

*Koala K(c)ash***Overview**

The state of New South Wales, Australia, pledges to raise \$34 million in an effort to save the declining koala population. Money raised will protect forest reserves and build a rescue hospital for injured wildlife.

Background

Native to and only located in Australia, koala numbers have declined by over 99% since the arrival of Europeans in the 18th century, 26% of the decline in the last two decades according to the [Australian Koala Foundation](#). Recent decline in the population is thought to be due to dog attacks, deforestation, and climate change.

Responses

Around 62,000 acres of state forest will become protected koala habitat on the Central Coast, North Coast, in Hawkesbury and Hunter. Another 10,000 acres of native forest on the Mid North Coast will become National Parks.

NSW Environmental Trust will use around \$20,000 to purchase the new koala habitat land and reserve it as new National Parks locations. Environment Minister Gabrielle Upton stated that the strategy will be ‘a comprehensive policy involving fixing roadkill hotspots, introducing more vaccines, conducting research, and engaging local communities in conservation.’

New South Wales Premier Gladys Berejikilian stated at the [Taronga Zoo](#) on Sunday that the wildlife hospital will open in Port Stephens. "It would be such a shame if this nationally iconic marsupial did not have its future secured."

Epic Earthquakes

Overview

A 4.5-magnitude earthquake wreaked havoc in southern California around 4:49 am Tuesday morning in the Cabazon area. The tremor was followed by another 3.2-magnitude earthquake just minutes later. There were no immediate reports of damage.

Background

Since April 1st, 2018, California has been hit with many earthquakes throughout the Southern part of the state. A 3.7-magnitude quake hit Aguanga, California on April 1st, followed by another 5.3-magnitude quake in the Channel Islands off of Santa Barbara County on April 5th. A recorded 3.9-magnitude quake was also recorded on the 22nd in Joshua Tree National Park just outside of Sky Valley.

Seismologist Lucy Jones stated on Twitter that the recent quakes are occurring in a ‘complex part’ of the [San Andreas fault](#), located under the San Bernardino Mountains in southern Cali. The largest reported earthquake in California history was recorded in 1857 at a magnitude of 7.9 along the San Andreas fault.

Responses

The [U.S. Geological Survey](#) reported the epicenter of the May 8th, 2018 earthquake just 7 miles outside of Cabazon. The quake was followed by dozens of small aftershocks throughout the southern region of California.

“You heard the shaking before you felt it,” Cristina Candelaria told KABC-TV in Redlands, California, 30 miles west of Cabazon.

Only minor damages and no confirmed injuries or deaths have been reported.

Be Best

Overview

In a speech on Monday, May 7th, first lady Melania Trump revealed an official effort as first lady titled, “Be Best,” a program teaching children to ‘put kindness first in their lives,’ especially on social media. The program will tackle opioid abuse, social media pressure, and mental health issues among young people.

Background

Taking place in the Rose Garden at the White House, media-shy First Lady Mrs. Trump made the speech in front of her husband, President Trump, Vice President Mike Pence, and multiple cabinet secretaries and other senior officials.

The plan continues to follow the ideals of places where the first lady has visited recently, including [a West Virginia clinic](#) that treats infants born with opioid addiction and [a Michigan school](#) where students participate in a program to stress the importance of emotional intelligence and kindness.

“Children deserve every opportunity to enjoy their innocence,” Mrs. Trump said.

Responses

Many have responded to the speech and plan in a negative light, claiming that Melania Trump is “taking credit for a pamphlet about cyberbullying that was first published by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) under the Obama administration.”

Others, have commended the first lady for her speech, citing that this is one of the first purposeful public appearances by Ms. Trump since the beginning of the Stormy Daniels accusations in late February.