

Herald Sun

Heartbreak as fire kills koalas in care

- Kelly Ryan
- From: Herald Sun
- July 13, 2011 12:00AM

[Recommend](#)[Send](#)

Be the first of your friends to recommend this.

[Share](#)

0 tweet



Tehree Gordon, founder of Jirrahlinga Koala Wildlife Sanctuary, Barwon Heads, has been left devastated after a fire destroyed the sanctuary's koala hospital and possibly 6 koalas in care. Picture: Craig Borrow
Source: Herald Sun

WHEN you devote your whole life and savings to the care of injured animals, any death or injury on your watch is the worst thing that can happen.

Fire that razed part of the Jirrahlinga Koala and Wildlife Sanctuary at Barwon Heads in the early hours of yesterday morning was the cruellest blow of all.

Founder Tehree Gordon has come to expect furry fire victims during summer. But the 3am phone call yesterday from her partner, Hamish, who risked his life to save koalas in the couple's care, cut deeply.

"We don't really know what happened. We don't understand how it happened, but we'll just have to rally and get back on our feet somehow," said the tearful 2004 Senior Australian of the Year.

It is thought a fault in a heat pad used to keep one of the couple's animals warm in the middle of winter may have sparked the blaze.

But as investigations continue, the death toll has been confirmed - two baby koalas and four adults, rescued and in rehabilitation after road trauma or illness, are no more.

"Hamish did all he could but was beaten back by the intensity of the heat as he tried to enter the hospital," Ms Gordon said.

"He went to the shelter immediately outside and koalas just leapt into his arms and he carried them to safety."

Ms Gordon rescued her first bushfire koalas 52 years ago. She has worked tirelessly since then to establish her famed sanctuary.

"We'll start again, we have no choice. The animals need us," she said.

After major renovations and a fanfare re-opening this year, the sanctuary would need help to recover from this devastating setback, Ms Gordon said.

www.jirrahlinga.com.au (<http://www.jirrahlinga.com.au%20>)

Recommend

Send

Be the first of your friends to recommend this.

Share

0 tweet

Ads By Google

- ***Free Practice Account***

Want to learn more about cfd's? We can help. [Learn More](#)

www.GFT.com.au

- ***Going out in Melbourne?***

Find your closest NAB ATM. In more locations Australia-wide.

www.nab.com.au/atm

- ***Nissan Navara***

The Brand New Nissan Navara Built to Work Tough & Play Hard!

Nissan.com.au/Navara

