

Call to stop growth to save koalas

By **SASHA PCINO**

AN ANIMAL protection advocate is calling for the cancellation of all existing development approvals on the Sunshine Coast in a bid to protect the region's dwindling koala population.

Jaylene Musgrave, founder of the Vegan Warriors group, is also pushing for a cap on development and the introduction of wildlife corridors to protect the species.

Ms Musgrave, who has been working closely with the Sunshine Coast Koala Wildlife Rescue Service, said the dwindling koala population was largely the result of development, with other species such as lizards, echidnas and kangaroos also threatened.

She has been working with the SCKWRS to lobby the regional council for change and hopes to meet with council representatives to discuss the issue. To bring the issue further into the spotlight, Ms Musgrave appeared on national television last week.

"The Sunshine Coast Council is one of the few in the country that hasn't put wildlife corridors in place. Some councils did this as far back as 1998," she said.

The corridors are remnant, regenerated or artificially created habitats, which link larger areas of wildlife habitat and enable animals and plant seeds to move between them in an otherwise uninhabitable environment.

"The council states they ensure developers adhere to guidelines to



PROTECTION: Vegan Warrior founder Jaylene Musgrave.

looking after koalas that are in areas that will be developed.

"(But) this seems extremely confusing as the SCKWRS spends each and every day collecting koalas, kangaroos and other wildlife that have been hit by cars, trying to escape because their homes have been bulldozed.

"If progress and growth cannot be achieved sustainably then they should be stopped until a viable solution is found."

A council spokesperson said about 80,000 people had moved to the Coast in the past 10 years and council was working on a new planning scheme.

"We have endorsed the Biodiversity Strategy, the implementation of which is supported by a \$9 million Environment Levy program, including land acquisition, partnership funding for community groups and a range of other initiatives."