



**IMPACT  
REPORT  
FY20**



## ABOUT US

As Australia's largest wildlife rescue organisation, WIRES has been rescuing and caring for sick, injured and orphaned wildlife for almost 35 years.

Our mission is to actively rehabilitate and preserve Australian wildlife and inspire others to do the same.

Operating 24/7, 365 days a year, our rescue team coordinate the fastest possible rescues for wildlife in distress, in collaboration with our volunteers, other rescue groups, vets, wildlife hospitals and the community

## CONTENTS

<a href="#">Overview</a>	<a href="#">2</a>	<a href="#">Species Recovery</a>	<a href="#">12</a>
<a href="#">Message from the CEO</a>	<a href="#">3</a>	<a href="#">Training Update</a>	<a href="#">14</a>
<a href="#">Emergency Response</a>	<a href="#">5</a>	<a href="#">Volunteers Update</a>	<a href="#">21</a>
<a href="#">Emergency Plan</a>	<a href="#">7</a>	<a href="#">Corporate Support</a>	<a href="#">16</a>
<a href="#">Rescue Update</a>	<a href="#">9</a>	<a href="#">Financial Update</a>	<a href="#">18</a>
<a href="#">Major Projects</a>	<a href="#">10</a>	<a href="#">2021 Priorities</a>	<a href="#">19</a>
<a href="#">Habitat Recovery</a>	<a href="#">11</a>	<a href="#">Partner With Us</a>	<a href="#">20</a>



WIRES acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this land and recognise their connection to native wildlife. We pay respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.



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## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

### **OVER THE LAST YEAR THE SITUATION FOR HUNDREDS OF NATIVE SPECIES, AND FOR WIRES AS AN ORGANISATION, HAS BEEN FOREVER CHANGED.**

With the rest of the country we were devastated by the unimaginable loss of life and biodiversity that resulted from the catastrophic combination of long-term drought and the worst Australian fire season in recorded history.

We were also overwhelmed by the financial, physical and emotional support for wildlife, received from hundreds of thousands of individuals and organisations across the country and worldwide. The scale of the disasters touched so many and the community mobilised to provide rescue and care for native animals impacted by the bushfires and to preserve and protect Australian wildlife into the future.

A national emergency requires a national response and WIRES was empowered by the community to support wildlife rescue, rehabilitation and recovery across Australia.

We sincerely thank the thousands of volunteers, veterinary staff and wildlife hospitals across Australia who rescue and care for native animals every day. We also thank every individual, community and organisation who has assisted our work with native animals.

Whether you have reported an injured animal, become a wildlife rescuer, sent supplies, helped with community wildlife education, restored habitat, donated financially, assisted with species conservation, or offered water and a safe resting place. We cannot do what we do for wildlife without you, thank you.

There has been a significant amount of good work done to help wildlife this year, and there remains a major challenge ahead as we continue to address the issues facing our animals. We will continue rescuing and caring for individual animals and collaborating with major partners to address the issues of habitat loss and the depletion of wild populations. With many threatened species now closer to extinction, urgent action is needed.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leanne Taylor". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Leanne Taylor, WIRES CEO



# 2019/20 BLACK SUMMER BUSHFIRES



Photo courtesy of Adam Stevenson

WIRES.ORG.AU

## EMERGENCY RESPONSE

12 WEEKS - JAN TO MAR - 2020

 **86,090**  
INCOMING CALLS +  **39,451**  
OUTGOING CALLS

 **3,602,994**  
UNIQUE VISITORS

**9,590**  
RESCUES  
ACCEPTED



 **516,838**  
EMAILS RECIEVED

## EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The catastrophic 2019/2020 fire season was fueled by very hot, dry conditions, extremely low rainfall and a severe drought. Before the fires ended in March 2020, they had burned consecutively for **240 days**.

Across Australia over **18.6 million hectares burnt**, much of which was threatened species habitat. NSW was the hardest hit state.

There were **over 11,000 fires in NSW**, including the Gosper's Mountain fire, which became the worst fire in Australia's history. The Gosper's Mountain fire was the first mega-fire, burning for 79 days and joining other smaller fires to burn over 1 million hectares.

