

Preface

to Papers Presented at the Koala Retrovirus Workshop, San Diego Zoo, April 2013

GEOFFREY W. PYE,*¹ REBECCA N. JOHNSON,² AND ALEX D. GREENWOOD³

¹ San Diego Zoo Global, San Diego, CA 92101, United States of America

² Australian Centre for Wildlife Genomics,
Australian Museum Research Institute, Sydney NSW 2010, Australia

³ Department of Wildlife Diseases,
Leibniz Institute for Zoo and Wildlife Research, 10315 Berlin, Germany
gpye@sandiegozoo.org · rebecca.johnson@austmus.gov.au · greenwood@izw-berlin.de

This volume presents peer-reviewed papers from the oral presentations and break-out group-sessions delivered at the *San Diego Zoo Global Koala Conservation Workshop: The Koala and its Retroviruses: Implications for Sustainability and Survival* meeting, held at San Diego Zoo, 17–18 April 2013. Over 70 participants from Australia, Europe, Japan, and North America attended, including experts in the fields of koala care, conservation, ecology, epidemiology, immunology, molecular biology, population management, retrovirology, veterinary medicine, and zoonoses.

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The recognition of lymphoid neoplasia in koalas (Backhouse & Billinger, 1960; Canfield *et al.*, 1987) and its likely association with a retrovirus (Canfield *et al.*, 1988; Worley *et al.*, 1993; Hanger *et al.*, 2000; Tarlinton *et al.*, 2005) stimulated research amongst virologists as they excitedly studied what they believed to be the first real-time endogenization of a retrovirus (Tarlinton *et al.*, 2006; Stoye, 2006; Oliveira *et al.*, 2007; Tarlinton *et al.*, 2008). More recent work has shown a suspected exogenous spread of KoRV in southern Australia (Simmons *et al.*, 2012) as well as an extension of the possible time line of the endogenization (Ávila-Arcos *et al.*, 2013).

In addition, research has demonstrated the possibility of trans-species transmission (Fiebig *et al.*, 2006), identification of the KoRV receptor as PiT1 (Oliveira *et al.*, 2006), identification of the virus in koalas in Japanese and German zoos (Fiebig *et al.*, 2006; Miyazawa *et al.*, 2011) and the ability to detect presence of the virus in fecal material (Miyazawa *et al.*, 2011).

The recent isolation of a variant from the originally sequenced koala retrovirus, isolated from koalas dying from lymphoid malignancies in a North American zoo (Xu *et al.*, 2011; Xu *et al.*, 2013), and the concern it generated about population management prompted San Diego Zoo Global