

1 July 2020

THE OAKEY CHAMPION

The **Oakey Champion**

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Special connection between Army Captain and local koala

Oakey Army Aviation Centre Captain Lawrence Griffiths now has the rare privilege of having a koala named in his honour after he rescued the animal at the Oakey base after noticing that it was suffering from an eye infection.

Captain Griffiths contacted RSPCA Wildlife who called Toowoomba Koala and Wildlife Rescue.

The team, assisted by Army Aviation staff, rescued the koala before having it assessed by veterinarians at the RSPCA Wildlife Hospital at Wacol.

Other than a nasty bout of ulcerated conjunctivitis, the nine-years-old koala was found to be perfect condition at a whopping 8kg.

Judi Gray from Toowoomba Koala and Wildlife Rescue said she was surprised to find a wild koala at that weight considering the ongoing drought in the area.

She said it is clear that the Oakey Army Aviation Centre and surrounding bushland is highly suited to koalas.

"The Base must be a great place to live as the koala was in very good condition," she said.

Ms Gray said the

koala, then named called Lawrence after Captain Griffiths, was successfully released to the Oakey Base late last month.

She thanked Captain Griffiths for his help with the rescue and for keeping an eye on the local wildlife.

Ms Gray said the Toowoomba Koala and Wildlife Rescue has rescued and released many koalas from the Oakey region.

"Earlier this year we released a mother and a baby to the bushland at Arthur Shooter Park," she said.

Ms Gray said if anyone finds a sick or injured koala or other wildlife, they should contact the RSPCA on 1300 ANIMAL (1300 264 625).

She said the team will then call her or another wildlife carer to collect the animal.

Residents can also take the animal to the local veterinarians who can care for native wildlife.



ABOVE: Captain Griffiths helps to release koala Lawrence. He looked back at the Army Centre employee before climbing up the eucalyptus tree on the Base. BELOW: Lawrence the koala when he was found (left) and after successful treatments at Wacol (right).

- Photos courtesy Judi Gray from Toowoomba Koala and Wildlife Rescue