


# WILDNEWS

Autumn 2012 Issue 63



**Trauma Carers**  
What are they?  
What do they do?

Loving our  
Local Native  
Plants

**Poisoning in a  
Common Brushtail  
Possum**

Hands-on Reptile  
Workshop a Treat!



# *President's Report.*

*Karen Scott*

I HOPE THAT THE NEW YEAR HAS BEEN KIND TO EVERYONE. THANKFULLY THE ANIMALS ARE SLOWING DOWN IN THEIR BREEDING AND WE HAVE CERTAINLY SEEN A REPRIEVE IN THE NUMBER OF INCOMING CALLS TO OUR EMERGENCY HOTLINE.

We are currently facing an 'end of an era' with the imminent closure of the Wildcare Office. Many thanks to those members who expressed a desire to help in the Wildcare Office, but for whom work and family commitments do not allow them the time to do so. Many members are faced with the reality that paid employment and family commitments take precedent over volunteering on a regular basis in the Wildcare Office. We have been so blessed over the past ten years to have had two wonderful volunteers in Roy Webster and Trish Hales who have helped shape Wildcare into the organisation that it now is. I am sure that I am not the only one who will miss visiting the Wildcare Office and its volunteers. Thank you to all of the Wildcare members who have volunteered time in the Office, over the past ten years.

Without the Wildcare Office, there will be some changes within Wildcare which you will read about in this edition. Please note these changes. The Wildcare Management Committee is of course

committed to ensuring that there is minimum inconvenience or disruption to Wildcare members, however, as most of the Committee members work full-time, some leeway with responding to enquiries would be appreciated.

Thank you to those members who have answered our call for more volunteers on the Wildcare emergency hotline. This service is essential to Wildcare's aims and objectives in helping our local wildlife. Our telephone volunteers are truly a special group of people and without them, Wildcare would surely not exist.



# 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.

Wildcare Australia, Inc.  
PO Box 2379 Nerang Mail Centre, Qld 4211

Cover photo: Kookaburra courtesy of A. BIRD

## 24 X 7 Emergency Phone Service

(07) 5527 2444

[www.wildcare.org.au](http://www.wildcare.org.au)

### Email

enquiries@wildcare.org.au  
shop@wildcare.org.au  
education@wildcare.org.au  
news@wildcare.org.au  
records@wildcare.org.au

### The Main Committee

President - Karen Scott  
Vice-President - Gail Gipp  
Secretary - Tracy Paroz  
Treasurer - Ashleigh Paroz  
Committee Members - Natasha Lewis-Millar and Trish Hales

Newsletter Team - Eleanor Hanger, Karen Scott, Renée Rivard, Deb Bianchetto

Newsletter submissions can be sent to [news@wildcare.org.au](mailto:news@wildcare.org.au)



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PHOTO // D TURNBULL

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



# *A Warm Welcome to Our New Members*

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*Wildcare Australia welcomed the following new members in January, February & March 2012*

Clare Smith; Elizabeth Marwood; Amy Brehmer; Sarah Ingram; Krystal Donnelly; Kerry Johnston; Shane Rider; Debbie Lubke; Debbie Overell & Eric Black; Vicky Kilty; Sylvia Buch; Alan & Jan Priest; Wendy Murray; Linda Furlong; Alecia de Piazza; Claire McCarthy; Kathleen Hardie; Amy PONTon; Lindy Thomas; Tenielle Matherson; Alice Roser; Lauren Clark; Sarah Mulhall; Ryan Poole; Brett Gadd; Alyse Milton; Valmai & Robert Raper; Alana Kirchhoff; Cassandra Kirby; Danielle Hastie; Brent Nolan; Sara Luey & Scott Wilson; Leigh-Ann Ghan; Gina Butcher; Anita & Aston Byquar; Christine & Wolfgang Waerner; Krystal Tuovinen; Ray Revill; Alysha Burton; Susan Napper; Wayne & Kathy Lather; Matt Walker; Kayla Howarth; Maxine Smith; Euan Edwards; Annette Maclean; Lynn & Jason Moye; Heather McMurray & Karl Gallant; Clinton Grosvenor; Melissa McLuskie; Kieren & Joely Smith; Yvonne & Hamish Morrin; Anne & Douglas Raymond; Elisa Genn; Andrew Wallace-Mitchell; Jodie Woods; Toni West; Mark & Maria Robson Kristen Mitchell; Kayla, Simon & Tammy Jackson; Kieran Gailer & Rosario Castellanes Perez; Estelle Johnsen; Mariko Mukubo; Naomi Cleminson; Fleur Trezise; Megan Benham; Carolynn Taylor; Kara Daniell; Gary Young; Natalie Hill; Judy Swanton.

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.

## *Wildcare Opportunities*

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### **Telephone Volunteers Needed**

For a few hours a month you can make an enormous difference to the lives of injured and orphaned animals. A confident and friendly voice on the end of the phone can make a huge difference to a person desperate to get help for a suffering animal, but not knowing what to do or where to turn. Please consider joining our team of Telephone Volunteers.

Call [hotline@wildcare.org.au](mailto:hotline@wildcare.org.au) to register your interest.

### **Newsletter Submissions**

We are always looking for articles of an educational nature as well as news, upcoming events, stories and other items of interest for Wildnews. Pictures, preferably >1MB in size, are also needed and must be sent as a separate file attachment (please do not insert pictures into MS Word or other documents). We encourage new members to share stories of their first rescue or rehab! Stories should be about 800 to 1000 words. The submissions must be original or, if not, must be correctly accredited. Submissions may be emailed to [news@wildcare.org.au](mailto:news@wildcare.org.au)

# Important

## Upcoming Changes to the Wildcare Office and Contact Numbers

With the imminent closure of the Wildcare Office, members need to note the following changes, please.

### WORKSHOP BOOKINGS AND TRAINING ENQUIRIES

Please direct ALL workshop registrations by email to [cathy@wildcare.org.au](mailto:cathy@wildcare.org.au).

