

Wildcare Australia Inc.

Information Booklet



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ABN 80 853 694 538



Postal Address:

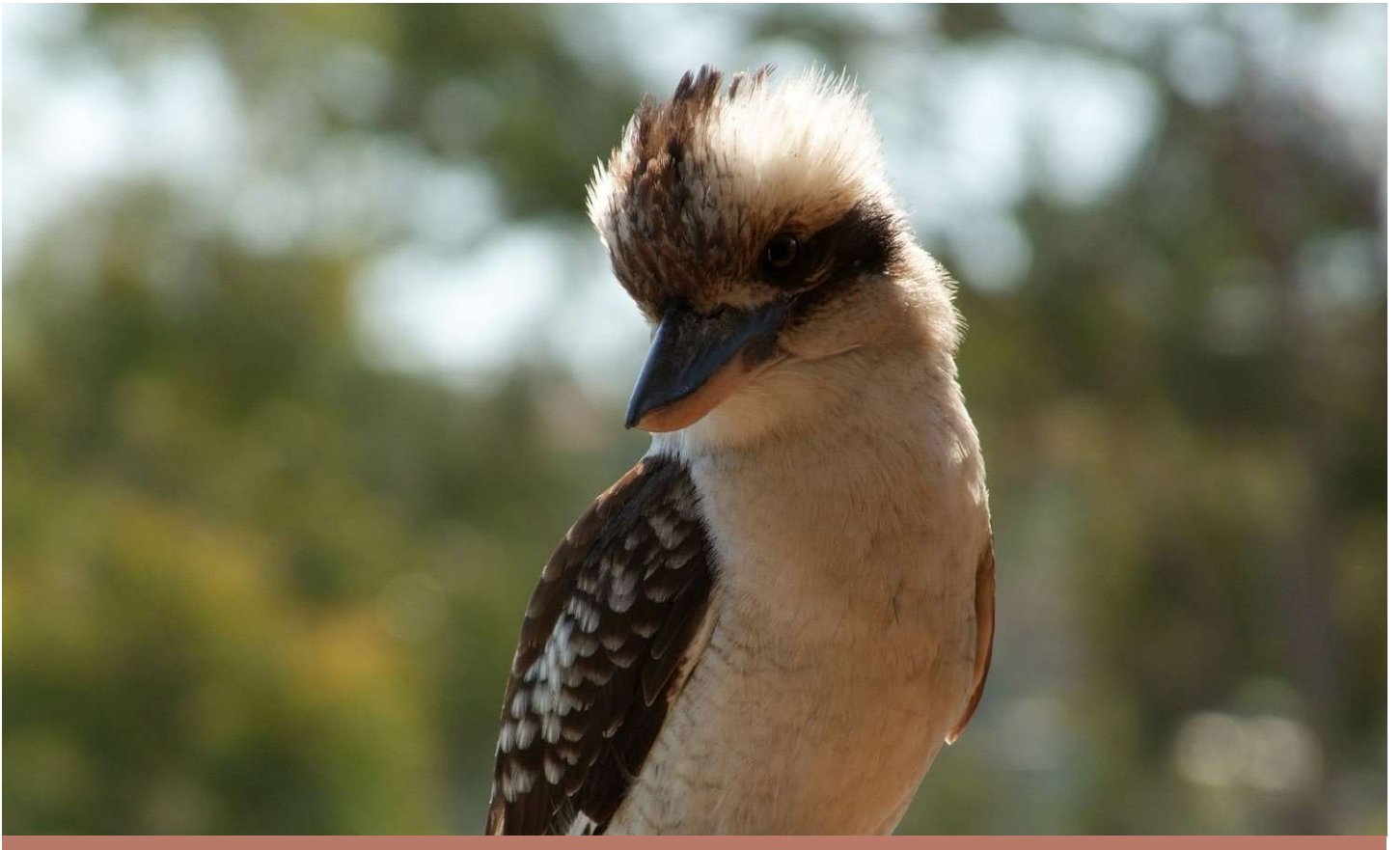
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Thank you for your interest in Wildcare Australia Inc.

WILDCARE is one of Queensland's largest wildlife rehabilitation groups and provides an emergency rescue and rehabilitation service for all native wildlife.

The aims of the organisation are:

- To rescue and rehabilitate sick, injured and orphaned native wildlife so that they can be returned to the wild.
- To operate an emergency telephone service which is available to facilitate the rescue of native wildlife and to provide advice on wildlife related issues.
- To provide a comprehensive and professional training program for volunteer wildlife rehabilitators.
- To raise public awareness of Australia's unique wildlife and its diverse habitat requirements through community talks and education programmes.