By January 2020, it was clear globally that Australia was in the midst of our worst fire season in history. The size and scale of the national disaster was evident and WIRES confirmed on the 10th January that we would provide national support.

Over approximately 15 weeks WIRES funded over 240 national projects, 223 of these supporting licensed wildlife carers and rescue organisations, representing over 6000 volunteers, with immediate needs to assist impacted wildlife.

### WIRES 28 BRANCHES ACROSS NSW WERE SUPPORTED IN ADDITION TO THESE WILDLIFE PROJECTS:

- VIC - 101 projects
- QLD - 45 projects
- WA - 35 projects
- SA - 18 projects
- NSW - 17 projects
- TAS - 4 projects
- NT - 2 projects
- ACT - 1 projects



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**THERE IS NOTHING THAT COULD HAVE PREPARED ANY AUSTRALIAN FOR THE TRAGEDY WE HAVE WITNESSED. OUR HEARTS BROKE FOR EVERY LIFE LOST AND THE COMMUNITIES AFFECTED.**

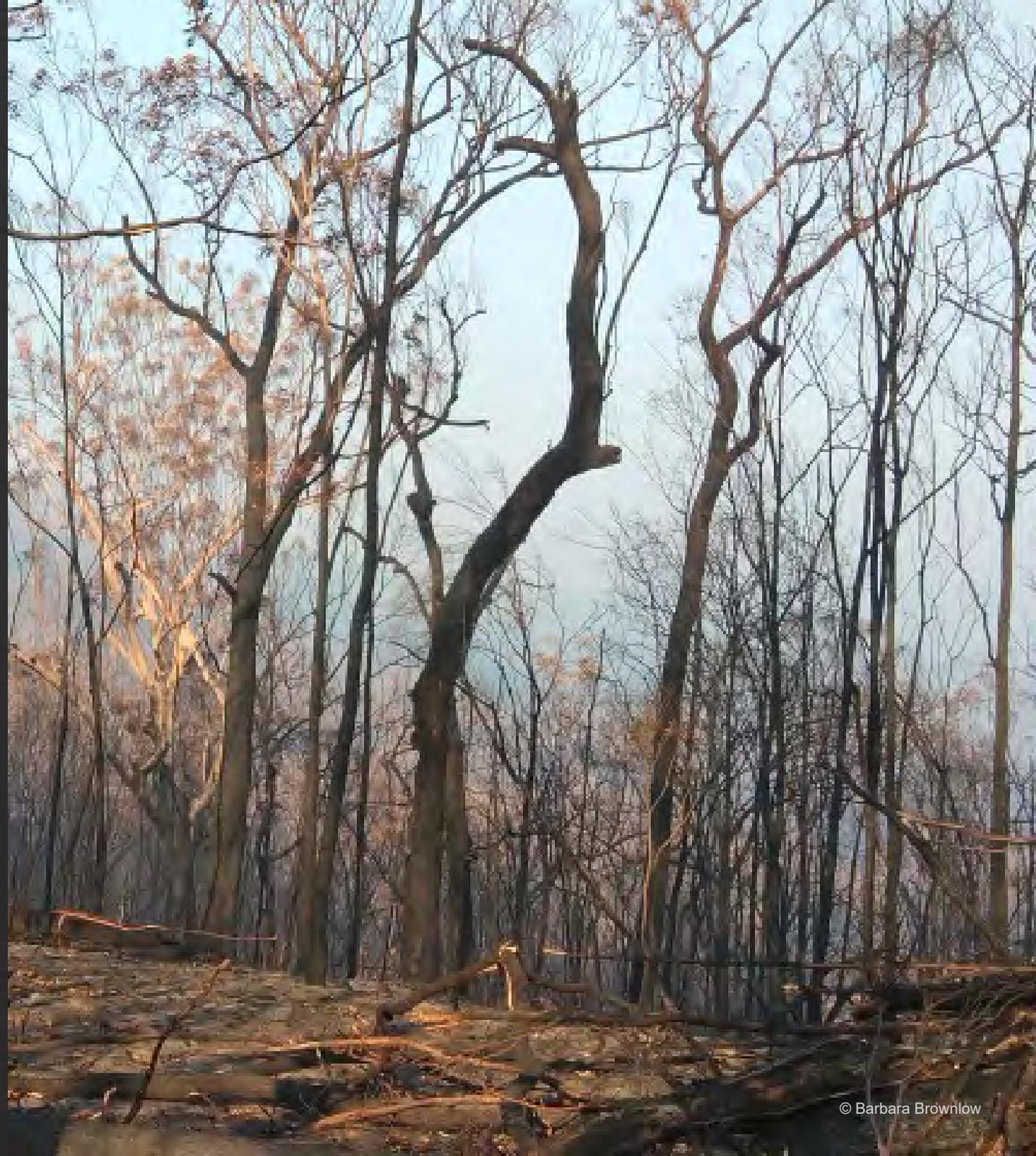
Barbara, one of WIRES volunteers, lives on a property that is 512 hectares. It was dedicated entirely to wildlife habitat and on the 26th November they were told to evacuate.

