

New life, new hope for koala defenders

By PETER GARDINER

SPOONBILLIANS are getting ready to celebrate their four-year fight to preserve koalas in their midst, buoyed by the recent sighting of a female with a joey on its back at Castaways Beach.

Ironically, it was an act of anonymous cruelty that engendered this remarkable community spirit in Peregian's Spoonbill St.

The poisoning of two koala-feed trees in the street was the catalyst for neighbours to join forces to not only help their favourite marsupials, but reduce their carbon footprint through the Living Smart program.

Sunshine Coast Council has been so taken with Spoonbill's embracing of this concept to think globally and act locally, it sent a film crew along to shoot some footage to promote the scheme last Thursday.

Spoonbill St spokeswoman Lyn Bollen said September was Save the Koala month. But the joy at the new sighting and potential new life to the local urban koala population, has been tempered by the fact that these animals are under great stress and may eventually succumb to

chlamydia.

As it is there are three known koalas and possibly five all-up which have been sighted in the area.

The mother and baby koala sighting was posted on the Noosa-created Koala Diaries on August 16 with: "Koala was climbing along my back fence. It had a baby on its back."

Diaries co-founder Carolyn Beaton said this had created a positive buzz among local koala campaigners in the run-up to a crucial month.

"A mother and joey has not been seen for over 12 months, when two koalas were unfortunately killed on Leslie Dr (in Noosa Heads)," she said.

■ This Saturday from 7am the street, which has the most Living Smart homes on the Coast, will hold its communal garage sale with at least 10 houses involved, helping recycle their unwanted goods rather than send them to landfill. There will be a collection site in the street for dumping old batteries and residents will help the Koala Foundation by selling No Me No Tree stickers. A sausage sizzle and a coffee van will make even total strangers feel right at home.



LIVING SMART: Spoonbill St Peregian residents, Russell Porter and Lyn Bollen, with Sunshine Coast Regional Council sustainability officer Simone O'Keefe (middle), are proud of their street's efforts.

PHOTO: DARRYN SMITH