



**\*\*\*MEDIA RELEASE\*\*\***

**1 MARCH, 2020**

It has been eight weeks since the Ravine Fire burned through Hanson Bay Wildlife Sanctuary (HBWS) on 3 January, 2020. In that fire most of the buildings were lost, including the Visitors Centre and the Hanson Bay Cabins, as was a significant amount of wildlife habitat within the Sanctuary. However, like so many places on Kangaroo Island, Hanson Bay is in the process of assessing, cleaning up and making provisions for the future. While we do not yet have a timeline established for completely re-opening the Visitors Centre and the Hanson Bay cabins, we do envision being able to welcome visitors on controlled, guided tours in the not-too-distant future.

Since 7 January, we have been back at the Sanctuary, and thanks to the help of many volunteers and to the Australian Defence Force, we have been bringing supplemental eucalyptus "browse" branches to the koalas that survived the fire within the Sanctuary. As recently reported in the media, a partnership was formed with Cleland Wildlife Park in the Adelaide Hills to relocate 28 of our Koalas. This was to establish a chlamydia-free and KORV-free insurance population on the mainland, as well as to protect against a potential catastrophic loss on KI. Kangaroo Island koalas are the only double-disease free colony of koalas in Australia.

Even after sending 28 koalas to Cleland, there are currently 40+ wild koalas living in the Sanctuary, and these animals continue to be monitored daily. There are also other species including kangaroos, wallabies, echidnas, cape barren geese, and many other native Australian animals still calling the Sanctuary home. HBWS is benefiting from aerial food drops over the surrounding National Parks and HBWS by DEW, and we are creating artificial shelters and placing them around the Sanctuary in the depleted habitat for many of the smaller animals. Thanks to the relatively mild weather in February, some of our landscape is slowly greening up and we are making plans to survey some of our other animal populations, like the termites and goannas.

Hanson Bay Wildlife Sanctuary was established in 1997, on the western end of Kangaroo Island. It is surrounded by Kelly Hill Caves and Flinders Chase National Park. It is a privately-owned conservation sanctuary that seeks to allow the native animals to flourish in the wild. Animals at Hanson Bay are living in the wild in their natural habitat. Hanson Bay will continue to be a place for native Australian wildlife to flourish and prosper in the wild.

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