

OFFICIAL



**Government
of South Australia**

**INTERNATIONAL KOALA CENTRE OF
EXCELLENCE
Trading as KOALA LIFE
2023-24 Annual Report**

Koala Life

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To:

The Hon Susan Close MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Climate, Environment and Water

This annual report will be presented to Parliament to meet the statutory reporting requirements of *Public Corporations (International Koala Centre for Excellence) Regulations 2018* (the Regulations) and the requirements of Premier and Cabinet Circular *PC013 Annual Reporting*.

This report is verified to be accurate for the purposes of annual reporting to the Parliament of South Australia.

Submitted on behalf of the International Koala Centre for Excellence, trading as Koala Life by:

Chris West
Director, Koala Life

Date: 24 September 2024

Signature: CD West

This report is late due to a delay in the receipt of the Independent Audit report.

From the Chair, Professor Robert Hill



The core work of Koala Life has continued to develop, centred around the insurance colony of koalas held at Cleland Wildlife Park and the vital genetic management and breeding of future generations for possible reintroduction to a wild in which koalas may have disappeared. As a research-based, not for profit organisation, dedicated to koala conservation, Koala Life has established key partnerships with government agencies, academic institutions, philanthropic and business leaders, and the wider community.

The last year has been eventful for Koala Life as breeding has continued with the colony of conservation study koalas at Cleland Wildlife Park. Genetic results are pending on the genetic profiles of the Strzelecki fathers, Kangaroo Island mothers and first generation offspring and verbal reports suggest that there *is* a genetic difference. This will demonstrate that this exercise in contained genetic management of a small group of captive koalas has been successful and acts as a demonstration or pilot for possible larger scale breeding and conservation management in the future.

Research into disease and genetic techniques is ongoing and relatively long term and findings will certainly inform decisions within evolving national and state koala management approaches.

An area of new activity has been in public engagement, simply put to tell the story of koalas and their conservation spanning ancient aboriginal insights into koalas and their gum forest homes, through the arrival of Europeans, the previous huge population collapse in the early 1900's due to fur trading, to the modern day onslaught on their habitats, disease spread and wildfire impacts. Crucially, this story development involves Aboriginal voices and includes Nature Play principles and will inform and inspire people to care and action.

There are linkages with the planting of thousands of gum trees across the Mt Lofty region as part of a collaborative initiative supported by Dr Jane Goodall during her visit to Koala Life and Cleland Wildlife Park this year.

The contribution of an energetic Board has been invaluable and the transition to a volunteer board is a demonstration of commitment.



Professor Robert Hill
Chair, Koala Life Board

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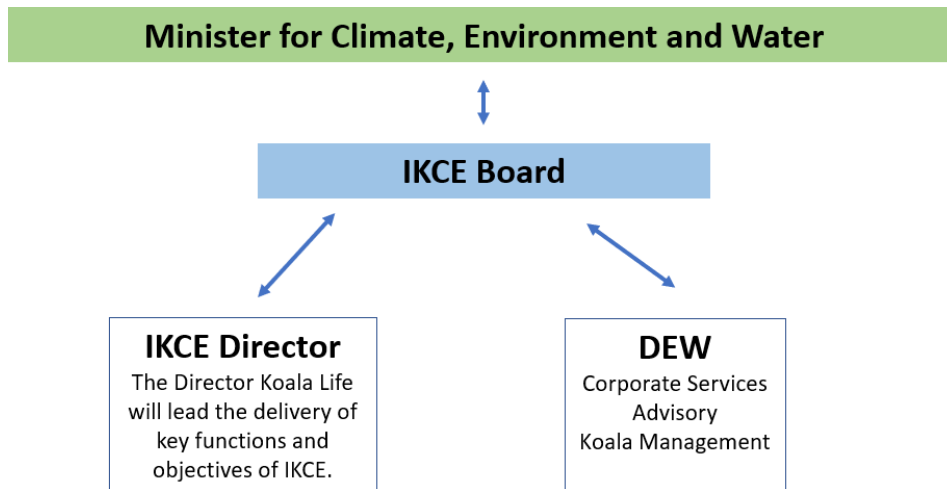
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Overview: about the agency

