



...THE JOEY CLUB...

Koala Safety Guide

Field Guide No.2





Koalas don't always stay in trees

Although koalas spend most of their lives in trees, it is completely normal to sometimes see them on the ground.

Koalas come down from trees to:

- Move between food trees
- Search for a mate during breeding season
- Establish or expand their home range
- Find water during periods of drought or extreme heat
- Move through fragmented habitat where trees are no longer connected

Seeing a koala on the ground does not automatically mean it needs rescuing.



Sources:

[Koalas - Queensland Government](#)
[National Recovery Plan for the Koala](#)
[Australian Koala Foundation](#)



Observe before you act

Seeing a koala on the ground or in an unusual place can be surprising, but it doesn't always mean the koala is in trouble.

Koalas naturally come down from trees to:

- 🌿 Move between feeding trees
- 💕 Search for a mate during breeding season
- 🏠 Travel within their home range
- 🌳 Find new habitat or move through areas where trees are not connected

If you see a koala, the most important thing to do is stay calm and observe from a safe distance.

Take a moment to ask yourself:

- Is the koala moving normally?
- Is it climbing or walking with purpose?
- Does it appear alert and aware of its surroundings?
- Is it safely away from immediate danger?

If the answer is yes, the koala may simply be travelling. The best thing you can do is give it space and let it continue on its way.

Sources:

[Koala rehabilitation](#)
[Helping Sick or Injured Native Wildlife – City of Moreton Bay](#)



When might a koala need help?

A koala may need assistance if it:

- has been hit by a car
- is bleeding
- has obvious injuries
- cannot stand or climb (sitting at the base of a tree)
- appears weak or very thin
- is trapped in a fence or netting
- has been attacked by a dog
- is lying on a road and not moving
- has joeys nearby after the mother has died
- is sitting in the same dangerous place for a long period without moving

If you're unsure, it's always better to call a wildlife rescue organisation for advice.

What you should not do?

Do not:

- touch the koala
- chase it
- feed it
- give it water by hand or bottle
- try to move it yourself

Keeping your distance helps reduce stress for the animal and keeps you safe.



Sources:

[Injured wildlife: What can I do to help](#)



Who can help?

If a koala appears injured, trapped or in immediate danger, contact a licensed wildlife rescue organisation.

Moreton Bay Koala Rescue

Supports koala rescue, rehabilitation and community education throughout the Moreton Bay region.

Pine Rivers Koala Care Association

Volunteer organisation specialising in koala rescue, rehabilitation and release across the Pine Rivers and surrounding areas.

Wildlife Rescue Queensland

Provides wildlife rescue and advice for injured, sick and orphaned native wildlife across South East Queensland.

The RSPCA Queensland 1300 ANIMAL

If you're unsure what to do, the RSPCA can provide advice and connect you with the appropriate wildlife rescue service. Call 1300 ANIMAL

IFAW's Wildlife Rescue App

This app connects you with the closest licensed wildlife rescue group at the touch of a button. The free app is available nationally and great when you don't know who can help near you!
<https://www.ifaw.org/au/resources/wildlife-rescue-app>

Your Local Wildlife Rescue Group

If you know your nearest licensed wildlife rescue organisation or your local veterinary clinic, ask them for advice.

Sources:

[Injured wildlife: What can I do to help](#)





What if i see a koala that seems ok?

If a koala looks healthy and is behaving normally, you can report your sighting so scientists can learn more about where koalas live.

Not sure if the koala is okay? That's okay! Sometimes it can be difficult to tell if a koala is sick, injured or in trouble. If you are unsure, it is always okay to ask for help. Contact your local wildlife rescue organisation for advice. A wildlife rescuer can talk you through what to do and let you know whether the koala needs assistance.

If you're unsure, it's better to ask than to guess.





Where to report a wild koala sighting

Location	How to report sighting
National Sighting App (Can be used for all states)	• Koala Spotter - CSIRO's national koala sighting app ◦ Android: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=au.csiro.koala_watcher&hl=en_AU ◦ iOS: https://apps.apple.com/au/app/koala-spotter/id6450281064
Queensland (QLD)	• QWildlife - QLD Government's Official koala sighting app. ◦ Android: https://apps.apple.com/au/app/qwildlife/id1500668021 ◦ iOS: https://apps.apple.com/au/app/qwildlife/id1500668021
New South Wales (NSW)	• I Spy Koala - NSW's dedicated koala sighting app ◦ Android: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=au.csiro.koala_watcher&hl=en_AU ◦ iOS: https://apps.apple.com/au/app/i-spy-koala/id1474755197



What would you do?

Look at the scenarios below. For each situation would you watch, or call?
For each, write why you picked it.

Situation	Watch	Call
Koala sleeping high in a tree		
Koala walking across the ground between trees		
Koala being chased by a dog		
Koala sitting quietly beside a suburban road		
Koala hit by a car		
Koala caught in a fence		
Koala sitting at the bottom of a tree hunched over		

Remember

Observe first. Help second.

By staying calm, giving the koala space, and contacting trained wildlife rescuers when you're concerned, you're helping ensure the best outcome for both the koala and yourself.