Workshop registrations **cannot** be made by telephoning the Wildcare emergency number – the volunteer telephone operators **do not** have access to the training database and they are busy dealing with rescue/emergency calls. It is preferable that registrations are made by email as above. Otherwise, workshop bookings can be made by telephone to Cathy on 5493 0162 (after hours only please).

### MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES

All membership enquiries should be made to the Wildcare Secretary by email to [secretary@wildcare.org.au](mailto:secretary@wildcare.org.au).

Enquiries about membership status and membership kits cannot be answered by the volunteer telephone operators. Please direct telephone enquiries to Tracy on **0418 366 087** or Karen on **0400 165462**.

### WILDCARE SHOP ORDERS

Wildcare will still be able to accept and organise Shop orders for **bulk orders only**. We can generally get bulk orders delivered to you directly for a nominal courier fee (around \$6) to most SEQ metropolitan areas).

Orders and enquiries for Shop items can be made by email to [shop@wildcare.org.au](mailto:shop@wildcare.org.au)

### OTHER GENERAL ENQUIRIES

For all other general enquiries, please contact the appropriate Management Committee member. Telephone enquiries will not be able to be dealt with by the volunteer telephone operators as they do not have access to the database and will be dealing with rescue and emergency calls.

Please bear in mind that most Committee members work full time so if they are unable to take your call, please leave a detailed message and they will get back to you as soon as they can.

**For non-urgent enquiries, it is preferable to use email. Email addresses are listed on the Contact List.**

*"I arise in the morning torn between a desire to improve the world and a desire to enjoy the world. This makes it hard to plan the day."*

E.B.WHITE

# For your Diary

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- **MILLION PAWS WALK** - Gold Coast - 20th May 2012
- **LEAF** - Griffith University Campus @Logan - 3rd June 2012 (A fun day focusing on the Environment)
- **GREEN WEEK** - Gold Coast - 2nd – 10th June (with Wildlife Expo, stalls and speakers on the 10th June)
- **AUSTRALIAN WILDLIFE REHABILITATION CONFERENCE** - Townsville - 16th – 20th July - <http://www.2012awrc.org.au/>



# Calling all Members

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CALLING ALL MEMBERS, RESCUERS & REHABILITATORS INTRODUCING WILDCARE'S VERY OWN



## WILDLIFE CALENDAR PHOTO COMPETITION

Wildcare is looking to produce its very own wildlife calendar for 2013.

Who else would be better to provide all the wonderful shots of our Australian native wildlife than our amazing rescuers and rehabilitators!

The calendar will include great pictures and educational excerpts and will be sold to raise much needed funds for our organization.

Keep your eyes keenly peeled for the upcoming email which will include all details and requirements. In the interim polish off those lenses, shine up those LCD's and get snapping, shooting & recording!

## *Can you speak and/or make an exhibition of yourself?* \_\_\_\_\_

*Penelope Hacker*

IT IS ALMOST A YEAR SINCE I PUT UP MY HAND TO VOLUNTEER FOR A JOB (IT WASN'T THIS ONE!) AND ENDED UP AS COMMUNITY EVENTS COORDINATOR.

Never even scratch your nose in an AGM... Still, though I had a hard act to follow after Laura Reeder, it has been interesting and rewarding, though like a good general, I seem to have been leading from the rear via email, as there is no one to look after my joeys when I am away all day.

Many events have been on the Gold Coast, miles from me, so those tireless Wildcarers, who seem to do everything (do they ever sleep or eat?) like Roy and Karen, have shown the Wildcare flag with other willing members, at the Wildlife Careers Day at Currumbin and the Wildlife Expo at Beaudesert, for example.

The two events I have attended were in the Brisbane area: the Samford Show in July last year, and, more recently, White's Hill State College Fair on 17th March. Sadly, the Saturday at Samford was very wet, so there were fewer people than usual, but that didn't dampen the enthusiasm of our group, Naomi, Anika, Andrea and Maree. The next day was far brighter and we had many locals interested in what we do. That is the main thing – getting the word out as to what to do when an animal in distress is found. And we made enough money to more than cover the costs of attending!

White's Hill was only an afternoon, but we had Naomi again, Christine, our efficient telephone "rosterer" and Belinda, who came all the way from the coast and had set up before we arrived! Sarah came up from the coast too, but since we were quiet at the time, and she had her kids, we let them go to enjoy the fun. Once again, it was good to get the word out, and we made nearly \$300 in one afternoon, and the rain held off until the end.

However we are desperate for extra speakers for events, mainly on the Gold Coast, for groups like scouts/guides, retirement villages and various clubs such as Probus. Eleanor, Sally and Ricky have done a great job, but we are getting more requests than they can fill. And, before you panic and say "No!!" both Karen and Eleanor have wonderful PowerPoint presentations which they are happy for speakers to use as a starting point for their talks.

Please email me ([talks@wildcare.org](mailto:talks@wildcare.org)) if you are willing to be a speaker, letting me know the area you could cover, and times you are available, and watch for emails from Karen to join in displays.



Christine, Belinda and Naomi at White's Hill



Andrea and Maree at Samford

PHOTO // P HACKER



## *Nitro the Brushie That Could!*

*Maree Green*

It was a late Thursday afternoon and I was about to serve tea, when I received a phone call from one of the ladies, who is with Wildcare. She wanted some advice for a MOP (member of public) who had a possum, which her cat had brought in about a week previously.

Instead of contacting someone for help immediately, the person and her partner had decided that they would keep the possum and see what happened.

The reason the MOP came to the Wildcare volunteer at her work was because the "cute" phase had now run its course and she didn't want the possum anymore.

Now this was one of my first phone calls in the Placement Coordinator role, so of course I contacted my mentor straight away, to see how I should handle it. The advice was most useful.

I asked the Wildcare volunteer to go and collect the baby possum and as soon as she had it in her hands, to explain in a friendly and rational way, the importance, in such cases, of contacting someone immediately for help, or of taking it to a veterinarian.

MOP told us that she had been feeding Nitro, as he was called, three times a day on baby formula and pawpaw.

When our carer checked Nitro over, she found that he was very dehydrated, so before she brought him to me, she took him to a 24/7 vet (BVSC at Albany creek), so he could be given subcutaneous fluids.