Our strategic focus

Our Purpose	To secure the survival of koalas and their habitats across Australia
Our Vision	To create game changing partnerships in survival science and applied conservation outcomes
Our Values	In this together Accessible Experts A trusted voice
Our functions, objectives and deliverables	<p>Working together to save an Australian icon – koalas are so much more than just a part of our cultural identity and tourism appeal. They play an important role in the health of our ecosystems. Habitat loss, life threatening diseases and rampant bushfires are seriously impacting on their long term survival in large parts of Australia.</p> <p>Game changing partnerships in survival science – As a serious voice in koala conservation, Koala Life is committed to the challenge. Alongside partners, we are helping connect and support a network of koala experts. From volunteers, scientists, and politicians, to universities, institutes, and business organisations, collaboration is already making a huge difference in the fight to save koalas. Whether it is raising funds and sharing knowledge, know-how and research.</p> <p>We aim to utilise the best survival science to establish healthy and genetically diverse populations in protected areas and communities across Australia.</p> <p>Engagement - Opportunities to engage, create awareness and collaborate were maximised in 2023-24 building on the visit from a global icon in nature Dr Jane Goodall.</p>

Our organisational structure



Board members:

Robert Hill	Chair	1 July, 2023 to current
Chris West	Ex-Officio	1 July 2023 to current
Susie Herzberg	Member	1 January 2022 to 31 December 2024
Susan Harrington	Member	1 January 2022 to 31 December 2024
Sandy Carruthers	Member	23 August 2022 to 22 August 2025

Changes to the agency

During 2023-24 there were the following changes to the agency's structure and objectives as a result of internal reviews or machinery of government changes.

- Brian Cunningham resigned as the Chair of the Board on 30 June 2023.
- Robert Hill commenced as Chair of Koala Life Board on 1 July 2023.
- Chris West joined as an Ex-Officio member for the Board on 1 July 2024.
- The Executive Officer position was filled temporarily (Kerry White) with Alyssa Ratzmer appointed on 9 April 2024.

Our Minister (s)



The International Koala Centre of Excellence is a body corporate established as a subsidiary of the Minister for Climate, Environment and Water, the Hon Susan Close MP.

Ms Close is the Deputy Premier and oversees a group of portfolio agencies including the Department for Environment and Water.

Our Executive team

Dr Chris West is the Director of Koala Life, responsible for:

- oversight of the colony of rescued koalas located at Cleland Wildlife Park
- overseeing Koala Life as a foundation with charitable status to raise funds to support research into koalas and their forest habitat
- overseeing and supporting Koala Life in fundraising and promotional activities
- development of collaborative research projects relating to applied koala conservation outcomes
- development of public engagement programs to connect people with the stories, issues and challenges faced by koalas and how people can support koala conservation
- overseeing the strategic direction and general administration of the organisation.



The Board and it's Committees

In accordance with *Public Corporations (International Koala Centre of Excellence) Regulations 2018 Regulations 2018*, the Board consists of not more than 7 directors, one of whom must be a person employed in the administrative unit of the Public Service responsible for assisting the Minister in the administration of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*, and the others must together have such environmental, research, commercial, corporate governance, financial or other qualifications or experience as are, in the Minister's opinion, necessary to enable the board to carry out its functions effectively.

Prof Robert Hill

(Chair, Koala Life Board)



Ms Susie Herzberg

(Member of the Board & Risk and Performance Committee)



Ms Sandy Carruthers

(Employee of the Public Service)



Ms Susan Harrington

(Board Member, Fundraising and Donations)



Fundraising Committee

Membership: Ms Susan Harrington, and Ms Carolyn Francis.

The responsibility of this committee is to actively facilitate raising \$10 million over the first five years of the Board's operation.

Gift Fund Committee

Membership: Ms Susie Herzberg (Chair), and Mr Chris West.

