

Wild News

ISSUE 79

New
**People
Profiles**



Education
**Fungal Disease
in Wildlife**

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All News & Events

+ Species Coordinators' Reports



President's Report



By Karen Scott

Welcome to another year and another edition of WildNews I hope that everyone had an opportunity to relax and spend time with family and friends over the Christmas and New Year break.

The past few months have been very busy for most of our volunteers with an influx of baby birds and mammals coming into care throughout spring and summer. We are grateful to have such an amazing team of volunteers who pull together and accomplish so much, ensuring that as many as possible of our local wildlife are cared for and returned back to the wild where they belong. This is always a very trying time for our volunteers, but I am pleased to see so many people working to help not only our local wildlife, but also our fellow volunteers.

A special thank you to all of our volunteers who work tirelessly 'behind the scenes' to ensure that Wildcare continues to function as efficiently as possible. It takes a great deal of time and effort to run an organization the size of Wildcare and without these volunteers, we would have no 'Wildcare'.

Thank you to our small team of hotline volunteers who do their best to ensure that the hotline is manned as much as possible. Over the spring/summer months, this is a particularly difficult, with a continual stream of incoming calls. Wildcare does not have a 'call centre' – our hotline volunteers undertake their shifts from their own homes, on their personal phones. Anyone who has volunteered on the hotline will appreciate the great number of enquiries that are received and the ongoing battles that we face with difficult (and often heart-

breaking) situations, as well as dealing with difficult people who have no appreciation of wildlife at all. Our hotline volunteers are a very special group of people and I thank you all for your dedication and commitment.

Thank you also to those who work tirelessly with the never-ending administrative tasks that need to be undertaken. Though not as much 'fun' as some other activities, it is necessary to ensure that Wildcare runs well and that we can provide the best possible support for our volunteers. Thank you to everyone who contributes in this way including our Wildcare Management Committee (Tracy, Lewis, Rachel, Caitlin and Brigitte), Cathy who contributes tremendously to the administrative side of our education program, Kiersten for maintaining Wildcare's records, Eleanor and Deborah for collating such an informative and educational newsletter as well as all those who contribute periodically with articles and photographs.

Here's hoping that 2017 will be a little kinder to our wildlife.

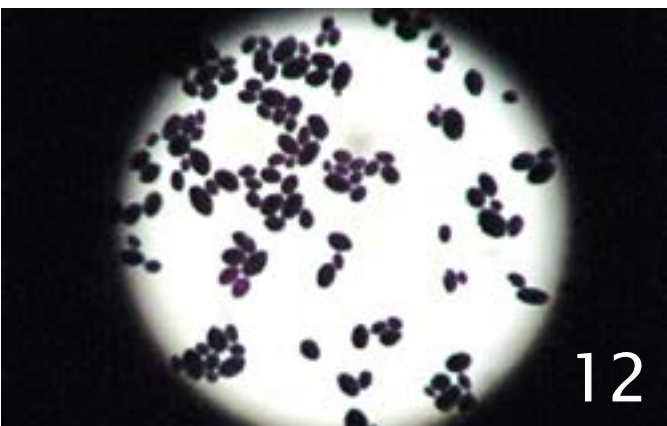
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Contents Issue 79



NEWS & ACTIVITIES

President's Report	02
A Warm Welcome to our New Members	04
Education Report	05
Wildcare Training Resources	05
Animal Action Night	06
A Huge Helping Hand	06

REHABILITATION

Species Coordinators' Reports	07
People Profiles	09

EDUCATION & CONSERVATION

The Human Factor	10
A Boy with a Passion	11
Behind the Scenes	11
Fungal Disease in Wildlife	12
Compassionate Kids	14

And also...

Grants	17
Advertising & Supporters	18
Thank you	19

OUR MISSION

To protect and enhance the environment by providing a high standard of rescue, care and rehabilitation for sick, injured, orphaned and displaced native fauna with the goal of successful release into the natural environment.

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Eleanor Hanger & Deborah Bianchetto.
Submissions can be sent to
news@wildcare.org.au
Cover photo: Eleanor Hanger

A Warm Welcome to our New Members

Wildcare Australia welcomed the following new members:

Carlina Tavendale & Jordan Gale; Dawn Todd; Carolynn Taylor; Colleen Whyte & Nathan Whyte; Tiana Davey; Michelle Inns & Craig Inns; Melissa Unwin; Melinda Wreathall; Jarrod Genet; Lorraine Lapp & Peter Lapp; Olivia Pemberton; Cindy Clarke; Rebecca Tapper & Elysse Tapper; Sara Scomazzon; Renae Depalo; Mitchell Roberts; Michael Henderson; Kaitlin Fewson; Chloe Reekie; Kylie Chant; Vriza Soto-Paulsen; Leanne Robertson & Stacey Robertson; Jay Walleth & James Walleth; Monika Herold-Wagner & Flo Herold; Marjie Spies; Jollie Collier; Meaghan Bionda; Lars Wheeler; Chelsea Kluske; Sharon Quinlan; Dianne Hoogendoorn; Barbara Bell & Cassandra Fletcher; Rachael James; Ashley Cox; Penny McKay & Tim McKay; Jan Anderson & Victoria Anderson; Toni Hann; Antoinette Lines & Andrew Cherry; Michelle Hester & Tony Curran; Stephanie Pilgrim; Amy Wregg; Gareth Jones; Felicity Stevenson; Mandy Keasey; Sue Burke; Trudy McRobert; Marian Camilleri; Kaitlin Klease & Catherine Klease; Martyn Noble; Roy Baker & Belinda Baker; Sharon Powell; Callum Thomson; Dave Canavan; Alexandra Petrovic; Nadean Kerr & David Kerr; Jenni Bunyan; Georgia Hjort; Holly Patterson; Adam McArthur; Nathan Watts; Justine Hughes; Judith Gray; Carolynn Ritchie; Tahlia Gregori; Simone Bosshard & Nikolai Liebsch; Angela Hales & Steven Hales; Kim Edwards & Finlay Fawcett; Kris Carey-Brenton; Heather Bruce; Kaytlyn Williams; Tiffany Lee; Gaylene Callander & Mark Callender; Charmain Derbesy & Carmen Derbesy; Tyson Dixie; Michelle Bennett & Michael Fuller; Summah Woods; Dana Heidke; Joann Condon & Ella Froggatt; Nadia Baker & Eric Gunton; Catherine Johnson; Callie Manwaring; Anne Kirby; Karen Drimer & Kezia Drimer; Chelsey Surgenor & Matthew Norris; Jessica Kaminski; Ashleigh Dolan; Jacqueline Picton; Viktoria Weber; Kathy Karibalis & Emily Wall; Donna Maguire; Kirsten Oberg; Alicia Villagomez; Zannah Gubler; Breanna Bruce; Tiia Toivonen & Sunion Matheson; Rita Lloyd-Evans; Karen Kindt & Lucy Rowlands; Robyn Gommers; Julia Odgers; Lisa Jordan; Robyn Cameron; Kate Kampen; Jules Morton & Glen Holmes; Lauren Lock; Desiree Lennox; Kirsten Oberg; Alicia Villagomez; Zannah Gubler; Breanna Bruce; Tiia Toivonen & Sunion Matheson; Rita Lloyd-Evans; Karen Kindt & Lucy Rowlands; Robyn Gommers; Julia Odgers; Lisa Jordan; Robyn Cameron; Kate Kampen; Jules Morton & Glen Holmes; Lauren Lock; Desiree Lennox; Elisha Crosby; Lisa Porcaro; Stacey Savage; Carly Smith; Rhiannon de Lange; Holly Pennington; David Willett; Tony Moores & Bethanie Warren; Andrew Watkins & Lisa Blashak; Jen Fisher & Will Fisher; Kristine Rae; Max Farrington & Ainsley Chase; Kylie Hey; Nicole Schuster; Miriam Grey & Dan Grey; Carol Moller; Montanne Savva; Stephanie Rasche; Jane MacGibbon; Roger Wagner & Ina Wagner; Yedmy Cubides; Tanya Best; Tamara Clare; Laurine Lugg; Kirsty Rose; Melissa Caranese; Michele Fancourt; Cristle Starr; John Gibbon & Samantha Holman; Tracy Washington, Samantha Washington & Devon Washington; Jamie Gajewski; Kristelle Miller; Natasha Saul; Lauren Edser & Stephanie Richardson; Jenaya Lewis; Heidi Lamb; Erin Flanders; Joanne Gibson; Emily Shearman & Louise Shearman; James Hudson; Ellen Ryan; Melissa Hudson & Gary Hudson; Melissa Adams & Camden Goode; Lauren Bottle; Ruth Bolam; Rosalyn Wilson; Emma Brown & Vernia Brown; Storm Mckenzie; Letitia Taylor; Laura Connelly; Jennifer Fleming; Marissa Duggan; Heather Palfrey & Ian Palfrey; Wendy Tomkins; Natalie Munsie; Clare Tidmarsh; Antonella Millefanti; Tui Williams; Kelly Collett & Jemma Collett; Caren Gillis & Jason Gillis; Paula Taylor & Bernie Morgan; Jenelle Ibbeson; Sue Saunders; Nhan Quang Bui; Lia King (Olivia) Chin; Holly Connors; Paola Pasten, Cristian Parra & Jose Pablo Parra Pasten; Jacinda Minahan; Danielle James; Katy Masson & Anthony Rowan; Kerrie Jones, Dakota Martin, Sina Letelemaana & Vae Letelemaana; Adrienne McAllister; Carol Walker; Katrina Crews & David Crews; Sally Bayfield; Alexandra Dickman; Simon Tweddle & Shelly Russo; Haley Thorn, Ciarna Thorn & Ayrton Thorn.

By joining Wildcare Australia you are demonstrating your commitment to the welfare of Australia's native animals. Please don't hesitate to get involved in this, your organization. If you are unsure of where your personal niche may be, contact us and I'm sure we will be able to help you. We hope you have a long and happy association with Wildcare Australia.

Thank you to all those members who have renewed their Wildcare membership subscription for another year. Your ongoing support is much appreciated.

NEXT ISSUES SUBMISSIONS DATES

Issue 80 : 15th March

Issue 81 : 15th June

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of Wildcare Australia or of the editors.



Education Report

Thank you to everyone who has already registered for workshops in the new January to June 2017 education program.

We are pleased that we have been able to continue to offer a good variety of courses, in numerous locations. These include some of our more specialized workshops which are generally only offered once a year.

The Wildcare education program has always been one of the most important priorities for us as we have always felt that wildlife volunteers should have access to quality training at little or no cost and we are thankful that we have had the support, over many years, of experienced carers who have contributed many long hours into developing our education program.

We would encourage all of our active members to start considering now what education workshops you need to complete, in order to maintain your Permit Endorsement with Wildcare. A condition of your Permit is that you must undertake at least one workshop each year for each of the species for which you have a permit. Once you have completed the basic workshop for the species, you can attend the advanced workshops or other relevant workshops, all of which can be used to satisfy your training requirements. For carers who are very experienced and who have attended most of the training courses, we are able to offer some flexibility on a 'case-by-case' basis so please feel free to contact Karen Scott (Education Coordinator) to discuss further.

Invitations to submit a Permit renewal will be forwarded in April 2017 with current Permit Endorsements expiring in June 2017 so now is the time to check the Education Calendar and ensure that you have your training requirements sorted.

Thank you to Dr Robyn Stenner who has again developed and offered several advanced workshops in recent months on birds, reptiles and wildlife first aid. The feedback from attendees has been very positive and these advanced workshops have provided all wildlife carers with additional knowledge, regardless of their level of experience. These workshops were made possible by funding from the City of Gold Coast through their 2015 Community Grants Program.

Wildcare Training Resources

Please note that this year we are implementing changes to the way in which training resources, such as manuals, are provided to members.

We have been using Dropbox as a method of sharing these resources with workshop attendees and it has proven fairly efficient.

Commencing from January 2017, these resources will be available as download files through Dropbox but **each will expire two (2) months after they are provided.**

It is imperative that when you receive the email with the link to download the resources, that you download and store them to your computer's hard drive or tablet promptly.

10th Animal Action Night: Inspiring Action for Koalas

This year Wildcare was very fortunate to be one of the recipients of funds raised by the Animal Action Day team through their fundraising night which was held on the 1st October 2016 at the Quality Hotel Mermaid Waters.