Describing their property before the fires Barbara said:

*“Our property was entirely for wildlife habitat – no farming. ...It now all looks like the photo...We had an abundance of the usual wildlife expected to reside in a wet and dry sclerophyll habitat, with a large dam.”*

Although they were fortunate their house was saved, when they returned a few days later, Barbara said:

*“Our local 2 magpies and 4 butcherbirds and a few kookaburras survived. 7 out of approx 15 red-necked wallabies survived, cicadas, 1 blue-tongued lizard, 1 sand monitor, 1 lace monitor and 1 land mullet ...We have a few other birds returning, although no noisy minors. ...there are no snakes, no echidnas, no possums – the land is bare.”*





## EMERGENCY PLAN

In the aftermath of Australia's devastating bushfires and drought, WIRES (NSW Wildlife Information and Rescue and Education Service Inc.) has received unprecedented global support from individuals and organisations, donating in excess of \$90,432,248 to WIRES Emergency Fund to help Australian native wildlife.

WIRES takes the responsibility of these donations extremely seriously and we are working closely with a wide range of individuals and organisations to ensure the best possible outcomes for our wildlife. Stakeholders include major donors and grant providers, Federal, State and Local government and agencies, other rescue organisations, universities, vets and environmental groups.

Funding has been allocated to key focus areas including Response and Rescue, Rehabilitation, Relief, Recovery and Risk-Reduction. Longer term projects will address the changed landscape and loss of habitat, support research on the rehabilitation and protection of vulnerable and threatened species, and the potential to establish a national network to improve the outcomes for wildlife.

### RESCUE:

- Funding immediate emergency response requirements to support wildlife and volunteers impacted by the emergency events
- Purchasing food, medical supplies, medication and equipment
- Replacement of rehabilitation enclosures destroyed by fires and purchase of additional enclosures
- Providing supplementary water and food to support wild populations
- Increasing national rescue capacity
- Improving emergency preparedness

### REHABILITATION:

- Rehabilitating animals impacted by emergency events
- Supporting projects that facilitate best practice rehabilitation and research
- Increasing national rehabilitation capacity
- Improving emergency preparedness

### RECOVERY:

- Assisting with the preservation of remaining populations and habitat nationally
- Supporting projects that reduce future risk to wildlife
- Supporting projects to protect all native species, prioritising vulnerable and/or threatened species.



Photo courtesy of Sandy Collins

## RESCUE

The WIRES Rescue Office works every day of the year to assist native animals in distress by connecting the information received from rescue calls and reports, with WIRES volunteers, veterinarians, and external wildlife rescue organisations, to resolve all rescues as quickly as possible.

WIRES 1300 line operates 24/7 and received over **180,000 calls** in the financial year ending June 2020. During the 12 months WIRES provided rescue advice and **assistance for over 100,000 native animals**, including over **600 calls to help koalas**.

Before the fires many animals were being rescued due to lack of habitat and food due to the drought. WIRES Central Coast volunteers experienced a high number of gliders coming into care as the drought caused low humidity in treetops which

resulted in low sap production. As sugar gliders rely on sap in their diet, many were underweight and needing support care.

The horrific Black Summer fires then destroyed millions of hectares habitat, killing and displacing billions of animals.

