

# Ten-year-old's 'phenomenal' effort helps koalas in need

## Catherine gets shade for wildlife centre

Alison Foletta

AT JUST 10-years-old, Catherine has an ambition to become a veterinarian. But unlike most 10-year-olds, she's actively working towards her dream, helping out at wildlife shelters.

Thanks to Catherine Kane's fundraising through a cupcake stall at her school, Mount Blowhard Primary, she was able to donate \$200 to Shanhaven Shelter.

The \$200, which nowadays is a small load of groceries, has bought much needed screening for the koala enclosure at the shelter.

Nikki Shanahan runs the shelter out of her property, establishing the shelter 12 months ago, using her own funds for the start-up costs.

As a vet-nurse of 35-years, Ms Shanahan is able to provide specialist care for injured wildlife, which was why she also included a clinic room.

"It's something I've wanted to do for a long time," she said.

"There is a lot of money in set-up.

The money Catherine has raised for the koala shelter is amazing - it just gives me goosebumps when the younger generation is aware and passionate about animal welfare."

Catherine was happy to give up her Saturday morning to put up the screening her donation funded.

"I like wildlife. My favourite native animal is the feathertail glider."

Catherine said it was a good feeling to see the funds going to help the shelter.

She and her family live on three-acres in



Nikki Shanahan, Catherine Kane and Melissa Morey putting up the shade for the koala shelter, sourced thanks to Catherine's fundraising.

Picture by Kate Healy

Ascot, so they can see wildlife from time-to-time at their home.

Her mum, Anita Kane, said Catherine had always had an affinity for animals, big and small.

"She started with bugs, she's got stick insects and she's graduated to native wildlife - she just loves them," Anita said.

Catherine said: "I tried to keep a ladybug when I was in kindergarten but mum said 'no'."

Ballarat Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation (BWRAC) secretary Melissa Morey said the young girl's efforts were "phenomenal" to see.

"We so appreciate Catherine has been able to do her fundraising to help us purchase the brush privacy screens," Ms Morey said.

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## Wildlife concerns in Ballarat

Ms Shanahan said there had been a concerning lack of koalas seen at the moment.

Other issues this time of year are road traumas.

"We've seen some young orphans come through, but it's mainly road trauma or animal bites from cats or dogs. I've got

a kookaburra who was hit by a car," Ms Shanahan said.

Ms Shanahan advised echidnas will soon be out and about.

"They'll be on the move from now on," she said.

The shelter often sees raptors like wedge-tail eagles who have been hit by cars or run into wind turbines, Ms Shanahan said.

Ms Morey said cats were a huge issue at the moment.

"Cats are one of the biggest killers of wildlife and responsible for a lot of extinction for our smaller wildlife," she said.

Ms Morey said BWRAC were also concerned about the lack of koalas and advised people to be wary on the roads.

"We've got a small number of koalas in Ballarat area; road trauma and dog attacks for them is just huge," she said.