Aldwyn Altuney from Animal Action Day worked tirelessly with her team of volunteers to make the night tremendously enjoyable for everyone and a huge success.

The funds raised were divided between Wildcare Australia Inc. and Friends of the Koala from Lismore and will be used to help support koala rescue and rehabilitation in the Gold Coast and Northern NSW regions.

Thank you to the Wildcare members who supported the event and a very special thank you to Jasmine Rasmussen who represented Wildcare beautifully with her captivating speech.

A special thank you to Aldwyn for her hard work and inspiration in bringing the plight of koalas to the public's attention. Thank you to Lynn Santer, who was the Master of Ceremonies, and also to the wonderful performers who volunteered their time and talent to make this event such a resounding success.

For more information about the work of the Animal Action Day group please visit them at:

<http://animalactionday.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/162186850535982/>

Gold Coast Wildlife Carers Get a Huge Helping Hand

Wildcare Australia Inc. has been fortunate over the years to have some wonderful supporters, both of our organization as a whole and also of our individual volunteers.

Whether such support comes in the form of direct financial support, discounts on wildlife products or building supplies, or in-kind support, it is all greatly appreciated by our dedicated volunteers, who contribute so much of their own time and financial resources to caring for our local wildlife.

One such supporter is Councillor Peter Young, the Division 5 representative for the City of Gold Coast. Peter has supported Wildcare in numerous ways over many years and has always been a great advocate for our local environment.

Councillor Young kindly provided Wildcare with a \$4,000 donation in 2016 which is being used to help with the financial cost incurred by local carers in purchasing specialised food items and vitamin supplements for a vast variety of species.

To date the funds have been used to purchase:

- Bird food including parrot hand-rearing formula, lori-keet/honeyeater mix and specialised vitamin supplements for birds

- Specialised vitamin supplements for echidnas
- Milk formula for possums, gliders and other small mammal species
- Specialised colostrum supplement for orphaned mammals
- Live and frozen food (e.g. crickets, mealworms) for birds
- Frozen food (e.g. rodents, quails) for large reptiles

So far the funds spent have equated to over 80kg of food and supplements with more to be purchased shortly.

It is difficult to express our gratitude for this generous contribution from Councillor Young. The financial cost of rescuing and rehabilitating our native wildlife is continuing to be a tremendous burden for our volunteers and often impacts on the species and number of animals that they can take into their homes.

From all of our Gold Coast volunteers, thank you Councillor Young for your generous gift and on-going support.

Coordinator Reports

POSSUMS

By Natalie Rasmussen

I would like to wish everyone a happy New Year and to thank all of the amazing people who supported Alice, myself and our possums in 2016.

I've been coordinating possums for some time and believe 2016 was our busiest year yet. If we hadn't had a large number of new and very good carers come through last year we definitely wouldn't have been able to save as many possums and gliders as we did. It took such a weight off our shoulders and not only was everyone very capable, but also so kind and supportive to each other. I truly think supporting and lifting each other up is the key to a more productive and efficient group. People were bending over backwards to reach out to one another and I feel as if we were not only caring for the animals so incredibly well, but also for each other.

We had a large number of possums with dermatitis and with injuries due to road trauma and cat and dog attack. There were those who found themselves trapped and others displaced when their habitat was destroyed. It was a very heart wrenching but

rewarding year with most animals being released back into the wild.

This year I'm hoping to ease the pressure on our soft release sites, as the few of us who are able to do soft releases have definitely reached our maximum numbers. If any of you believe you have a suitable property and would be willing to do some releases for us, we would love to hear from you.

I would like to finish up by thanking our wildlife hospitals. Living on the Gold Coast I have mainly dealt with Currumbin Wildlife Hospital, and I'd like to say thank you on behalf of our carers. The staff and volunteers at Currumbin have been so incredibly kind, informative and supportive and I feel have become friends. We are all doing this together and I am so grateful that we have such a wonderful group of people on whom we can rely to help us heal our sick, injured and orphaned animals. I've learnt so much from the staff with whom I've come into contact at Currumbin and feel they truly need to be acknowledged and thanked.

REPTILES

By Brigitte Blakeway

Magnificent Monitors

These beautiful reptiles find themselves in trouble a lot of the time, as a result of vehicle hits.

As an opportunistic feeder, road kill make the perfect buffet. Unfortunately, when the table you eat from is bitumen and people just don't seem to slow down, the chances of a vehicle hit are high.

While reptiles have a reputation for their hardiness and some may say, "what doesn't kill them, makes them stronger", it really isn't the case. What would normally have an instantly negative outcome for a mammal or bird may cause a reptile many weeks or months of enduring infection, pain and starvation.

So please, if you do stop for a pouch check or just to check a road kill, move the animal as far as possible away from the road, as this can help the opportunists enjoy their "free feed" while staying safe.

This handsome fellow was hit by a vehicle in the Mt Cotton area and was left on the road.

He was in a lot of pain, but was trying not to show it. Working together with Redland Bay Wildlife Ambulance, who arrived on the scene and secured him, we moved him to my vehicle so I could take him to get emergency attention at a Veterinary Surgery. Not many domestic veterinarians are equipped, or skilled to accept these patients. So finding emergency veterinary care is often difficult.

I was fortunate enough that night to have a skilled wildlife veterinarian attend him and after being given some medication to

help with pain and to make him sleepy, we positioned him for some X rays.

Unfortunately, the X ray showed not just a skull fracture, but a complete shearing of the socket and ball joint of his left front arm. As you can see in this picture, his left forelimb is displaced and literally just hanging. No ability to move it at all.

While skull fractures don't always mean euthanasia, but can mean a lengthy period of rehabilitation lasting many months. A fracture in one of these powerful limbs is not always a recoverable condition, which proved the case with this patient. After lots of X rays were taken, followed by discussion on surgery and how to reconstruct the damage, we decided that it would not be feasible. Monitors need that powerful muscle strength and bone stability to scale trees for birds' eggs and other treats as well as for excavating termite mounds for their egg incubation, or as in the next story, "The Summer of Jaws" by Liz Miller, to scare their would-be carers.



Coordinator Reports

REPTILES

By Liz Miller

The Summer of Jaws (A tail of fear and loathing!)