The responsibility of this committee is to provide recommendations to the board for the Gift Fund for the principal purpose and functions of IKCE in accordance with Regulations 2018 and the rules set out in the IKCE Charter.

Risk and Performance Committee

Membership: Ms Susie Herzberg (Chair), and Mr Chris West.

The responsibility of this committee is to support the Board and Minister to identify, prevent and respond to real and potential risks and performance issues, and to support the IKCE to meet its compliance requirements.

Science Committee

Membership: Ms Sandy Carruthers (Chair), Prof Bob Hill, and Mr Chris West

The responsibility of this committee is to promote and facilitate access to grants and other funding sources for the innovative research into the biology, management and conservation of koalas.

Ex-Officio to the Committees

Dr Chris West is Ex-Officio to the Board and its committees. He attends the meetings in his capacity as Director of Koala Life.

Legislation administered by the agency

Public Corporations (International Koala Centre of Excellence) Regulations 2018
under the *Public Corporations Act 1993*.

Other related agencies (within the Minister's area/s of responsibility)

Department for Environment and Water

The agency's performance

Performance at a glance

The Strzelecki males and Kangaroo Island females were mated in 2022 and early 2023. The Board is now waiting on confirmation of the success of this breeding event.

Over 3,000 gum saplings have been planted for renewal of the shared Cleland Wildlife Park and Koala Life plantations established to feed koalas at the Cleland. Land is being offered for this purpose by a growing number of partners spanning a range of land ownership models.

Peer reviewed research publications have been written on aspects of stress monitoring and disease management with colleagues from our two closest University partners, Flinders and Adelaide. Research discussions are ongoing with a number of interstate universities, within the context of the CSIRO led national koala recovery plan, with a view to exploring significant grant funding.

Opportunities to engage, create awareness and collaborate were maximised in 2024 with the highlight being a visit from Dr Jane Goodall a global icon in nature. Koala Life hosted 90 people at a Youth Voice Event inspired by Dr Jane Goodall in her 90th year.

Youth Voice and Forests of Hope was launched in partnership with Arborgreen and Scouts SA that will see 90 trees planted across 90 locations providing habitat and food for our Koalas and wildlife. Koala Life is continuing its partnership with Green Adelaide to further advocate for young leaders in the environment field, following from it's successful engagement with Dr Jane Goodall on the Youth Voice for the Environment Initiative.

They will support young leaders to lead and activate the collective and build relationships with existing and new partners, ambassadors, and emerging interest groups. The collective will host an annual *Youth Voice Statement for the Environment*.

A summary report from the youth engagement process undertaken for the Jane Goodall event is underway and will inform the intent of this year's Statement.

Agency specific objectives and performance

Agency objectives	Indicators	Performance
Establishment of a disease-free, insurance colony	Successful breeding and increased genetic diversity	Strzelecki males have been mated with Kangaroo Island disease-free colony
Integrated strategic and operational management with CWP and effective cost and revenue model.	Strategic Plan revised. Joint cost planning and breeding, health, care, feeding with CWP. Biosecurity provisions simplified by moving to all disease-free koalas on the Cleland site.	Goals identified. Co-management processes and systems in place. Standards and efficiency gains will follow.
Overall revenue model with significant external support	External funding Preparation of a prospectus and connection with a widening circle of potential supporters.	To support the staff and operational costs. Longleat donations, Monaco grants and other donations.
Growth of the disease-free colony and meta population planning	Numbers of koalas held at Cleland and identified holding partners	Breeding numbers increase.
Development of expanded research partnerships	More agencies and institutions engaged and larger funding streams	Interstate opportunities being explored.
Southern Koala 'policy' options discussed	Workshop conversations and consensus papers in draft form	One SA workshop completed, and output drafted.
Community Engagement	Multiple conversations around communications planning, media, and social media activity, talks, articles, etc	Foundation article in Weekend Advertiser and many social media stories.
Documented Outcomes	To deliver quarterly accurate and detailed reports to the Koala Life Board.	The Director Koala Life provides an update at every board meeting.

