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Case study

Koala research programme enters second decade

Australia's longest running study on a koala population continues in the Bowen Basin.

Rio Tinto Coal Australia has supported the Koala Venture partnership with The University of Queensland for more than 20 years, delivering vital knowledge of koala habitat and diet.

This research has been incorporated into the operations and rehabilitation work at Blair Athol Mine, and in 2008 the Koala Venture expanded this research to include the new Clermont Mine currently under construction.

Each year Koala Venture researchers from The University of Queensland make six trips to the region to check on the koalas that live on the mining lease at Rio Tinto's Blair Athol mine site.

"Koala Venture has been the longest running koala study in Australia and has delivered research findings promoting a broader understanding of koala ecology valuable to the conservation of this national icon," the head of Koala Venture, Professor Frank Carrick, said.

After 20 years Rio Tinto Coal Australia's & The University of Queensland have achieved several big milestones:

- An Australian Minerals & Energy Environment Foundation (AMEEF) Excellence Award in 1999
- Uniquely monitoring several successive generations of koalas
- The first record of a koala making its home on rehabilitated former coal mining land, and
- Pioneering ecological technology, with the progression from conventional radio-tracking devices to GPS location.

Koala Venture is just one example of a long-running project that is part of Rio Tinto Coal Australia's Biodiversity Action Plan for the Bowen Basin.