Rescuer Damian of the Numinbah Valley Eco Centre received a call about a Lace Monitor in trouble by the side of the Valley Rd. He quickly swung into action and found a large Lacey, injured and very unresponsive beside the bitumen. It appeared to have been hit by a car.

Easily caught and handled, the Lacey was rushed by Damian to the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital where the fantastic team of veterinarians and nurses immediately assessed his injuries and began treatment. It was found he was suffering from a fractured jaw, and so was christened such. Jaws was prescribed pain relief, rest and assisted feeding.

Much to the relief of some of the hospital staff, as Jaws had decided if he must be known as one, he would live up to his reputation as a land shark, he was given clearance to go out to foster care for rehabilitation, under the expert care of Lewis, one of the Wildcare reptile coordinators. And so Jaws came home to live in one of the new Wildcare trailers. It was quickly established that Jaws enjoyed two things; climbing up to sun bathe on the high ledge in the enclosure, and pre-meditating launch attacks on his carers.

Over the coming weeks, the summer sun's warmth healed Jaws, for which his carers were grateful, as no one wants to medicate such a wild fellow. He was soon smashing down his food items with much gusto, and leaf change and cleaning days were fraught, with keeping one eye on Jaws and one eye on the escape route.

Then came the day everyone, Jaws included, had been waiting for. The veterinarians at Currumbin Wildlife Hospital cleared him for release. And so it was organized that I would meet Damian at the release site, to say our farewells to the big lizard. Along with leaf changes and cleaning, short straws were drawn by Lewis to have to catch and crate Jaws.

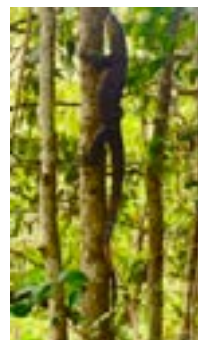
Monitor releases have always been slow, lazy and warm experiences for me. Jaws has changed all that.

From the outset, as we drove the distance to Numinbah Valley, he manoeuvred in his crate to best glare at me, plotting my demise I am certain the entire trip, and hissing constant reminders to me that, well, Jaws by name, Jaws by nature.

We met up with Damian at the release site, and positioned the crate away from us, facing down the mountain a little. Jaws was hanging off the door, making just the simple act of swinging it open a scary experience. After some time, I tried a little gentle coaxing from the back of the crate. This resulted in a tail slap, the likes of which I hope to never experience again, and nearly toppled his crate over. Eventually Jaws marched straight out at a great rate of knots, as planned, in a straight line down the mountain.

He stopped and turned his head, looking back at Damian and me over his shoulder, and for a fleeting moment, I felt he was being kind and saying thank you. Fleeting it was, as straight after that he spun around and charged, running at us both, his final launch it seemed. In all the chivalry Damian could muster, he jumped somewhere out of reach behind me! Now, those who know me, know that staying upright on my feet on mountainsides is an ability that escapes me. I did manage at the last second to stand very still (fear has a way of enabling this!) and Jaws diverted at the last moment to leap onto the tree beside me, and leisurely climb towards the top. I swear I heard him laughing.

“Live long and well, Jaws. Your wild and fierce ways are all that we love and respect in big lizards, and please, no more chasing cars these holidays.”



People Profiles

In this issue we meet Gayle Morris who is interviewed by Caitlin Raynor.

GAYLE MORRIS

Why did you join Wildcare?

I joined Wildcare initially for my son. He has been diagnosed with Aspergers and has a true passion for wildlife. When I found out what Wildcare was and what it involved, I thought it would be a perfect chance to have this unique opportunity to share with him. I do not come from an animal background in the educational sense, so it's all been very new to me, but the training that Wildcare offers is so thorough that I was easily hooked, and I now find myself doing things I never dreamed of myself doing. The best thing, apart from the gorgeous wildlife, is that Wildcare is just such an amazing group of people. I'm so proud to be a part of it and I've become Super Mum in the process.

What do you like about rescuing/caring for wildlife?

What I like best about rescuing and caring is knowing I've made a difference in the animal's life. Giving that animal another chance is such a rewarding feeling. I love being able to get up close and personal with them. It feels like an opportunity of a lifetime, because where else do you get to do what we do? We've learned so much from each animal already, and you never know what species you're going to get to assist with. One day it might be a joey rescue, another it could be an echidna release. They really do bring a lot of joy into our family. As my son says, he will never let his wildlife down, no matter how big or how small.

What don't you like about rescuing/caring?

Honestly, it can be an emotional roller coaster. Unfortunately the circumstances these animals find themselves in are not for good reason, and that is why we are there to help. It can be quite horrific seeing an animal suffering. When caring for them, we put in as much effort as we can to do the best we can for them, but sometimes their situation is beyond our control, that is the really heartbreaking and downside to it all.

Why do you choose to care for the species you care for?

When I first joined Wildcare as I said earlier, it was for my son. He particularly loves his reptiles, so I said that we could care for lizards. After attending the orientation workshop that soon changed. We now do lizards for my son in one part of the house and orphaned joey possums for me in another part of the house. My possums give me another excuse to be a Mummy again. They are the sweetest things and all have such different personalities. I fall in love every time. Part of caring is de-humanising of course, as we want them to succeed when we re-release them, but I go through my own de-possumising!

The lizards on the other hand, are not sweet and cuddly; they are more of the interesting and simply just cool creatures!

What is your most memorable rescue or animal cared for?

My most memorable rescue was of my first joey Eastern Grey Kangaroo. Mum had been hit by a car and the joey, whom we named Cova, was still in her pouch attached to Mum's teat. I was as nervous as anything, but as soon as I got onsite, everything I'd learnt in my training kicked in and I had a successful joey removal. It was the most rewarding feeling, one I'll never forget.

I can't pinpoint a most memorable animal that I've cared for...can I just say, 'all'? Each animal we've had in our care has brought so much into our lives. My son is as involved as I knew he would be and it's just such an amazing experience each and every day that we share.

You are paired up with a coordinator, who is your mentor through it all, and I have to say that they are the most amazing people. The patience they have and the effort they put in to make sure not only your animal is doing well, but also that you are doing well. That is probably up there with the most memorable part of caring. I could not have gotten through many a time if it had not been for them.

What advice would you give a new rescuer or carer?

