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Ballarat

TIMES NEWS GROUP



Koala CARE

Ballarat Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation group has received a State Government grant to deliver a koala protection project in the Mount Helen and Buninyong area. More on page 11.



Ballarat Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation members Lisa Paliaga, Laura Guest, Melissa Morey, Max Deutscher and Lillian Gattuso, with Member for Eureka Michaela Settle (third from left) by Gear Avenue, Mount Helen. Photo: EDWINA WILLIAMS

Virtual fencing could protect koala population

EDWINA WILLIAMS

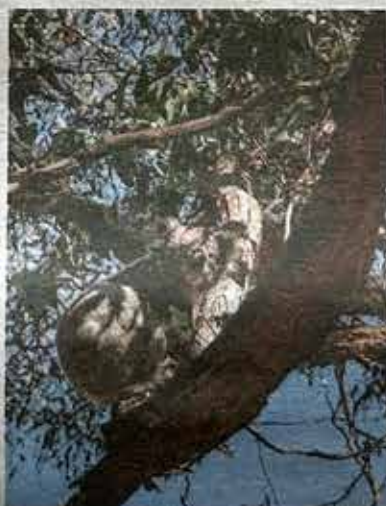
BALLARAT Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation has been awarded an animal welfare grant from the State Government for the *Ngaambulum* (Koala) Protection Project.

The funding worth \$32,000 will help BWRAC in their work to reduce koala injuries and deaths on roads by buying and installing two kilometres worth of virtual fencing for the Mount Helen and Buninyong area.

"The virtual fencing is posts with solar panels on them, no strings or wires, and they're placed about 25 metres apart along the road," said Ballarat Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation president Melissa Morey.

"When a car drives down the road, it triggers the device on the post, it omits a sound a light, and that's meant to cause the animal to pause momentarily. By the time they move again, the car is hopefully gone.

"We will put together a



Under threat: One of Buninyong's koala residents. Photo: CAROL HALL

working party of interested local organisations to collaborate with us on this project and we'll work out the best location.

"The product works best in an 80-kilometre zone, so there are some technical considerations we need to take into account around where we install the fencing, and we need to make sure that it is thoroughly tested, analysed,

and data is collected like it's never been done before so it's a validated study."

BWRAC members rescue koalas, including those injured in vehicle accidents, advocate for the species, and aim to educate the public about the plight of koalas in the wild.

"The dedication and hard work of Ballarat Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation in rescuing and rehabilitating injured koalas is truly inspiring," said Member for Eureka Michaela Settle.

"With this funding, they can continue their crucial work to safeguard our local koala population and reduce the number of injuries and fatalities caused by road accidents."

In recent weeks, a koala was hit by a car in Moss Avenue, and a member of the public stopped traffic in another part of Mount Helen to help a mother and joey cross a road.

Ms Morey said the species are also under threat due to dogs in back yards.