Finally the carer arrived at my house with a very underweight, starving possum who hadn't been to the toilet for a week. So the first thing I did was toilet him, and the look I got was one of relief.

We then weighed and checked Nitro over and found the start of a cyst on the back of his neck, where the cat had punctured the skin. He weighed about 240g when he should have been at least 300g.

The next day we headed off to our vet. She gave him a local anaesthetic where the abscess was, as it had grown bigger overnight. Once the local had taken, she clipped around the abscess, and with a scalpel made two incisions, one at each end of the abscess, and started to drain it. What came out would have filled at least one of those kidney dishes.

Nitro required antibiotics for five days, and we had to keep flushing out the abscess, for at least six days, which, I can now say, was hard, because once Nitro saw what was going to happen he fought me in every way.

Now this is when we joined him up with one of our other brushtail possums, Apple (who we'll just say had a weird personality). They both grew and made all the milestones that were needed. Nitro's inherited behaviour kicked in when he was about 400g. It took Apple a little longer.

These two have now been released at Ocean View in a lovely bushland area.

Goodbye Nitro! You came in a bad case and we and the vet thought you wouldn't make it, but you defied the odds, are now released and enjoying life. Love you, Nitro!



PHOTO // M GREEN



# Trauma Carers

## *What are they? What do they do?*

*Karen Scott*

Queensland is one of the very few States in Australia that have provision for non-veterinary staff to be licensed to hold and use veterinary drugs for sedating and euthanasing wildlife.

The **Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996** make specific provision in their Policy "The Issue of Approvals for Veterinary Purposes" for people in various positions who have a genuine need to hold such drugs. These positions include veterinary nurses, animal control officers, animal ambulance drivers, stock inspectors, rangers and charitable organisations.

Wildcare was the first wildlife care group in Queensland that successfully obtained approval for several experienced wildlife carers to hold sodium pentobarbitone (Lethabarb) for the purposes of euthanasing wildlife. Several years later, Queensland Health agreed to extend that approval to allow those carers to hold drugs to sedate/anaesthetise wildlife for the purpose of euthanasing them. This was a tremendous benefit to not only our wildlife carers (as their safety was hugely increased) but also to the animal welfare of the wildlife that were being euthanased.

Wildcare has now held these Approvals from Queensland Health for nearly 15 years and as a result of the success within our organisation, other wildlife care groups in Queensland have been able to apply for and obtain Approvals from Queensland Health in their region.

Wildcare has ten active Trauma Carers throughout South-east Queensland. We are now able to adequately cover regions in the Gold Coast, Logan, Scenic Rim, West Brisbane, Ipswich, Moreton Bay and Sunshine Coast regions. We also currently have one more being approved for the Redlands region.

The core function of Trauma Carers is to attend to critically injured wildlife that are not able to be safely handled and transported by members of the public or inexperienced rescuers. Trauma Carers have been trained to assess the animals' injuries, sedate them if required, and if necessary, euthanase them quickly and humanely to prevent further suffering.

An example of some of the calls that our Trauma Carers typically respond to include:

- Adult macropods hit by cars (these need to be sedated and either transported to a vet or euthanased on-site).
- Macropods that are displaced and need to be captured and translocated to a safer location
- Animals entangled, for example in fencing or netting, where sedation is required to safely remove the animal
- Euthanasia of Category 3 bats
- Other wildlife with life-threatening injuries, where no vet is nearby to euthanase the animal

It is never a pleasant experience to respond to these types of calls as they do not often end well. Knowing however how wildlife carers in other States are forced to deal with wildlife in these situations, we feel that it is a tremendous privilege that Queensland Health has allowed wildlife carers to hold these Approvals. Although, it is not an easy job (both physically and emotionally) it is one that we are honoured to be able to do. To be able to humanely end the suffering of an animal is one of the most important aspects of being a wildlife carer.

For every Wildcare Trauma Carer, there is also a small team of other members who offer a tremendous amount of support. The partners of our Trauma Carers are often called upon to attend and assist with these rescues – many times at 2am. We also have a small group of experienced members who also assist Trauma Carers at these rescues. The assistance and support from our partners and other Wildcare rescuers is very much appreciated.

We also have a number of local veterinarians who offer support and guidance to our Trauma Carers. Trauma Carers are required to consult with a veterinarian before sedating and/or euthanasing wildlife and this places a tremendous burden on the veterinarians to be available to take these calls. The guidance that they provide is invaluable and we thank them for their ongoing support and trust in our Trauma Carers.

If you find yourself in a situation where you need to contact a Wildcare Trauma Carer, please contact the Wildcare hotline on **07 5527 2444** and they can put you in touch with your closest Trauma Carer.

# Coordinator Reports

## Emergency Telephone Report

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THIS LAST QUARTER HAS BEEN QUITE TOUGH ON THE EMERGENCY PHONE LINE AND ITS OPERATORS. With fewer volunteers signing up to take on shifts and others needing a break, the pressure has landed on such tireless phone volunteers as Deb Flack, Penelope Hacker and the office volunteers to hold the fort as best they can. Sadly, diverting it to the answering machine is also becoming necessary more often, resulting in delays in wildlife getting the assistance they need.

Two phone training sessions were held in March, so hopefully we have created some positive momentum. Welcome to our new volunteer phone operators Theo, Joy, Tammy, Sharon, Ceris, Ros and Rod and thank you for taking on shifts. I look forward to adding more new faces to the roster in the coming months.

Much gratitude and thanks to the small group of members who continue to help with the phones when they can. It is truly appreciated.

While the roster is beginning to look healthier than late last year, **we still require assistance in order for the hotline to return to a 24 hour emergency line.** PLEASE consider helping us with the phones, it makes a huge difference to the animals out there in need, and can be done from the comfort of your own home, in hours that suit.

If you have any questions, feedback or comments, please contact Christine on [hotline@wild-care.org.au](mailto:hotline@wild-care.org.au) or 0401 786 677 ( evenings / weekends).