Do it! Get involved! It's a journey but it's a bloody good one! (can I say that?) It will give you the highest of highs and the lowest of lows...but anything you can do helps. It really does. Wildcare has so many different opportunities of ways to help, and it's just such an amazing organization. Everyone joins for the same reason at the end of the day, to help save our gorgeous native wildlife.



Why it's time to ditch the argument for animal welfare in the face of an uncaring local government.

Every day across Australia, wildlife die due to human impact. As wildlife rescuers and carers, we are intimately familiar with this human impact in south east Queensland. We deal directly with the aftermath of horrific human-wildlife interaction, mostly the result of ignorance and carelessness, but sometimes even the deliberate cruelty that some people are inexplicably capable of.

When it comes to accidental wildlife injury and death, one of the causes that most quickly comes to mind is vehicle collision. A study by Taylor and Goldingay (2004) of road kill in Northern Rivers showed a rate of 0.3 road kills per kilometre per week. This was a circuit completed from Lismore to Brunswick Heads then down to Ballina and finally back to Lismore, done in spring and summer over two eight week periods in 2000. The study only recorded vertebrates (mainly birds and mammals) over a certain size and acknowledged that the rate is most likely an underestimate due to their methodology. A separate study for reptiles and frogs revealed over five million die annually on Australian Roads (Ehmann and Cogger, 1985). For wildlife rescuers and carers, this rate is probably no surprise. We are so accustomed to looking for injured or dead wildlife on roads that we often stop for t-shirts, teddy bears and other discarded belongings.

While this rate is certainly not a revelation it is no less disheartening for folks like us. Seeing the huge numbers of wildlife that die or become injured on our roads can make rescuing feel relentless and futile, but seeing the animals that go to release makes everything rewarding. This too, however, comes tinged with fear for the future: Will this animal be as lucky the next time it encounters a road?

The truth is that habitat discontinuity is incredibly high in south east Queensland and suitable habitat is rapidly being reduced and fragmented by urban encroachment. When it comes to land, homes for humans take priority over homes for wildlife, and changing that attitude is a near impossible task in the face of an ever-growing human population. In the light of this, it seems important to mitigate the impact of roads on wildlife.

One measure that immediately jumps to mind is reducing the speed at which cars travel on roads. Habday (2010) found that certain species had low reflectance values and were harder to detect at a distance while travelling, thus, lower speed limits increased the detection time and therefore prevented vehicle collisions with wildlife. Unfortunately, a study by Dique et al. (2003) showed that in an area where a significant number of koalas were dying as a result of road collisions, changing the speed limit between the hours of 7pm-5am for the period of August to December had absolutely no effect: the number of people speeding did not change and the number of koalas dying stayed the same. Ultimately, it is easier to modify animal behaviour than it is to modify human behaviour.

So then how do we modify animal behaviour around roads? Most of their behaviour will change naturally over time, with changes in home range and altered movement patterns. A study by Brown et al. (2006) indicated that cane toads actively use roads. Conversely, Keller and Bender (2007) recorded elevated heart rates in wildlife approaching roads. In terms of reducing vehicle collisions, mitigating structures for road crossing have become the ideal method for wildlife managers.

Infrastructure for wildlife crossing roads has previously been limited mainly to underpasses. Sometimes they are not necessarily purpose built, as Crook et al. (2013) identified several drainage culverts that were regularly used by wombats in Nowendoc, NSW. It was noted that they were more likely to be used if they were wider and close to forest cover. But wombats are a burrowing species and using tunnels to cross roads is probably second nature to them. For many other species, underpasses are a threatening concept, often with very few means of escape and little cover. They can be made more effective by using barrier fencing to funnel animals to underpasses and adding climbing posts intermittently as a means of escape for arboreal animals that may encounter predators. Nevertheless, overpasses are much more effective than underpasses. Overpasses do not necessarily have to be elaborate structures; for gliders an overpass can consist of a series of poles (Taylor and Goldingay, 2013). Ladder and box type rope crossings have seen great success in NSW and Victoria. For macropods, fenced overpasses with forest cover for the entirety of the overpass are probably the most ideal, but also the most expensive option.

So how do we convince a local council to invest money in such infrastructure if they already show a low regard for wildlife welfare? Quite simply, we do not frame it as a wildlife investment, but a human one. Rowden et al. (2008) recorded fatalities and injuries to humans due to swerving to avoid wildlife, as well as non-injurious crashes that have an economic impact. Up to 5.5% of all serious-casualty crashes annually were due to wildlife. There was also found to be a significant amount of underreporting. Since eliminating wildlife is not a viable, ethical or desirable option, or even economical since much of our tourism depends on our unique native animals, investing in mitigating structures would make our roads safer for humans and wildlife.

While it seems counter-intuitive to shift our focus from the wildlife we love to the humans that are so often the cause of their suffering, presenting the argument from this alternative perspective is not only likely to be more palatable to a financially-motivated government, but will also appear more thoughtful and respectful of the multifaceted concerns that local governments must consider as part of their duties. Together, if we change how we approach wildlife management strategies with higher authorities, perhaps we can enhance the cooperation between us, for the betterment of all our locals.



A Boy with a Passion

By Gayle Morris

Last year Rylan, our seven year old son, decided that he wanted to enter the Science Competition through school.

His inspiration came from his passion for reptiles and he wanted to showcase the life cycle of a monitor lizard prior to hatching.

Rylan made his own replica incubator and even made his own reptile eggs by soaking chicken eggs in vinegar to remove the hard shell. He then drew stencils and attached them to the end of torches, so people could see the different stages of growth when pointed to an egg.

Before the project was entered into the competition, Rylan had the opportunity to show his whole school, during an open session displaying all the projects being entered. For someone who does not feel comfortable with large crowds, he did extremely well and you could see his passion for reptiles just oozing out of him. He loved every minute of it, with everyone being so supportive and really enjoying what he had done.

This project won Rylan 1st place in the Griffith University Gold Coast School Science Competition in his category of Communicating Science within his class level of Years 1-2.

Winning this was such a proud moment for us, as well as for him. Winning also put Rylan's project straight through to the Queensland State Finals. With no expectations here on the state level, we were over the moon when we found out he'd actually won 1st place again in his category and class level.

