

# Alone and alarmed

By Gemma Seymour

THERE are fears for the health and safety of a thin, weary traveller last sighted a week ago near Penrith Lakes.

"We're very concerned because he's very thin," said Sonya Stanvic, the WIRES Blue Mountains branch coordinator for threatened and miscellaneous species.

Mrs Stanvic said WIRES received a call from a Cranebrook resident on Saturday, November 8.

The resident spotted a koala in a park being harassed by a magpie. A rescuer was sent to the site but the animal had disappeared.

It was sighted again last Tuesday night by a motorist who nearly collided with it near the intersection of Andrews Road and Castlereagh Road, Mrs Stanvic said.

Security staff at the Sydney International Regatta Centre have been informed so they can keep an eye out.

"We've had somebody out day and night looking for this animal," said Mrs Stanvic, who believes the koala is an older male. "My biggest concern is it's going to end up in someone's backyard and be bailed up by a dog."

She said koalas had no road sense. They could get sore, infected feet and that stress could trigger sickness.

Mrs Stanvic thought the



**Lost koala:** The Cranebrook resident who contacted WIRES and took this photo believes the animal could have a wounded arm.

koala could be the same one that was spotted six weeks ago at Bligh Park.

"Wherever he came from he's panicked. He's trying to find his way home but he's lost."

Cranebrook and Penrith residents are being asked to be careful on the roads and investigate if their dogs bark at night.

A rescue team is on standby to take the koala into its care.

Rob Close, an adjunct professor with the University of Western Sydney, runs the Campbelltown Koala Research Unit.

He said there was a good population of koalas in the Kurrajong area. "We can only guess [where this koala has

come from], either he's come from that Kurrajong area or he's come from a population that was thought to exist at the ADI site. There's a possibility they're still there.

Dr Close's rescue team is made up of a Sydney University PhD candidate and volunteers. If caught, the koala will go to the Wildlife Health and Conservation Centre at Camden, part of Sydney University's veterinary school.

It will be medically assessed and go to WIRES' recuperative care if required.

If you see the koala, do not approach it - koalas can bite.

**Sightings: WIRES, 4754 2946 or National Parks, 4588 5247. A rescue team will attend.**