Christine Johnes

## Birds

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### SUNSHINE COAST

FINALLY THE BIRDS APPEAR TO HAVE GIVEN UP THEIR NESTING AMBITIONS FOR THE YEAR. They have certainly been busy making up for the years when food and water was scarce. Both my butcher birds and magpies have had more than one sitting and the koels have been coming in on a very regular basis.

About the only birds that are still nesting are the ducks. They have not slowed down much at all. I am hoping this last batch will be the end of their breeding season also.

A couple of whistling ducks came into care this year. This was a new species for me, although I know a flock have taken over a dam towards Yandina. This has been the first time they needed care. The whistling ducks have been missing from the coast for many years and it is nice to think that they are re-populating this area. If history is to be believed they, along with the Magpie Geese, were forced into extinction locally, as they were used as a food source by the early settlers.

Ailsa Watson

# Coordinator Reports continued...

## Possums

### GOLD COAST

POSSUM CARERS HAVE BEEN WELL CATERED FOR IN THE LAST COUPLE OF MONTHS, WITH WORKSHOPS ON THE GOLD COAST, IN BRISBANE AND AT BEERWAH. Unfortunately some were very poorly attended, which is a pity, as there is always new and updated information being provided and there are new ideas being exchanged, so we would encourage not only possum carers but also rescuers and telephone personnel to avail themselves of the opportunity to learn more about the nine species of possums we are fortunate to have in South-east Queensland.

At present the nine species are covered in two workshops, one dealing with the gliding possums and the second dealing with the non –gliding ones. As well as management and care these workshops cover classification, identification and biology as the more knowledge one has, the better able one is, to prepare the orphaned young not just to survive but to be a healthy breeding member of its species.

In order to relieve the burden on our possum coordinators, both those who mentor and those who organize the placements, we will be announcing some new appointments and changes in the near future. This will also mean that carers have access to a few more people for advice.

In the interests of the animals, to relieve stress and expedite placements, it is extremely important that you notify your coordinators, of your availability to take animals and of the animals you have in care, so that the correct decisions can be made. This goes some way to preventing animals being moved unnecessarily from carer to carer, or being transported long distances when there is a carer available closer to hand.

The Placement Coordinators have the responsibility for placing animals with carers. Please assist them in their job by keeping in touch by phone or email.

The Possum Coordinators, who mentor and give advice, hold the position, because of their expertise in the field and their experience with large numbers of animals. They have a proven track record and a firm commitment to ensuring that animals receive the highest quality of care.

These are the people to whom you should go for advice and assistance. If they do not have the answers, they will make every effort to find them, or will be able direct you to someone who has.

At a recent workshop given by Dr Anne Fowler, the nutritional values of Divetalact, a popular milk replacement product, were discussed. Some research has indicated that this milk product requires the addition of Wombaroo Impact and also Wombaroo High Protein Supplement to achieve the necessary nutritional values for good growth and development in furred joeys.

It is recommended that for every 1 scoop of Divetalact milk powder mixed with 40 mL warm pre-boiled water, a level spoon (provided with the product) of Impact and 2.5g Wombaroo High Protein Supplement is added. (For gliders the ratio is 1:50mL + Impact + HPS) If you have any questions about this, please contact one of the coordinators.

Eleanor Hanger



PHOTO // K SCOTT



## *Coordinator Reports continued...*

### *Some like it Tight*

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WE ALL HAVE DIFFERENT TASTES WHEN IT COMES TO HOMES.

Some like twiggy, country-style arrangements, others like hollows lined with leaves and a feather or two. This pair of juvenile Squirrel Gliders chose the smallest hollow from the range on offer and squeezed in, in such a way that the carer was concerned they may have trouble getting out: however exiting proved no problem at all. Does it indicate that if given a choice of artificial home, our animals in care prefer a more confined space, to a roomy mansion? Are you giving them a choice?