If you have any further queries, please feel free to email us at enquiries@wildcare.org.au



WILDCARE is a non-profit organisation and a registered charity. It is funded entirely by membership subscriptions, donations, grants, fundraising and sponsorships.

If you are interested in becoming a wildlife rehabilitator, you may find the following information useful in deciding whether wildlife rehabilitation is for you.

If you are interested in supporting WILDCARE in other ways, such as assisting with the administrative tasks, delivering school and community talks, answering our emergency telephone service, sewing or building possum boxes, aviaries or enclosures, we invite you to become a member of the organisation and to register your area of interest or expertise.

If you are interested in financially supporting the work we do, we invite you to become a member, make a donation or leave a bequest, knowing that your support will directly help our volunteers in the rescue and rehabilitation of sick, injured and orphaned native wildlife. Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.

If after reading this information you have any further queries, please feel free to contact us on (07) 5527 2444 or by email at enquiries@wildcare.org.au. Alternatively, you can find additional information on our website www.wildcare.org.au.

Thank you for your support.

What is Wildlife Rehabilitation?

Wildlife rehabilitation involves providing care for sick, injured and orphaned native animals so as to ensure that they have the best chance of survival when released into their native habitat.

It also includes assisting wildlife when they become displaced or are found in dangerous situations.

The activities of the wildlife rehabilitator range from the initial rescue of an animal to the release of the animal back into the wild. This includes not only the actual care of native wildlife, but also arranging suitable release sites and monitoring animals after release.

Wildlife rehabilitation also involves anticipating and helping to prevent problems with native wildlife as well as resolving conflicts between humans and wildlife. It also includes lobbying local, state and federal governments to do more to protect native wildlife.

Wildlife rehabilitation has many facets: it is part education, part science, part problem solving and part care giving.

Wildlife rehabilitation is a fast growing industry in Australia, with a rapidly expanding knowledge base and ever-improving professional standards.



Why is Wildlife Rehabilitation Needed?

With increasing urbanisation leading to loss and fragmentation of wildlife habitat, native animals not only lose their food and shelter, but are negatively impacted upon by people, their vehicles and their pets.

Wildlife rehabilitators may be able to give some of these orphaned, injured and displaced animals a second chance.

Many people living in an urban environment have little personal experience of wildlife or its habitat requirements and when they encounter native animals want accurate and appropriate information about living in harmony with them.

In the urban and rural environment there is also the potential for conflict between humans and native wildlife. This is where wildlife rehabilitators have a role to play, in providing education, to reduce areas of conflict, and to advise the growing number of people who are interested in environmental issues. Wildlife rehabilitators can also make a valuable contribution to conservation.



Why become a Wildlife Rehabilitator?

Wildlife Rehabilitation can be very rewarding in many ways.

It provides a personal connection with the natural environment and many of our volunteers feel that they are giving something back that will help, in some small way, to balance the damage we do. It also brings an enormous sense of joy and reward at seeing a strong and healthy animal that you have cared for being returned to the wild.

It provides a unique opportunity to talk to people about native wildlife and to impart to them an appreciation for our wildlife and an understanding of their habitat requirements.



If you have any further queries, please feel free to email us at enquiries@wildcare.org.au

The Different Types of Wildlife Rehabilitation

The majority of wildlife rehabilitators in Australia care for wildlife in their own homes; however, the activities they chose to undertake vary greatly.

- Some rehabilitators choose to specialise in certain species (such as birds, possums, bats or reptiles) or a specific age or stage of development (such as juvenile or adult animals)
- Some choose to look after only sick or injured animals such as those requiring ongoing medical or intensive care.
- Some choose only to care for orphaned joeys or birds that may require around the clock monitoring and feeding.
- Some will only look after a few animals each year, while others have the time and facilities to care for many.
- Some only provide the vital service of rescuing and providing 24 hour emergency care before passing the animals on to other wildlife rehabilitators
- Some rehabilitators are able to provide safe release sites, which allow ongoing monitoring of rehabilitated animals.
- Some choose to help with the emergency telephone service



How do I become a Wildlife Rehabilitator?

In order to become a wildlife rehabilitator in Queensland you need to have a Rehabilitation Permit issued by the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (EHP).

You can apply for a Rehabilitation Permit in one of two ways:

1. Apply directly to EHP

You can apply to the EHP directly for a Rehabilitation Permit. In order to do so however, you must be able to provide either proof of extensive previous experience with caring for native wildlife.



2. Join an accredited wildlife organisation

If you do not have prior experience or knowledge in caring for wildlife you will need to join an accredited wildlife organisation, such as WILDCARE. Once you join an accredited wildlife organisation you may obtain a Rehabilitation Permit through that organisation.

