

NEWS



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Fauna has help from a staunch supporter

SO, we have a woman as our state's Premier, a woman as our country's Prime Minister, a woman as our state's governor, a woman as our country's Governor-General, and now even a woman ranked as the richest person in Australia.

Talk about girl power. Long may it last, though I have no doubt it will.

Much like Roger Bannister breaking the four-minute mile barrier or Barack Obama cracking the white-colour code in America's white-coloured house, once it's been done it seems infinitely more achievable to future aspirants.

Some who may not have otherwise considered it truly possible, and others such as John Landy, who were just unlucky someone else claimed first spot first.

Yet, the truth is, Australian women don't need all of these prestigious titles to prove our rightful equality. They simply confirm what we've known all these years. We can do anything – well, almost – just as men almost can, too.

The difference now is we see proof of it every day on a national level, yet we've been proving it in our daily lives for much, much longer. Locally, we have an inordi-

nate number of inspiring women juggling more than others would think possible, pursuing their passions while fitting in family, friends, other work and whatever else they need or want to.

They are women who show all the commitment and courage it takes to achieve great things, but don't necessarily aspire to politics, financial power or national recognition.

Coast women such as Carolyn Beaton, someone who hides a steely determination and overwhelming capacity for hard and, at times, heartbreaking work under an immaculately groomed facade.

A marketing professional and mother to a busy toddler, Carolyn hasn't just pontificated on her passion to save one of Australia's most significant fauna species, she has pursued it with an outcome-focussed zeal rarely shown by anyone – female or male – in a higher office today.

She has not let dead ends, delays or devastating death tolls stop her from doing whatever she can to effectively help this country's koalas, which her website, Koaladiaries.com.au, sadly shows are truly in crisis in



FURRY FRIENDS: Carolyn Beaton is the determined campaigner behind Koaladiaries.com.au.

many areas, certainly here on the Coast.

Thankfully, she hasn't waited for anyone else's help or she'd still be waiting. As she told a recent Senate inquiry in Brisbane: "Despite numerous representations, our Sunshine Coast community has failed to get to first base with the State Government – we've failed to even elicit a response."

She's seen a problem, felt passionately about changing it, and, most admirably, put her passion into action, working voluntarily for several long, largely unforgiving years doing all she can and more to address it.

She's what you might call a stayer – someone willing to stay the course through to the, hopefully, not-so-bitter end.

Co-founding and continuing to run and grow Koaladiaries.com.au is just one of many ways Carolyn fights for action on an issue that, she keeps proving through her online Census, is increasingly critical.

Carolyn is every bit as fine an example of the power of women in this reaffirming country of ours as our numerous women in power.

Mindset 'has to change'

CAROLYN Beaton was asked to present to a Senate Inquiry hearing into the state of this country's koala population. Here's some of what she had to say about the Coast's situation:

"The encouraging public response to the Koaladiaries.com.au initiative aside, my attempts to secure a future for the koala in Queensland can only be described as an exercise in frustration. I have taken a particular interest in the koalas that inhabit the Noosa biosphere reserve – where I live – and where not long ago hundreds of koalas lived.

"In my Noosa Heads district, where nature-based tourism is important, today we can count the survivors on two hands.

"I believe it was Albert Einstein who said that you cannot hope to solve a problem with the same mindset that created it. The mindset within the ranks of our State Government is seemingly that human population growth, and therefore more development on koala habitat, is not only desirable, it is an economic necessity.

"In this context, the koala has simply been collateral damage in the unrelenting push for a bigger Queensland.

"This is abhorrent to many people and I personally feel that no human endeavour is so important that it justifies pushing another species to extinction.

"Higher levels of intellectual rigour in strategic planning are clearly needed – but this will take time and the koala does not have the luxury of time."

➔ **Read more of what Carolyn had to say on her blog at Koaladiaries.com.au, or log on to post your recent koala sightings.**