When we went to Queensland University for him to receive his certificate at the awards ceremony, we were blown away once again when the Young Scientist of the Year award came up, and his name was called. Being a Mum who only hoped her son would see the project through to the end, it's been an amazing journey not only to see him win all these awards, but also to see him learn and teach others what he's learning. Rylan has a downright passion for his wildlife and he's an inspiration to me every day.

Behind the Scenes

By Eleanor Hanger

Life for an active wildlife carer, unlike many volunteering jobs, involves the investment of enormous amounts of time and money along with the expenditure of large amounts of physical and emotional energy.

There are cages, aviaries, yards, and pools to be built, furnished and maintained. There is food to be sourced, scouring the garden or bushland for vegetation or critters to build healthy, growing bodies. There are supplements and milk to be bought to compliment the natural diet and ensure high levels of nutrition for growing youngsters or repairing bodies. There are regular feeding regimes to be fitted into already hectic schedules, as well as medicating and nursing, cleaning and sterilizing, not to mention emergency calls, rescues and visits to wildlife hospitals and veterinarians.

However have you ever given a thought to those who not only include the above in their busy lives, but who also manage the organization – Wildcare Australia Inc. – the President, committee, other office bearers and coordinators. The size of our organization, the large area it covers and the various facets of it mean that managing Wildcare is akin to running a business – however unlike for-profit businesses, this business is run by volunteers outside their 'working' hours, as an adjunct to their own businesses or professions. It is a community service where the expectations

and demands of the community for a professional rescue and rehabilitation service are high.

In addition to the rescue and rehabilitation part of the business, there is the hotline to be managed, records to be kept, grants to be applied for and the education programme to be delivered. Wildcare's education programme is very well regarded, and to maintain the high standards the education material has to be constantly revised and updated, material printed, new courses planned, calendars prepared, registrations taken and venues hired.

The driving force behind all of this activity, the person who according to her partner spends every night working for Wildcare is, and has been for many years, Karen Scott. Her commitment to Wildcare and to achieving the best outcomes for our native wildlife is unconditional. So as we enter 2017 which unfortunately holds little prospect of being better for our wildlife and even less so for our members, who have to deal with them, I would like to express the appreciation of the members for the professionalism and hard work of all of those involved in the management of Wildcare and especially of Karen who has steered the ship through sometimes rocky waters with incredible skill, efficiency and vision.

Thank you.

Fungal Disease in Wildlife

By Robyn Stenner (BVSc, MANZVCS- Wildlife Medicine)

Fungal infection is a common secondary disease process which can develop during time in care. Occasionally an animal may present with primary fungal disease on admission, but this is still usually secondary to older compromise or injury.

Unlike bacterial disease, fungal growth is comparatively slow and the initial period of illness can often be quite subtle. Many fungal conditions can even remain asymptomatic until fairly advanced, at which point the animal will appear to go downhill very quickly.

The main fungal infections seen in wildlife during care are fungal diarrhoea/gastrointestinal infection (candida), and respiratory disease. I will discuss these further below, to help you better understand and recognize these conditions early in the disease process.

The main difference between fungal and bacterial diseases lies in the rapidity of replication of the organism, as well as the drugs available to treat the disease. Bacteria and fungi are vastly different organisms, which is why it is crucial to correctly identify the causative agent and start the correct treatment as soon as possible. Veterinary microscope assessments of samples, and/or laboratory culture are pivotal in isolating the organism, and aiding in the choice of an appropriate drug.

Bacteria are single celled, and possess no nucleus, they reproduce by binary fission - each cell replicates a copy of itself, and these two then each replicate again resulting in four bacterial cells and so on. This allows for extremely rapid colonization of tissue. This can often occur before the animal's immune system has time to recognize and fight the invading bacteria. Fungi in comparison are complex organisms, with a nucleus making them somewhat similar to animal cells. Their replication is a much slower process often involving many stages. They are thus generally much slower to invade, and often the immune system of the animal will clear the infection before it does any harm. However, in cases where the immune system is compromised, the fungal organisms will be able to build up enough to cause disease for the host.

For wildlife coming into care, stress, injury, or dehydration/starvation/hypothermia all play a role in the initial admission period. All of these factors can have an impact on the health of the immune system. It does not take long for bacterial or fungal opportunists to invade these patients. This is why it is so essential for our wildlife patients that we minimize ongoing stress once they are in care. Ensuring the correct habitat is provided, minimizing handling/unusual noises or smells, and attempting to provide them with an enclosure as close to the "natural habitat" (within reason) all help reduce stress. Achieving an excellent plane of nutrition will also support the immune system by ensuring that the body has all it needs to function effectively.

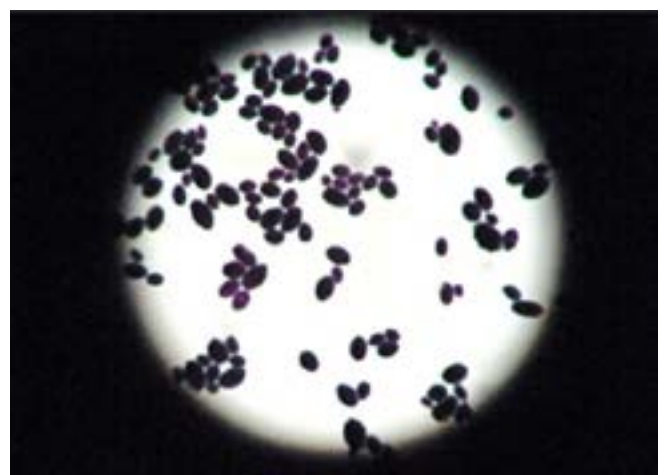
Hygiene is equally important in reducing the burden of microorganisms in the environment of the patient. You will never be able to create a sterile environment (and nor do we want to try and achieve this). However, reducing the load is critical- by cleaning out the cage regularly, and removing uneaten/old food daily. The higher the number of organisms in the environment,

the more likely disease will result if those organisms enter the body of an animal.

Regardless of how hard we try to achieve perfection, there will still be individuals who develop fungal disease in care. Some species are more susceptible to fungal infection, or less adaptable to the care environment, and thus have chronic stress. Orphaned marsupials which come in as pinkies will have very poor immune systems due to a reliance on immunity provided by the mother through milk. This transitions slowly over the pouch life of the joey to a reliance on their own immune system. However it is a gradual process, and the younger the orphan the less robust their own immune system will be. Within three to four weeks of orphaning, the immunoglobulins provided by the mother will have waned completely, and it is often at this point that we see orphaned marsupials developing infectious complications such as thrush.