Eleanor Hanger

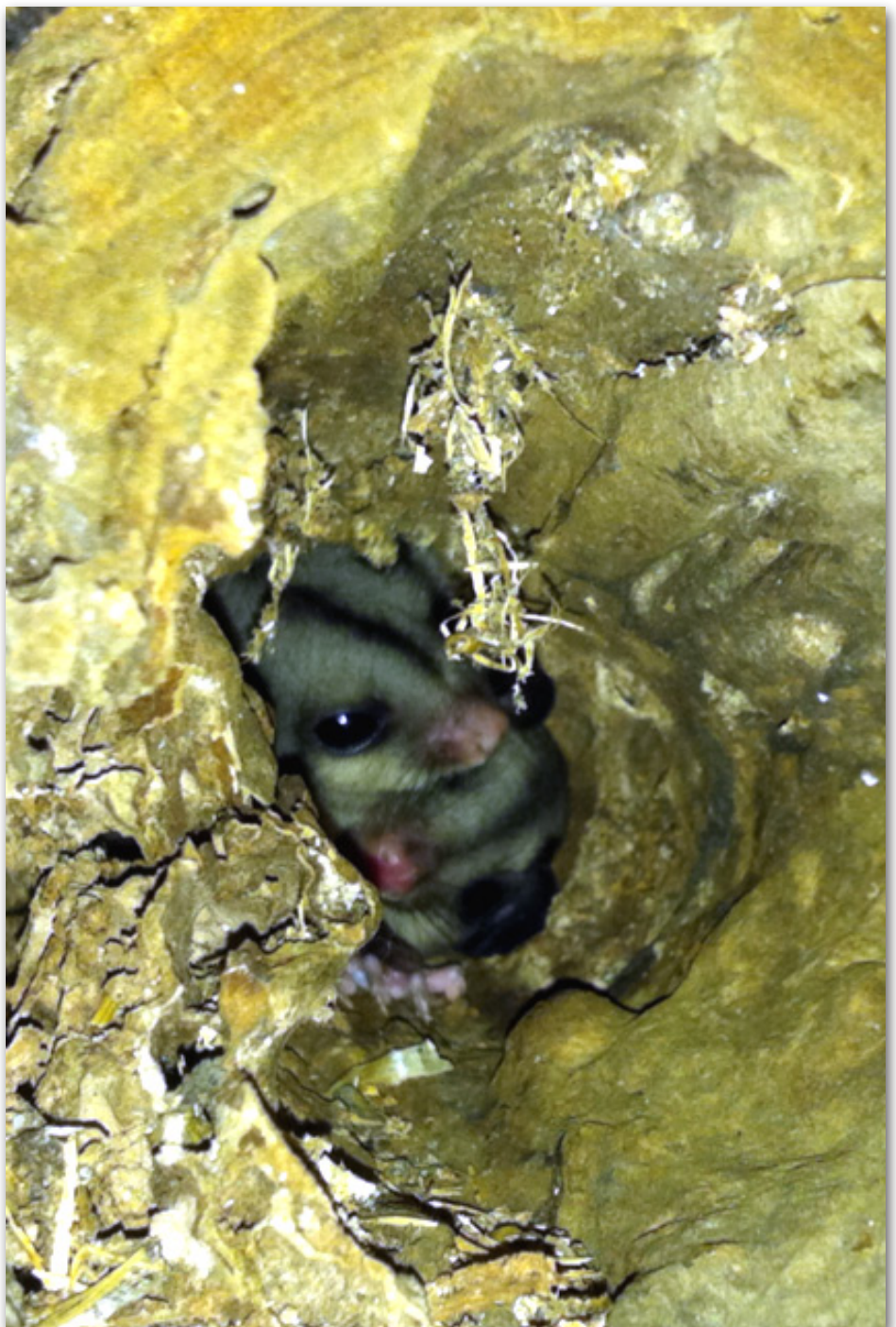


PHOTO // N RASMUSSEN

## *Coordinator Reports continued...*

### *Reptiles*

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IT HAS BEEN A VERY BUSY COUPLE OF MONTHS AGAIN ON THE REPTILE FRONT, WITH MOSTLY SNAKES GETTING INTO TROUBLE.

We've had a heap of new road traumas (mostly head strikes) and entanglements with household netting around gardens the primary culprit. We're pleased to report that most have been lucky enough to survive (although a few will be in long-term care – see Parlay's story below).

Lizards have been behaving this month and we have very few lizards or skinks in care (I'm not sure I should have pointed that out – they may be listening and realize there are a few warm, dry beds here at the moment!). However, the Lace Monitors have not been so lucky. We recently attended a rescue of a very large male monitor, who had unfortunately climbed a 6-foot fence into a yard with two Staffordshire Bull Terriers. This is the legacy of new estates and habitat destruction, as this property was on the border of a brand new estate.

The monitor put up a colossal battle (I've never seen so much blood sprayed over the outdoor furniture, glass door and pavers) and both dogs needed emergency veterinary treatment – one had his ear ripped completely off and the other required about 30-odd stitches (the sprayed blood was all from the dogs). This highlights the nature of encounters with this animal and is disappointing, as both dogs were contained in their yard with the home owner (and children) extremely distressed at the events that ensued. The most unfortunate part of the story though is the fact that despite emergency trauma care, the monitor died from his bite injuries overnight.

A second monitor was rescued from a property past Rathdowny after falling five meters from a gum tree and landing in some vines in a smaller tree. This guy was also very large and the degree of difficulty for rescue was increased significantly by the fact that he was trapped two meters off the ground and was swinging in the breeze. I should also point out, just for something different, it was pelting with rain.

I was told he was about a meter in length from nose to tail and luckily, as I never believe what I am told, took large and small transport containers. On arrival, I found that the property

owner had estimated his tail to back leg length. His back legs were so large, she thought it was his head and body which were much further up into the vines out of clear view. After swearing incessantly at myself for answering the phone,

I worked out a plan of action. Logically, the safest thing to do was get back in the car and go home for a cuppa and breakfast, but instead, I climbed up a ladder and into the vines to secure the monitor (after explaining exactly what

I was going to do and how the terrified elderly property owner could help). To give her credit, she did exactly what I asked, when I asked and he was contained within about five minutes. To give the monitor credit, he was probably too exhausted to give me much grief and came quietly. He was taken to Currumbin Wildlife Hospital, where a full workup identified old spinal trauma. After a brief period of rest and observation, he was released back to his rescue site.

A new initiative recently started has been the development and implementation of new 'hands on' workshops to assist rescuers and carers in the identification and handling of reptiles in the field. These sessions have been very well received and we will be continuing these in the future. The sessions are attended by Martin Fingland, a well-known reptile and wildlife owner and public presenter. Martin's expertise with all manner of reptiles (and other wildlife) is a valuable addition to our training sessions, where the theory can be put into practice. Contact Wildcare Education if you want further information about these sessions.

**A note to all reptile carers: please remember to submit your monthly updated records to the record keeper.**

Annette Bird



# Coordinator Reports continued...

## Reptiles

### PARLAY'S STORY

Parlay is an adult Coastal Carpet Python who came into care after being found on Stradbroke Island covered in ticks. When I say covered, I mean covered with his head almost unrecognizable as a snake. Staff at Currumbin Wildlife Hospital (CWH) picked over 1000 ticks off him under general anaesthesia.

He came into care receiving both antibiotic and pain relieving injections with a head three times the size of normal (and I'm sure a massive headache). The question was always in the back of our minds as to why he would have been on the ground, or so immobile that he couldn't rid himself of the ticks? A few days later we took him back as we were not happy that his head swelling was subsiding as it should : his left eye appeared sunken but was massively swollen around the top of the orbit. Question answered: X-Rays confirmed that he had a skull fractured in three places (including one over his left eye). This highlights the point that we should always be on the lookout for any abnormality – the ticks were an unfortunate red herring – his real issue was probably road trauma.

Luckily, we hadn't attempted to feed him and his treatment for his skull fractures is the same as he was already receiving. In the last week, we have picked another 100-200 ticks off Parlay (these ticks were too small to be seen initially). Parlay will be in care for a long time as his bloods are also terrible (from blood loss through both trauma and parasites). He will also require very small and frequent feeds for a while to allow his head to heal.



