaths, so locations of populations, their movements and impacts are publicly recorded," she said.

Koalas have been tracked in the Southern Downs with two sightings attributed to Warwick and one to Stanthorpe.

The first was on April 15, 2009, and the second on November 21, 2009.

Stanthorpe recorded a more recent sighting on September 15, 2011, when a koala ran across a road.



Tracking koalas using koalatracker.com.au is a way for us to be able to understand their habits and help protect them against development and threats.

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