As soon as WIRES was allowed safe access to fire grounds, our team did everything possible to minimise suffering and rescue affected animals. Often the fires were so fast and so severe that few animals could escape.

Many animals were rescued for issues linked to the fires including: smoke inhalation, being hit by vehicles as they were fleeing fires or needing to feed by the side of the road and an increase in orphaned or displaced wildlife.



Across all WIRES branches volunteers did extraordinary work to assist wildlife, during a time when many volunteers were facing evacuations from their own homes. The devastation was far reaching and the severe impact on wildlife and local communities was evident.

The Mid South Coast was one of the many areas significantly impacted by the fires. Teams were deployed to deliver wildlife food and supplies and assist volunteers with search and rescue. Above are some of WIRES Mid South Coast volunteers and Emergency Rescue team members with Sunrise presenter James Tobin in January. Our Mid South Coast volunteers have gone on to co-win the NSW Volunteer Team of the Year award, which is a wonderful acknowledgment of their incredible work.



## MAJOR PROJECTS

As the scale of the crisis progressed, it became clear that national collaboration on an unprecedented level would be required. To deliver the best long-term outcomes for wildlife, leading organisations formed partnerships to ensure that valuable resources would deliver maximum impact.

In the wake of extreme drought, weather and bushfires and thanks to generous community support, WIRES initiated major projects to support wildlife rescue, rehabilitation and recovery across Australia;

### 24/7 COVERAGE

Expanded WIRES Rescue Office, focusing on improving systems and processes to ensure all calls for all species can be quickly answered 24/7

### FRONTLINE WILDLIFE RESCUE

A national grant program distributing \$3 million for licensed frontline wildlife rescue and volunteer groups and vets

### VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

\$1 million providing support for WIRES volunteers in NSW with immediate rescue, response and rehabilitation requirements

### ARBOREAL DRINKERS

\$1M to fund water drinkers to support arboreal species in drought and fire affected areas

### EMERGENCY FOOD

\$1million towards the collection and distribution of food for wildlife impacted by the emergencies

### KOALA RESEARCH

A three-year \$1million grant to the Koala Health Hub (KHH) a University of Sydney initiative to support koala care, management and research following decades of drought and other significant impacts on their populations

### HABITAT RECOVERY

The delivery of 64 projects nationally directly focused on habitat recovery for wildlife

### BUSHFIRE RECOVERY

In the wake of extreme drought, weather and bushfires and thanks to generous community support that saw \$90,432,248 donated to the WIRES Emergency Fund, major projects were initiated to support wildlife rescue, rehabilitation and recovery across Australia

## VALUED EMERGENCY RESCUE, REHABILITATION & RECOVERY PROJECT PARTNERS INCLUDE

- Animal Rescue Cooperative
- Aussie Ark
- Australian Wildlife Conservancy
- Currumbin Wildlife Hospital
- Landcare Australia
- Reece
- University of Sydney
- Wildsip
- WWF Australia
- Re:wild





## WIRES LANDCARE AUSTRALIA WILDLIFE RELIEF & RECOVERY GRANTS 2020

In 2020, 64 Landcare & environmental community groups were given grants for wildlife relief and recovery



Wildlife habitat created via revegetation  
OVER  
**92,000**  
PLANTS TO BE PLANTED

**1,554+**



**NEST BOXES**  
to be installed



**PROTECTING WILDLIFE**

**50+**

Targeted species  
(and countless more to benefit)

**FUNDING**  
**\$1.185 million**  
for environmental projects



**PROJECT activities are taking place in 24 different NRM/ Catchment regions**

Types of threatened species supported by multiple projects



KOALAS	21 PROJECTS
GLOSSY BLACK COCKATOO	14 PROJECTS
BANDICOOT	8 PROJECTS
PYGMY POSSUM	8 PROJECTS
GREATER GLIDER	7 PROJECTS

## HABITAT RECOVERY

WIRES and Landcare Australia announced that 64 environmental groups across the country would benefit from a landmark **\$1.185 million grants** partnership supporting recovery of wildlife habitats impacted by bushfire and drought.

Launched in April 2020, the WIRES Landcare Australia Wildlife Relief and Recovery Grants is a pioneering alliance between two not-for-profits that have been part of the fabric of local communities for over 30 years.