Thrush is an extremely common cause of diarrhoea in marsupials in care. The causative agent is *Candida*, and can be found in very low numbers in the gastrointestinal tract of joeys without causing disease. With immune compromise (or heavy exposure) these numbers can multiply and cause small intestinal inflammation and reduction in the ability to absorb nutrients. Common causes of *Candida* infection include chronic stress (impacting on immune function), poor hygiene (heavy load of fungi in the environment), or antibiotic use (upsetting the normal bacterial balance). It is the most common cause of diarrhoea for marsupial joeys in care. This generally presents as a sweet smelling, yellowish mucoid diarrhoea. Most of the time these joeys are still bright and feeding well (at least initially). Heavy burden of infection or advanced disease can lead to deterioration (off food, dehydrating easily, more watery diarrhoea).

Candida can also be diagnosed in joeys with normal faeces but poor weight gains, reluctance to feed (gut pain), or restlessness. Secondary skin infection (orange crusting causing discomfort) around the mouth or cloaca can also be seen. It is always worth having a faecal assessment done looking for *Candida* in any orphan in care which is not gaining weight as well as it should, or just seems a bit "off".



Classic *Candida* organism appearance under microscope (stained)

Treatment is usually undertaken using nystatin (Nilstat®). This drug has good efficacy against thrush infections. One advantage of nystatin is that it is not absorbed into the blood stream. It remains in the gastrointestinal tract, and cannot move to other parts of the body resulting in unwanted side effects. In cases with severe burdens (such as the picture above), or animals which are clinically unwell (not feeding, severely dehydrated) then we might choose to use other fungal drugs which do have systemic absorption. Generally in these more unwell animals, there is a chance that the *Candida* has started to invade the wall of the small intestine. This makes it much more difficult to resolve the infection with nystatin alone.

It is very important regardless of the drug chosen by the vet to repeat faecal checks for thrush at least once per week while on treatment. It is crucial to monitor the faecal burden of thrush and to ensure it is decreasing, as well as to ensure we see at least two negative faecal checks before ceasing treatment. This minimizes the risk of recurrence after stopping the drug. In general, most joeys will respond well to treatment, and have little risk of complications.

The second major fungal infection which we deal with in wildlife is seen in birds. It usually presents as respiratory infection, caused by *Aspergillus* species of fungus. This is a ubiquitous fungal organism, present in the environment. Hygiene is critical in reducing infection by lowering the burden in aviaries (the higher the burden the more chance of disease overwhelming the immune system). You can never entirely sanitize an environment of this fungus, so minimizing stress is also very important. *Aspergillus* is especially common in raptors and water birds - swans and oceanic birds in particular. Ensuring these species have large well camouflaged aviaries in which to feel safe, will reduce the occurrence of disease. In some instances, prophylactic antifungals can be given daily to ensure that the fungal burden does not cause any problems. The main disease process seen in these species is respiratory disease. Due to the complicated lung and airsac anatomy of birds, it is possible for fungal spores to lodge in the lungs, trachea, or the air sacs and start to multiply. *Aspergillus* is aerobic (favouring high oxygen environments), which is why the airways are particularly susceptible. Disease can also be seen in the gastrointestinal tract.

Many cases presenting with *aspergillosis* will have had a period of weeks where they have been a little quiet, inappetent or sluggish, followed by a rapid deterioration with difficulty breathing, reluctance to move much, and open mouth breathing once the infection is terminal.

Unfortunately once the lesions become visible as above, the prognosis is very poor. It is impossible for the drugs to penetrate these large fungal masses. Prevention is much better than attempting to cure this disease. Generally for any of the species prone to this disease (swans, oceanic birds, raptors), a full health check (assessment under anaesthetic, radiographs, bloods) is advised for patients anticipated to be in care more than five days. This will give some idea of the health and immune function of the bird on admission. The decision may then be made to start prophylactic itraconazole to reduce the chance of disease. If this is not neces-

sary, then close monitoring, excellent hygiene, and minimizing stress will go a long way towards reduction of disease incidence. If veterinary assessment during care does diagnose *aspergillus* infection, early treatment with high doses of itraconazole or other antifungals can cure this disease.

Fungal disease can be a devastating infection for wildlife in care, especially birds. The majority of fungal infections in wildlife are as a result of a lowered immune system (often stress related), and a heavy environmental contamination with the fungal spores. Preventing infection by reducing these aspects is far better than treating the infection once advanced. The main take home message is to be vigilant with those species susceptible to infection, and always have a veterinary assessment sooner rather than later. It is better safe than sorry, and the earlier treatment is begun the better the chance of success and the shorter the treatment course will need to be.



Aspergillus granulomas in airsacs (and lungs) of a swan. This bird was quiet in care for the week leading up to presentation, but showed no respiratory change until the last couple of days before veterinary assessment. Photo: © Robyn Stenner.



Our Endangered Species

By Jasmine Rasmussen

Due to constant human developments, our native animals are being put under more and more pressure. It is becoming harder for them to survive and for their population to grow, when their habitats are being destroyed. Other threats, such as domestic animal attacks, road traumas, spreading diseases and pest control poisons are also reasons why so many species are becoming vulnerable. These threatened animals are categorised to include conservation dependent animals, vulnerable, endangered, critically endangered and extinct species (Australian Department of Environment and Energy). Unfortunately, so many Australian animals fall into these categories. It is up to you and me, the future generations of our nation to change this, and prevent so many beloved animals from disappearing forever.

If you go to <http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publicthreatenedlist.pl> you will be able to find a full list of threatened Australian animals, and your findings will be shocking. Iconic and much loved animals such as the koala, the spotted-tailed quoll and many species of bandicoot are ENDANGERED!

But, the most important question is, why are these animals in danger and how can we stop this? We cannot wait until it is too late. As members of Wildcare, it is our duty to speak for the voiceless animals under threat every day. Take every opportunity not only to educate yourself, but raise awareness in the people around you.

