

Artist Activities

With Karla Dickens



Karla Dickens, *Dreaming of a Koala Haven* 2012. Collection: NOPRPA (Northern Rivers Performing Arts), Lismore.

Koala

Koala is an Aboriginal word. It is a mispronounced word from the Dharug mob of Western Sydney: **Gula/coola/koolah** – which means no water or no drink.

This is so clever – because a Koala gets their water from gum leaves when they eat.

I have Wiradjuri heritage and my special word for Koala is Burrandhang.



How we can help koalas

Koalas have been struggling to survive for a long time, losing their homes because forests are cleared and because of bushfires. We can all help our precious koalas by:

- keeping our cats and dogs inside at night
- asking parents and friends to drive carefully around wildlife crossings
- planting trees that Koalas love to eat.

Let's send them lots of love as we make our own koalas.



Let's Make Our Own Koalas



Materials you will need:

- Scissors
- Felt-tipped pens or paint
- Ruler
- Toilet rolls
- Fabric or paper to cover the rolls
- Sticks
- Glue

Here's what we do:

Step 1 – Find some fabric or paper to use as collage material and cut into rectangles. The rectangles need to be 10 x 14 cm.

Step 2 – Take a toilet roll and glue a rectangular collage piece. You can also use rolls from paper towels, cling film or aluminium foil. Once your collage piece is glued on - you need to wait until it is nice and dry.

Step 3 – Imagine the roll is divided into three equal parts and draw a simple koala head on the top third – two ears and a head.

Step 4 – Take your scissors and cut around the koala's head.

Step 5 – Once you see the head you can decide what you want to use to create a face. I tried a felt-tipped pen and then some paint.

Step 6 – With the left-over collage pieces we decided to cut out some super-cute gum leaves to add to the koala.

Step 7 – When the koala has had plenty of time to dry, it's easy to bend the ears out a little bit.

Step 8 – Go outside for a walk to find some small branches for the koalas to sit on. Remember, a toilet roll isn't very big so we don't need great big sticks.

Step 9 – There was one more thing we experimented with that you may like to try. After cutting out the head, we decided to cut out a fat sausage shape in the middle of the toilet roll. This makes the koala look like it has arms and legs.