### JADE'S STORY

Jade is the most delightful Green Tree Frog, who was found by the side of the very busy Ferry Road in Southport with a nasty injury on her back leg. She is receiving twice daily Silvazine cream to her wound and as much food as a frog can eat (and trust me, they eat a lot!). She spends her day hiding in her hide but watch out, going on dark, she's out prowling her enclosure hunting those pesky crickets. She loves to be sprayed with water and it is important to point out that it must be tank water – like canaries in the mines, frogs are one of nature's litmus tests – they are very sensitive to chemicals as they absorb everything through their skin. Thus, they are ALWAYS handled with powder-free gloves and only clean tank water is used on them and their enclosure.

Annette Bird





## Coordinator Reports continued...

### Macropods

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THANKFULLY THE RATE OF ORPHANED JOEYS COMING INTO CARE HAS SLOWED DURING THE PAST FEW MONTHS.

We are unfortunately though coming into what is commonly referred to as 'trauma season'. As the days get shorter, more people are on the roads at dusk and dawn, which increases the number of our native wildlife being on the road. This is the time of the year when we typically get more adult macropods hit by cars, particularly in the evenings and early mornings and when we get more koalas hit by cars and attacked by dogs.

No doubt our Trauma Carers will be kept busy during this time along with our carers who specialise in orphaned joeys.

If you see or find a kangaroo or wallaby hit by a car, please remember to telephone the Wildcare hotline immediately. The telephone operator will call the nearest Trauma Carer to attend and help the animal.

Please also remember to drive more slowly during the colder months and to raise awareness with your family, friends and colleagues of the importance of doing so when they are driving between dusk and dawn.

Karen Scott

### Wallaby Twins

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Some years ago a beautiful hand-reared Red-necked Wallaby was released at Mt Cotton. Down the years she was seen regularly with a pouch young or juvenile accompanying her, something that gladdens the hearts of wildlife carers: the knowledge that a hand-reared animal can not only survive, but can also contribute to the population. So you can imagine the excitement when she appeared with two little heads gazing from the pouch.



PHOTOS // B GRANT

# Poisoning in a Common Brushtail Possum

*Deb Turnbull*

BILLIE JEAN WAS TAKEN INTO A LOCAL VET, AFTER SHE WAS FOUND WITH HER DEAD MOTHER IN THE SMOKO ROOM OF A BUSINESS, IN A LIGHT INDUSTRIAL AREA ON BRISBANE'S NORTHSIDE. When dead or debilitated brushtails are found inside a building, poisoning always comes to my mind as a possible cause.

Billie Jean was dehydrated, quiet and responsive, but not active. Her feet, ears and gums were very pale. These symptoms are indicative of rodenticide poisoning, something I had seen too many times before. I needed the vet to do a PCV blood test. This shows the proportion of red blood cells to white blood cells. Rodenticides are an anticoagulant and would cause a low PCV, that is a lower than normal percentage of red blood cells.

Billie Jean's blood pressure was very low, another sign that rodenticide poisoning was a possibility. Surprisingly though, Billie Jean's PCV was normal. Another rodenticide poisoning sign that was missing was particulate haemorrhaging in the gums. This presents as tiny pinpoint red dots on very pale gums. Given all the other symptoms the vet felt we had to treat for rodenticide poisoning just in case. This involves fluid therapy, the administration of vitamin K and supportive nursing care. The next day the PCV was redone and was still normal. Blood pressure was better but all other symptoms remained. Treatment for rodenticide poisoning continued.

On the third day symptoms were unchanged. This was a sick possum. Given the lack of any other symptoms treatment continued unchanged. By now it was the Saturday, and about two hours after my local vet had closed Billie Jean started having what I suspected were very small seizures.

She would go very still, her eyes would glaze over and then she would start drooling. Luckily for Billie Jean I had taught children who had petit mal seizures so I knew what was happening. I raced her to the Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital.

Dr Bec took one look and said these were definitely neurological symptoms. I was right when I guessed poisoning, but wrong about it being rodenticide. This was a neurotoxin, maybe pyrethrum or snail bait. Billie Jean was admitted to hospital. She was put on a fluid drip and medication to stop the seizures. This treatment continued for two and a half days. She stayed in hospital for a further day and a half. By now she had lost weight and was very weak. There was a lot of nursing care still required to pull Billie Jean through this poisoning episode.

Billie Jean loved her milk and I added high protein supplement and vitamins to it, just to give her a boost. She also loved her leaf so she was given as much as she could eat, and plenty of variety. Although big enough to be feeding just at night, Billie Jean grazed all day and night. Large meals were not what she wanted. It was like having a baby again. The photo was taken just two days after coming home from hospital. She was not interested in running around like a normal kid and quite happy to stay snuggled in a carry basket. There was still a long way to go before she would be in age-appropriate accommodation.

*Continued on next page*

## *Poisoning in a Common Brushtail Possum*

*Deb Turnbull*

When assessing an animal I always take note of where they were found. This just gives me a starting point. It does not rule out a full assessment though. I did not see Billie Jean's mum. She could have been hit by a car and crawled into the building. She could have been injured on some piece of machinery. This set of symptoms means the initial assessment must include a vet. Low blood pressure and PCVs are their domain. Fluid therapy is something we can all do to some degree, but IV fluids for two and a half days is not our decision to make or our place to administer.

Having a good working relationship with a local vet is critical to the survival of animals such as Billie Jean. Part of being a good carer is knowing when you do not have the skills required to completely assess or care for a given animal. Had I not taken Billie Jean to the vet, and then to the wildlife hospital she would certainly have died.



PHOTOS // D TURNBULL





# *Education Report*

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*Karen Scott*

THE JANUARY TO APRIL 2012 EDUCATION CALENDAR HAS PROVEN TO BE VERY POPULAR WITH MEMBERS, WITH GOOD ATTENDANCE AT MOST WORKSHOPS.

In February we were very honoured, once again, to have Dr Anne Fowler deliver a workshop for us on Marsupials, as well as an Advanced First Aid course for our Trauma Carers.

