

# News you can use!

**June 24, 2010**

## **Koalas on Magnetic Island Must Bear Up on Prison Food**

Prison food has become a delicacy for the resident koalas at the youth hostel on Magnetic Island, Australia.

A shortage of available eucalyptus trees has prompted staff at Bungalow Bay Koala Village youth hostel ([www.bungalowbay.com.au](http://www.bungalowbay.com.au)) to look "inside" to feed the koala population within their wildlife sanctuary.

Containers full of gum leaves are being barged across from the Townsville Correctional Centre's farm to feed the hungry marsupials.

The prison's farm is home to about 5,000 eucalypt trees, watered and cared for by prisoners. As the youth hostel is not permitted to trim the island's trees, it has been difficult to source the much needed supply.



*Dexter with Ranger Tony*

The youth hostel has planted about 1,200 eucalypt trees at the back of the property's bungalows and another 2,000 at the local council sport and recreation grounds, in partnership with the local council. However, they are still 16 months away from harvesting stage, making the prison leaf the main source of food for the koalas.

The three resident koalas, Dexter, Barney and Tiffany, each require four sticks of eucalypt branches every day, making for a busy production process to keep them in tip top Aussie condition.

Magnetic Island has a resident native koala colony of an estimated 2,000 locals which can be seen early morning or late afternoon on the "Forts Walk" which is a leisurely 20 minute walk from the Bungalow Bay Koala Village youth hostel.

*Magnetic Island is a tropical island located just off the coast of Townsville, north eastern Australia. Two-thirds of Magnetic Island is national park.*

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