Monthly Mission

Choose one animal that is a threatened species and do a research project on it! Find out more about their habitat, diet, behaviour and the reason for the population decline :) :)



Remember:

We all have a duty to be 'fauna fighters' and there are so many ways we kids can do that! If you have any questions, feel free to contact me, Jas Rasmussen at jasmussen@mybce.catholic.edu.au

Extinct:	frogs (4) birds (22) mammals (27) other animals (1)
Extinct in the wild:	fishes (1)
Critically Endangered:	fishes (8) frogs (5) reptiles (10) birds (16) mammals (5) other animals (27)
Endangered:	fishes (16) frogs (14) reptiles (18) birds (50) mammals (37) other animals (22)

Vulnerable:	fishes (24) frogs (10) reptiles (33) birds (67) mammals (66) other animals (11)
Conservation dependent:	fishes (7)
Total:	Fauna (501)

Colouring in competition

By Jasmine Rasmussen

Colour in the echidna and send a copy to jrasmussen@mybce.catholic.edu.au. The winner will be announced in the next newsletter!!!



Credit: shutterstock.com



Compassionate Kids in action

By Jasmine Rasmussen



This year we have had so many young Fauna Fighters taking action to make a difference for our Australian native animals.

We had some amazing possum and bird boxes made by the Assisi Catholic College Students. These help our carers to house animals while they are in rehabilitation, and upon release. These boxes are also great to put in your backyard to provide a home for some Australian natives who may be living in the wild near you.

Some of our Wildcare Fauna Fighters got to talk to the joey scouts from Burleigh Heads and Upper Coomera. It was a night full of fun, interactive games and lots of learning, all the while spreading a love for conserving our native wildlife. The Scouts presented Wildcare with some possum dreys, which, much like the boxes, provide homes for our wildlife. We use these dreys to house ring-tail possums, who build their own dreys, nest-like structures, to live in when out in the wild.

It was so wonderful to have the opportunity to talk with the joey scouts, and thank them for their support of our junior Fauna Fighters.

We have also been able to get our message out across Australia, with one of our Fauna Fighters making a difference as far away as Darwin, Northern Territory. Tahlee, who is 11 years old, has been writing to Wildcare to learn about our wildlife, and making donations to Wildcare for a couple of years. We were lucky enough to meet her and her younger sister Millie, when they were down on the Gold Coast for a holiday last Christmas. It is so amazing to have kids, like Tahlee and Millie, who care about our wildlife and are willing to make a difference. We are all in this together, with the same goals and passions and we can inspire each other to make a change.

It is always inspiring to meet other Fauna Fighters and see the wonderful work they are doing for animals. We would like to hear from you, to hear about how you made a change last year! You could write a letter to Wildcare, just like Tahlee did, or email us at jrasmussen@mybce.catholic.edu.au It would be awesome to see how other Fauna Fighters are working to save our wildlife. Also we are happy to answer any questions you have about wildlife or Wildcare.

Make sure to keep fighting for our fauna in 2017!

Grants

As a non-profit organization, we rely heavily on the generous support of the community as well as the funding opportunities provided by local councils, private businesses and corporations. Wildcare kindly acknowledges the following councils, businesses and individuals who have provided essential support for our volunteer work.



Dedicated to a better Brisbane

BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL - Wildcare successfully obtained a grant for \$3,400 from the Brisbane Council under The Lord Mayor's Community Sustainability and Environmental Grants Program 2015-2016 – Native Wildlife Carers Grant. These funds are being used to deliver three specialised training workshops in Brisbane and to offset some the costs associated with the printing of training manuals.



Gambling
Community Benefit Fund
Queensland Government

COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND – Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation - Our thanks to the Queensland Government's grant for \$14,780 which is being used to purchase nine new intensive care units and ten aviaries.



NOOSA CITY COUNCIL - Funding received of \$4,778 under the Noosa Council's Community Grants Program to help cover consumables associated with attending trauma calls in the Noosa area as well as construction of a mobile release aviary.



AURIZON COMMUNITY GIVING FUND - Funding received of \$3,890 to fund the purchase of a trailer and construction of a mobile release aviary to be used for all species of wildlife to enable successful release back to their natural habitat.



SUEZ - Our application for funding for a mobile release aviary, to the value of \$3,830, was successful under Suez's Community Grants program.



GOLD COAST AIRPORT - Funding was received through the Gold Coast Airport's Community Benefit Fund to enable us to re-print our series of wildlife brochures for distribution to the public, veterinarians and community groups.



CITY OF GOLD COAST - Funding was received from the City of Gold Coast under their Community Grants Program to support Wildcare's work with wildlife rescue and rehabilitation in the Gold Coast region.

Support Wildcare's Members & Supporters



Our sincerest thanks to Greenleaf Images for the use of several of their beautiful photographs in our promotional material. The quality of the material would not be what it is, without the use of these professional images.



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Thank you!



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TO THE FOLLOWING VETS FOR THEIR DEDICATION AND TREATMENT OF OUR WILDLIFE

ALBERT STREET VET CLINIC
 Beaudesert 5541 1233

ANIMAL EMERGENCY CENTRE
 St Lucia 3365 2110

ANIMAL EMERGENCY SERVICE
 Carrara 5559 1599
 Underwood 3841 7011

AUSTRALIA ZOO WILDLIFE HOSPITAL
 Beerwah 5436 2097

CURRUMBIN VALLEY VET SERVICES
PETER WILSON
 Currumbin 5533 0381

CURRUMBIN WILDLIFE HOSPITAL
 Currumbin 5534 0813

DR. BRIAN PERRERS
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 Helensvale 5573 3355
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 Nerang 5596 4899
 Oxenford 5573 2670
 Robina 5593 0300
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GYMPIE & DISTRICT VETERINARY SERVICES
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 Tin Can Bay 5486 4666

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 Kenilworth 5472 3085

MANLY ROAD VET HOSPITAL
 Manly 3396 9733

MT. TAMBORINE VET SURGERY
 5545 2422

NOOSA VETERINARY SURGERY
 Tewantin 5449 7522

TOOWONG FAMILY VET
 Toowong 3613 9644

TUGUN VETERINARY SURGERY
 Tugun 5534 1928

VETCALL
 Burleigh 5593 5557
 Mudgeeraba 5530 2204

WEST CHERMSIDE VET CLINIC
 Stafford Heights 3359 0777

Note: UQ Small Animal Clinic St. Lucia has now moved to the UQ Gatton Campus.