Corporate performance summary

Not applicable.

Employment opportunity programs

Program name	Performance
Nil	Not applicable

Agency performance management and development systems

Performance management and development system	Performance
Number of Board meetings held during the reporting period.	<p>There were 7 board meetings held during 2023-24.</p> <p>With respect to committees, the Risk and Performance Committee met 3 times during the financial year.</p> <p>The Fundraising Committee and Gift Fund Committee did not hold formal meetings but provided “out of session” endorsements before presentations to the full Board for final approvals. The Committees have determined that this was a more efficient way to proceed.</p> <p>The Science Committee has not held any formal meetings this financial year.</p>
Director report	A report from the Director is tabled and ratified at every board meeting
Performance Agreement	<p>A Performance Review was undertaken, which covered Operational Leadership, and Demonstrated evidence of implementing the tasks outlined in the IKCE (Koala Life) Charter. This was noted by the Board at meeting number 21, held May 2023.</p> <p>No formal performance review has been undertaken in this financial year and will be subject to board discussion in the current financial year.</p>

Work health, safety and return to work programs

Program name	Performance
Nil	Not applicable

Workplace injury claims	2022-23	2021-22	% Change (+ / -)
Total new workplace injury claims	0	0	0%
Fatalities	0	0	0%
Seriously injured workers*	0	0	0%
Significant injuries (where lost time exceeds a working week, expressed as frequency rate per 1000 FTE)	0	0	0%

*number of claimants assessed during the reporting period as having a whole person impairment of 30% or more under the Return to Work Act 2014 (Part 2 Division 5)

Work health and safety regulations	2022-23	2021-22	% Change (+ / -)
Number of notifiable incidents (<i>Work Health and Safety Act 2012, Part 3</i>)	0	0	0%
Number of provisional improvement, improvement and prohibition notices (<i>Work Health and Safety Act 2012 Sections 90, 191 and 195</i>)	0	0	0%

Return to work costs**	2022-23	2021-22	% Change (+ / -)
Total gross workers compensation expenditure (\$)	0	0	0%
Income support payments – gross (\$)	0	0	0%

**before third party recovery

Data for previous years is available at: <https://koalalife.asn.au/reports-documents>.

Executive employment in the agency

Executive classification	Number of executives
Not applicable	

Data for previous years is available at: <https://koalalife.asn.au/reports-documents>.

The [Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment](#) has a [workforce information](#) page that provides further information on the breakdown of executive gender, salary and tenure by agency.

Financial performance

Financial performance at a glance

The following is a brief summary of the overall financial position of the agency. The information is unaudited.

Statement of Comprehensive Income	2023-24 Budget \$000s	2023-24 Actual \$000s	Variation \$000s	2022-23 Actual \$000s
Total Income	20	210	190	291
Total Expenses	97	243	(146)	508
Net Result	(77)	(33)	(44)	(217)
Total Comprehensive Result	(77)	(33)	(44)	(217)

Statement of Financial Position	2023-24 Budget \$000s	2023-24 Actual \$000s	Variation \$000s	2022-23 Actual \$000s
Current assets	0	216	0	260
Non-current assets	0	20	0	24
Total assets	0	236	0	284
Current liabilities	0	2	0	17
Non-current liabilities	0	0	0	0
Total liabilities	0	2	0	17
Net assets	0	234	0	267
Equity	0	234	0	267

Consultant's disclosure

Koala Life has not employed consultants during the 2023-24 financial period.

Data for previous years is available at: <https://koalalife.asn.au/reports-documents>

Contractors disclosure

The following is a summary of external contractors that have been engaged by the agency, the nature of work undertaken, and the actual payments made for work undertaken during the financial year.

Contractors with a contract value below \$10,000

Nil

Contractors with a contract value above \$10,000 each

Contractors	Purpose	\$ Actual payment
Not applicable 2023-24		

Data for previous years is available at: <https://koalalife.asn.au/reports-documents>.