We also secured Martin Fingland from Geckos Wildlife Presentations to run a Reptile Handling workshop. This was very well received with the participants able to handle several species of turtle, lizards and non-venomous snakes. Martin has a wealth of knowledge when it comes to reptiles and everyone enjoyed themselves immensely and learnt a lot in the process.

Cathy is currently working on the next Calendar which will offer workshops from May through to December 2012. We have some new workshops planned which we hope members will find interesting and useful. The new calendar will be emailed and posted to members as soon as it is finalised.

There will also be some changes, in the next Calendar, to the way in which the Orientation and First Aid workshops will be offered. These will now be offered on the same day, as a full-day course, with the Orientation held first followed by the Basic Rescue and First Aid for Wildlife. This will hopefully alleviate some pressure on our volunteer trainers.

Remember, some workshops are only held once a year, so when you see them on the calendar, please do your best to attend them. If you have registered for a workshop, but find that you are unable to attend please advise the trainer as soon as possible. We had a recent instance where only one person attended and another workshop where no one attended. Remember please that our trainers are all volunteers also – they are not paid to develop or teach our workshops and receive very nominal reimbursement of their fuel expenses.

Please also remember that all Wildcare Permit Endorsements expire in June 2012. Check your existing Permit to ensure that you have satisfied any outstanding conditions on your Permit for training requirements, as you only have a few months left to get this rectified.

## *Here one Moment, Gone the Next*

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What has happened to the beautiful Fig tree in Australia Fair?

More importantly, what has happened to the possum that resided there?

# *Hands-on Reptile Workshop a Treat* \_\_\_\_\_

*Sonja de Sterke*

WHAT A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY TO GET UP CLOSE TO AUSTRALIA'S NATIVE WILDLIFE!

Many thanks to Martin and his very easy-going crew of reptiles. I fell in love with Mr Big, a spotted python that made itself very comfortable on my shoulders, tickling my neck with its head and cruising around. He must have thought I was a tree.

The reptile handling workshop was an amazing opportunity to feel at ease around these beautiful animals and to understand them better. I had always wondered what it would be like to hold a water-dragon. Experiencing these animals is so very different from reading about them. Already I feel I might be more confident when encountering one, and be able to stay calm and anticipate their behaviour a little better.

Martin's reptiles were such good educators, as they are used to being handled. After the initial excitement of getting out of the bag, most of them would settle down quickly and allow us to get closer to them. Many thanks for their patience with us! I just want to go back and spend more time with them.

Apart from the handling, Martin's sense of humour and knowledge made it a very pleasant day. I hope there will be more to follow.

It also gave me the opportunity to take some close-up pictures that would otherwise be very hard to achieve.

I still can't get away from the beautiful feeling of Mr. Big on my shoulders. What a unique and special experience to share.



PHOTOS // S DE STERKE & K SCOTT

# Loving our Local Native Plants

Michelle Benson

## HABITAT TYPES IN OUR REGION

So how's your garden growing? Crazy with life (and yes, weeds!) I'm sure, after such an amazingly wet summer. Have you achieved a good mix of ingredients for a healthy habitat? Do you have a variety of native species that are found naturally in your area? By selecting local native plants for your garden and creating habitat niches, you are helping keep our wonderfully biodiverse region alive.

If you're a native plant or animal that has certain vulnerability, and are put in the wrong place, or if the balance tips and new-comers are pushing into your space, survival can get pretty difficult.

When we get a better understanding of the different kinds of habitats that have evolved in South East Queensland, we can help give all species a better chance of survival, not just the more dominant or invasive ones that are settling into our altered environments.

If we have more biodiverse backyards, we're not only helping the larger species we can easily see, but a complex and exciting whole universe of smaller plants and tiny critters (yes, even ticks and leeches, too!). We have so much to learn from the complex interconnection that happens between all the different life forms in a habitat. Some rely on a certain leaf or flower or seed, others on an animal, fungi or a micro-organism, or who knows what else, for their survival.

A lot of native plants, especially some of the small heathland species, are very particular about their requirements, so can be difficult to propagate and are not readily available in nurseries. Some are very small, have a short life span, or can look a bit scraggy after a while, so are not popular choices for some gardens. That's why it is so important that we try to preserve and protect their special niches in the wild. The problem is that as development expands, fewer areas of intact habitat remain, especially heathland. Let's hope that with bet-

ter planning for the future, the many vulnerable species are given room to grow too.

Soil types, exposure to light and wind, and land form are major factors in determining the type of plant communities in habitat. Below I've tried to outline some of the different habitats that we have in our region and a few of the native plants that can be observed there. Most of these plants are readily available in native plant nurseries. Of course, if you want to get a more detailed picture of these plants you can simply do a bit of googling.

## COASTAL DUNE AREAS

These include the frontal dune area consisting mainly of grasses and vines, the mid dune area where shrub communities grow, and the hind dune area where littoral rainforest supports a larger cross section of trees and understory plants. All suburbs just behind the beach along the coastal strip are in this area.

Plants here have adapted to handle salt-laden winds.

- **TREES - Tuckaroo** (*Cupaniopsis anacardioides*) (hind dune) They are a beautifully shaped small tree to 8 m. The brown 1cm fruits are eaten by birds and possums. Wallam Banksia (*Banksia aemula*) (hind dune) to 8m. Pale yellow flower spikes to 15cm long feed all sorts of nectivores.
- **SHRUBS - Beach Alectryon** (*Alectryon coriaceus*) (hind dune) Large shrub to 5m. Fruit eaten by Fig birds.

Continued on next page



# Loving our Local Native Plants (con't)

- **SMALL PLANTS** - Midyim Berry (*Austromyrtus dulcis*) (mid and hind dune) Small shrub to 1m. Small fruits eaten by lizards and birds. Flax Lily (*Dianella congesta*) (frontal and mid dune) Tufted plant to 1m. Purplish flowers and fruits. Eaten by Brush Turkeys, Lewins Honeyeaters.
- **VINES** - Snake Vine (*Hibbertia scandens*) (mid dune) Vigorous scrambler with 5cm yellow flowers.
- **GRASSES/SEDGES** - *Eragrostis interrupta* (frontal dune) Clumping grass to 1.8m with purplish flower spikelets.
- **VINES** - Red Kennedy Pea (*Kennedia rubicunda*) (dry heathland) Scrambler with large red pea flowers that Brown Honeyeaters and Eastern Spinebills feed on (Also in Eucalypt forest).
- **GRASSES/SEDGES** - Swamp Foxtail (*Balioskion tetraphyllum*) (moist heathland)) Bright green soft leaf clumps to 100cm. Habitat for lots of small critters.