In WILDCARE, you will initially be issued a Rehabilitation Permit to rescue and provide emergency care for common species of birds and mammals.

After you successfully complete further specialised training courses and have the necessary facilities, you can apply for your Permit to be endorsed for other species.

Even if you do have previous experience with caring for native wildlife, we recommend that you consider joining an accredited wildlife organisation so that you can avail yourself of the many advantages of belonging to such an organisation including extensive training and support.

Getting Started as a Wildlife Rehabilitator

Becoming involved with wildlife rehabilitation is both challenging and immensely rewarding.

To help you on your way, remember:

- Learn as much as you can about wildlife rehabilitation by reading, attending training courses, and talking with other wildlife rehabilitators
- Volunteer to help a local wildlife rehabilitator, or volunteer at a wildlife hospital.
- Discuss with your family the degree to which you want to be involved and what that might mean for them.
- When you are ready, start small - doing one animal extremely well makes you a good wildlife rehabilitator. Never take on too many animals or too many different species.
- Begin to collect the supplies you are going to need, and acquire or build cages and enclosures.
- Check out our website for information on the various species that wildlife rehabilitators deal with in South-East Queensland.
- Remember that native animals must have no contact with domestic animals, as familiarity with pets, especially dogs and cats, will seriously jeopardize their safety when they are returned to the wild. You must be able to keep domestic pets separated from wildlife in care.

Why join Wildcare Australia Inc?

We believe that there are many advantages to becoming a Wildlife Rehabilitator with WILDCARE. We are proud to offer the following programs and support to our volunteers.

Orientation Program and Rescue and First Aid for Wildlife

Our introductory training day is designed for new members and is a pre-requisite for obtaining a Rehabilitation Permit through the organisation.

The program is conducted over the course of one full day and includes topics such as:

- An overview of wildlife rehabilitation in Queensland
- Identification of common native animals
- Record Keeping
- Rules and Regulations
- Health and Safety
- Rescue techniques

Education Program

We are very proud of the Education Program that we offer our volunteers. We place considerable emphasis on training and are continually striving to improve our education workshops and training material.

All our general training workshops are provided FREE OF CHARGE to our members.

We offer an extensive range of full day education workshops specifically designed for wildlife rehabilitators. Education workshops on offer include:

- Rescue and First Aid for Native Wildlife (Basic)
- Wildlife Habitat and Plant Identification
- Gliders
- Possums – Basic and Advanced
- Birds – Basic and Advanced
- Caring for Orphaned Mammals
- Wildlife Rescue (Advanced)
- First Aid for Wildlife (Advanced)
- Kangaroos & Wallabies – Basic & Advanced
- Bandicoots & Small Carnivorous Marsupials
- Echidnas
- Koalas – Adults and Infants
- Reptiles and Amphibians

If you have any further queries, please feel free to email us at enquiries@wildcare.org.au

In addition to these we periodically run fee-based specialised wildlife courses.

A full calendar of our education programs can be found on our website,
www.wildcare.org.au.

Alternatively, you can email us at education@wildcare.org.au and we will email you a copy of our current program.

Support and Assistance from Species Coordinators

WILDCARE has experienced volunteers who have taken on the role of Species Coordinators. Their role is to support and assist you in your endeavours as a wildlife rehabilitator and includes acting as a mentor with one-to-one training and assisting new volunteers with the correct set-up of rehabilitation facilities.

Insurance Cover

All wildlife rehabilitators with WILDCARE are covered under the organisation's Public Liability Insurance Cover and Voluntary Workers Insurance Cover. The premiums associated with this insurance are included in your membership fees.

How else can I help our wildlife?

If becoming a wildlife rehabilitator is not for you, then please consider helping our wildlife and WILDCARE in other ways.

Emergency Telephone Service

We are always seeking assistance to keep our emergency telephone service operating. This is a very rewarding role and an essential link to the public. We rely heavily on public awareness and compassion in responding to native animals in need of care. Full training and support is provided.

School and Community Talks

We have a team of volunteers who visit schools and other community groups to talk about our wildlife and how the members of the community can help them. We are always looking for more people to join our team. If you are good with children and wish to impart an appreciation of our wildlife to our younger generation, then maybe this is for you.

Housing

Can you build? We frequently need help putting up fencing, aviaries or shelters. Can you, or someone you know, donate building materials?

Handycrafts

Can you sew? Perhaps you are good with timber. We need volunteers to help sew pouches for joeys and to make nest boxes for injured and orphaned possums and gliders.



How do I join Wildcare Australia Inc.?

Complete our online Membership Application form at www.wildcare.org.au/help-us/join to become a WILDCARE member.

A small membership fee is also required, which goes towards the running of WILDCARE.

