

# Rian the koala heads home after surviving Stradbroke burn off

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THE koala nicknamed Rian, which was severely injured after being caught in a controlled burn on North Stradbroke Island last October, was released back into the wild on Wednesday.

After being spotted in a burnt- out tree in the Amity area, the eight-year-old female was rescued and taken to the Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital, where she was treated for second degree burns to her body, nose and eyes.

The koala captured the community's heart and her injuries raised the ire of island residents, who demanded answers about why the bushland wasn't more thoroughly checked before the burn.

Australia Zoo senior veterinarian Amber Gillett said Rian still had some pink spots on her nose, where the pigment had not yet returned, but she was otherwise happy that Rian had fully recovered.

"The release went well," Dr Gillett said.

"She was great and had no issues.

"She has her beautiful new coat back and was very eager to get back up the tree."

Dr Gillett said Rian would wear a tracking collar so her condition could be checked monthly.

"I'll also check on her myself in three to five months' time to make sure the pigment on her nose has fully returned," she said.

"Her nose was still quite pink and I didn't know whether she would have that her whole life.

"If she did, it would cause her problems in the sun, but her nose was pigmenting while she was in care and I'm confident it will fully return."

Dr Gillett said Rian was released within three to five kilometres of where she was found in October.

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