The details of South Australian Government-awarded contracts for goods, services, and works are displayed on the SA Tenders and Contracts website.

Risk management

Risk and audit at a glance

Koala Life has a comprehensive Governance Framework that defines the rules, procedures, processes, obligations and other guidelines for Koala Life. The Framework has 17 policies in total, including: Role of the Board, WHS, Communication (incl media), Risk Management, Financial, Record Keeping, and Volunteers. The Board's Risk and Performance Committee has a rolling schedule of reviewing policies and reported to the Board on compliance.

Fraud detected in the agency

Category/nature of fraud	Number of instances
Nil	0

NB: Fraud reported includes actual and reasonably suspected incidents of fraud.

Strategies implemented to control and prevent fraud

The Board have a Policy in place for the control and prevention of fraud: Policy 9 Risk Management within the Koala Life Governance Framework.

Data for previous years is available at: <https://koalalife.asn.au/reports-documents>

Public interest disclosure

Number of occasions on which public interest information has been disclosed to a responsible officer of the agency under the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2018*: 0

Data for previous years is available at: <https://koalalife.asn.au/reports-documents>

Note: Disclosure of public interest information was previously reported under the *Whistleblowers Protection Act 1993* and repealed by the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2018* on 1/7/2019.

Reporting required under any other act or regulation

Act or Regulation	Requirement
Not applicable	Not applicable

Reporting required under the *Carers' Recognition Act 2005*

Not applicable

Public complaints

Number of public complaints reported

Complaint categories	Sub-categories	Example	Number of Complaints 2022-23
Professional behaviour	Staff attitude	Failure to demonstrate values such as empathy, respect, fairness, courtesy, extra mile; cultural competency	0
Professional behaviour	Staff competency	Failure to action service request; poorly informed decisions; incorrect or incomplete service provided	0
Professional behaviour	Staff knowledge	Lack of service specific knowledge; incomplete or out-of-date knowledge	0
Communication	Communication quality	Inadequate, delayed or absent communication with customer	0
Communication	Confidentiality	Customer's confidentiality or privacy not respected; information shared incorrectly	0
Service delivery	Systems/technology	System offline; inaccessible to customer; incorrect result/information provided; poor system design	0
Service delivery	Access to services	Service difficult to find; location poor; facilities/ environment poor standard; not accessible to customers with disabilities	0
Service delivery	Process	Processing error; incorrect process used; delay in processing application; process not customer responsive	0
Policy	Policy application	Incorrect policy interpretation; incorrect policy applied; conflicting policy advice given	0
Policy	Policy content	Policy content difficult to understand; policy unreasonable or disadvantages customer	0

Complaint categories	Sub-categories	Example	Number of Complaints 2022-23
Service quality	Information	Incorrect, incomplete, out-dated or inadequate information; not fit for purpose	0
Service quality	Access to information	Information difficult to understand, hard to find or difficult to use; not plain English	0
Service quality	Timeliness	Lack of staff punctuality; excessive waiting times (outside of service standard); timelines not met	0
Service quality	Safety	Maintenance; personal or family safety; duty of care not shown; poor security service/ premises; poor cleanliness	0
Service quality	Service responsiveness	Service design doesn't meet customer needs; poor service fit with customer expectations	0
No case to answer	No case to answer	Third party; customer misunderstanding; redirected to another agency; insufficient information to investigate	0
		Total	0

Additional Metrics	Total
Number of positive feedback comments	0
Number of negative feedback comments	0
Total number of feedback comments	0
% complaints resolved within policy timeframes	0

Data for previous years is available at: <https://koalalife.asn.au/reports-documents>.

Service Improvements

Not required

Compliance Statement

Koala Life is compliant with Premier and Cabinet Circular 039 – complaint management in the South Australian public sector	Y
Koala Life has communicated the content of PC 039 and the agency's related complaints policies and procedures to employees.	Y

Appendix (part 1): Independent Audit Report Letter 2023-24

Appendix (part 2): Independent Audit Report IKCE Financial Statement 2023-24