Your Membership Application is then put forward by our Secretary to the Management Committee for consideration at the next monthly Committee meeting. Once you have submitted your Application Form you are welcome to attend the Orientation Program or any of our other training workshops while you are waiting on your Application to be finalised.

Should there be any questions that have not been answered in this information booklet, please feel free to contact one of our office volunteers. They are always more than happy to answer your queries.



If you have any further queries, please feel free to email us at enquiries@wildcare.org.au

Our Partners

Wildcare Australia has formed a strong alliance with various animal welfare organisations and works closely with them for the benefit of our local wildlife.

**Currumbin Wildlife Hospital,
Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary,**
Currumbin, Gold Coast

WILDCARE has a strong relationship with the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary. The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital admits for over 8,000 animals each year from the Gold Coast and northern New South Wales region. It provides excellent support to volunteer wildlife rehabilitators by providing free veterinary assistance.



Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital,
Beerwah, Sunshine Coast

WILDCARE has a close relationship with the Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital. The Hospital provides veterinary assistance to volunteer wildlife rehabilitators by providing all veterinary services, including medications, free of charge.



If you have any further queries, please feel free to email us at enquiries@wildcare.org.au



RSPCA Queensland

WILDCARE and the RSPCA Qld have worked together for many years to ensure that our local wildlife are rescued and attended to as quickly as possible. Through the emergency telephone service operated by both organisations, we are able to liaise closely with one another to ensure the best possible outcomes for our wildlife.



Department of Environment and Heritage Protection

The EHP is the Queensland Government regulatory body responsible for Queensland's fauna and flora.



We work closely with local Wildlife Rangers to ensure compliance with the legislation and the maintenance of high standards of care, and to provide community education and advice on wildlife welfare and related issues.

Local Veterinary Surgeries

Our volunteers could not provide high standards of care without the generosity and support of the hundreds of veterinary surgeries in South-East Queensland.

Most veterinarians offer their professional services free of charge to volunteer wildlife rehabilitators. Their contribution is invaluable.

If you have any further queries, please feel free to email us at enquiries@wildcare.org.au



Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What sort of animals will I be able to care for?

The type of animals that you will care for will depend upon a number of factors. To ensure the best outcome for the animals, you will only be able to care for those species for which you have completed relevant training, and for which you have appropriate equipment and housing. Generally, new carers will start with less challenging animals which generally require a shorter time commitment and less extensive equipment. As your skills and knowledge develop you will advance to caring for more specialised and demanding species.

Q. What sort of animals will I be called on to rescue?

This depends on several factors. Your skill, experience and willingness will be considered prior to any call out. It will also depend upon the area in which you live. If you live in a high-density residential area the species that you will most likely be called upon to rescue will be birds, reptiles and small mammals such as possums. If you live in a more rural location and are appropriately trained, then you may be called upon to assist with the rescue of larger animals such as kangaroos and koalas.

Q. Do I have to keep all of the animals that I rescue?

No. Once you rescue an animal, you take the animal to a local wildlife hospital or contact the relevant Species Coordinator. If you do not have the knowledge or facilities to care for that animal, they will put you in contact with a wildlife rehabilitator who is able to provide appropriate care for that particular animal.

Q. I work full time; am I still able to care for wildlife?

Yes you are. The species that you can care for will depend upon your lifestyle including factors such as your working environment, your work schedule, family commitments and where you live. We will work with you to try to establish what species would best suit your lifestyle.

Q. Is there someone I can call if I have any problems?

Yes, there is always someone you can contact if you have any questions. Our structure provides a number of people you can contact for support and guidance, including Species Coordinators, Management Committee Members and Education Coordinators.

Q. How old do you have to be to care for wildlife?

You need to be 18 years of age to care for sick, injured or orphaned wildlife in your own right. For many of our members though, caring for wildlife is a family activity. Children under 18 years of age can be involved in various ways such as collecting browse, but it is imperative that there is a responsible adult as the primary carer for the wildlife. We do acknowledge though the inherent value of our younger generation being able to be involved. More information on this aspect of wildlife rehabilitation can be obtained by contacting one of our volunteers.

Q. Do I have to do all of your training workshops?

There are several compulsory training courses that you must complete before being able to rescue or care for wildlife. You must complete the Orientation Program and the Rescue and First Aid for Wildlife (Basic) course. From there you must complete an appropriate training course for the species that you wish to care for.

For example, if you wish to care for possums then you must complete the Basic Possum Course before you will be able to care for possums. Each year, you will be expected to attend at least one workshop on the species that you are caring for. As we continue to learn from research and experience our workshops are ever evolving, so it is beneficial for you to attend as many workshops as you can throughout the year.

If you have any further queries, please email us at
enquiries@wildcare.org.au

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