## COASTAL HEATHLAND

This area lies behind the dune area and includes both dry and moist plant communities depending on where the water table lies. Most of this habitat is now canal developments. Examples of suburbs within this area include Biggera Waters, Bilinga, Burleigh Waters, Holywell, Jacobs Well, Miami, Palm Beach, Robina, Surfers Paradise, Sanctuary Cove, Tugan.

- **TREES** - Scribbly gum (*Eucalyptus racemosa*) (dry heathland) Smooth barked tree to 20m. Distinct insect larvae scribbles on trunk. Leaves – koalas, blossom – nectivores, manna – gliders, seeds – rosellas.
- **SHRUBS** - Dwarf Banksia (*Banksia oblongifolia*) (dry heathland) Multi-stemmed shrub to 2m. Creamy 15cm flower spikes attract nectivores. Oxylobium robustum (moist heathland) – Shrub to 3m. Yellow pea flowers. Attracts many insects, hence insectivores.
- **SMALL PLANTS** - Swamp Grass Tree (*Xanthorrhoea fulva*) (moist heathland) Tufted plant to 2m. Cream flower spike to 60cm. White Cheeked Honeyeaters and many butterflies love the flowers. Swamp Iris (*Paterersonia sericea*) (moist heathland) Small strapped leaved plant with three petalled purple flowers.

PHOTOS /// M BENSON



*Banksia spinulosa*



*Boronia saefrolifera*

Continued on next page

# Loving our Local Native Plants (con't)

## FRESHWATER WETLANDS (low lying wet areas)

In these areas the flood prone land has been drained or changed into golf courses, sports fields and canal estates. Soil drainage is poor. Examples of these areas are Arundel, Benowa, Bundall, Carrara, Coomabah, Elanora, Helensvale, Hope Island, Jacobs Well, Southport, Sanctuary Cove, Currumbin Waters, Merri-mac, Reedy Creek, Varsity Lakes, Worongary.

- **TREES** - *Melaleuca spp.* including Paperbark Tea Tree (*Melaleuca quinquenervia*) To 8m. Sweet smelling blossom feeds abundant nectivores including gliders, spinebills, honeyeaters, flying foxes.
- **SHRUBS** - *Twiggy Myrtle* (*Babingtonia similis*) Bushy shrub to 3m. White flowers attract many insects, hence many insectivores. *Blue Tongue* (*Melastoma malabathricum*) Bushy plant to 1.5m Showy pink flowers. *Swamp bottlebrush* (*Melaleuca pachyphyllus*) Twiggy shrub to 1.5m. Flowers for nectivores.
- **SMALL PLANTS** - *Swamp Lily* (*Crinum pedunculatum*) Strap leaf plant to 1.5m. Large white flower clusters. Fruit eaten by rodents and Brush Turkeys. Leaves eaten by Lily Moth caterpillars.
- **SWAMP ORCHIDS** (*Phaius australis*) (found mainly on Morton Bay Islands) An endangered ground orchid to 80cm tall. Showy maroon and white flowers on 1m stalks. *Native Violet* (*Viola banksii*) Groundcover with violet flowers most of the year. Grazed by Swamp wallabies.
- **VINES** - *Monkey Rope* (*Parsonsia straminea*) Vigorous twining vine with clusters of creamy tubular perfumed flowers. Has long woody seed pods.

- **GRASSES/SEDGES** - *Tassel Sedge* (*Carex polyantha*) Tufting green clumps to 1m. *Rushes* (*Juncus spp.*) Flowers attract insects. Seeds eaten by water birds. Habitat for frogs and waterbirds.

There are five other habitat types in our region, which I would like to cover in the next newsletter.



*Melastoma malabathricum*



*Viola banksii*

PHOTOS // M BENSON

# Grants

As a non-profit organisation we have been extremely fortunate over recent years to obtain sponsorship and grants through a number of different programs.



The Logan City Council has kindly supported the Wildcare Education Program over the past year and has helped fund expenses associated with our extensive training program, fuel expenses and general administration expenses.



Gambling

**Community Benefit Fund**

**Queensland Government**

The Gambling Community Benefit Fund has enabled Wildcare to upgrade the two computers at the Wildcare Office and to purchase a new laser printer and a card printer for membership cards. Funding was also received to cover the printing costs of our Volunteer Manual.

A further grant has been received recently to purchase essential wildlife rescue and rehabilitation equipment.

Many of our volunteer wildlife carers from the Brisbane region have been fortunate enough to apply and receive funding from the Brisbane City Council under their Native Wildlife Carer Funding Program. This has been a fantastic initiative of Council and has provided a wonderful opportunity for our volunteers and one that we are sure they are extremely grateful for.



The Pines Elanora provided funding of \$5,000 to enable Wildcare to further help protect local koalas in the southern Gold Coast areas. Funding was utilised to purchase essential rescue equipment and to develop an information brochure and poster on koalas. The brochure and poster have been printed and already the brochure has received positive feedback from local residents and has resulted in a number of sick koalas being reported which has enabled them to be treated early.



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for more details*

## Cream cage

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The cage needs some re-attaching to its plastic base, as the little plastic lugs have broken, otherwise good. (45cm square and 70cm high)

*Email expressions of interest to Kim - [kim@foundationfinance.com.au](mailto:kim@foundationfinance.com.au)*

## Lonely Hearts

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Gorgeous young Short-eared Possum seeks companionship of same species. No sexual preference but around the 300g mark preferred.

*Please address expressions of interest to: [news@wildcare.org.au](mailto:news@wildcare.org.au)*

## Free to Good Home

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*Contact: Karen on 0400 165 462*



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Gambling

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