Made possible due to the unprecedented volume of donations to WIRES from within Australia and around the world following the Black Summer bushfires, this grants program will support wide-ranging regeneration projects focused on restoring habitat impacted by the bushfires.

Projects include rainforest revegetation, installation of nest boxes to replace destroyed tree hollows for decimated native species, feeding programs for endangered wildlife, management of invasive weeds, erosion control and protection of our waterways and aquatic habitat.

These projects were selected to benefit wildlife and they will deliver positive outcomes for wild populations of over 50 native species.

Landcare Australia CEO Dr Shane Norrish applauded the overwhelming response to the grants program, citing the extraordinary commitment landholders and community environmental groups display towards the relief and recovery of bushfire and drought-impacted regions across the country, particularly when Australia is facing one of its most challenging times in recent history.

*“While the nation has been impacted by the worst global health pandemic in living memory, effectively halting on-ground bushfire and drought regeneration activity, the desire and motivation to get on with the recovery effort has been astounding, and the demand for assistance and the quality of applications so great, WIRES provided additional funding to support more groups than originally contemplated.”*

- Landcare Australia CEO Dr Shane Norrish



## SPECIES RECOVERY

Working with Australian Wildlife Conservancy and Aussie Ark, WIRES have supported a range of bushfire recovery projects and species conservation projects. Species recovery and conservation work will be completed to assist the 17 species below over the next 3 years.

	NEAR THREATENED	VULNERABLE	ENDANGERED	CRITICALLY ENDANGERED
Broad Toothed Rat			X	
Brushed-tailed Rock Wallaby		X		
Davis Tree Frog		X		
Eastern Quoll			X	
Greater Glider		X		
Hastings River Mouse		X		
Hunter River Turtle			X	
Kangaroo Island Dunnart				X
Koala		X		
Long-nosed Potoroo	X			
Manning River Turtle			X	
Northern Bettong			X	
Parma Wallaby		X		
Rufous Bettong		X		
Spiny Crayfish		X		
Spotted-tail Quoll	X			
Tasmanian Devil			X	



## WILDLIFE TRAINING

In the 12 months of the financial year ending June 2020 WIRES received a huge increase in volunteering interest from the community, 2573 people registered their interest in WIRES Rescue and Immediate Care Course (RICC), 1221 of these in January prompted by the fires. This was a 153% increase in enrolments from the previous year.

As a result of the bushfires and coronavirus pandemic, face-to-face courses were heavily impacted. Despite these setbacks and the cancellation of many courses, there were still 38 rescue and immediate care workshops held with 769 participants in attendance, and 35 species courses held with a total of 656 participants completing new or refresher training.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions and the influx of RICC enrolments during this period, the WIRES Training Team created an online alternative to the RICC workshop. This workshop has been developed as an optional solution for participants to complete their training, so that they can become active rescuers faster.

WIRES Training Team and Species Management Teams have also been involved in major reviews of the official Codes of Practice for many species, and they have been working on an extensive range of course updates and new courses, launching major updates to WIRES Avian and Reptile Handling Courses.

### SPECIES TRAINING COMPLETED INCLUDED:



Bat courses



Macropod Courses



Possum and Glider Courses



Wombat Course



Reptile Handling Courses



Small Mammal Courses



Raptor Course



Avian Courses





## CORPORATE SUPPORT

Deeply touched by the horror of the fires, organisations nationally and internationally have provided incredibly generous support to help wildlife immediately impacted and many are committed to supporting the long-term recovery process and the long-term protection and preservation of native animals.

This national and global support empowered WIRES to initiate new partnerships that will deliver long-term transformational change for wildlife habitat and wild populations. We have also been able to provide critical emergency assistance for wildlife rescuers and animals in distress nationwide.

We extend our sincere gratitude to every business, large and small, that has donated to support wildlife rescue, rehabilitation and recovery. For organisations wanting to support wildlife WIRES has several [partnership levels](#) designed to make it easy for smaller businesses to get involved, and we welcome opportunities to partner with larger organisations on major projects to increase our national collective impact for wildlife, all enquiries can be emailed to [support@wires.org.au](mailto:support@wires.org.au)

Thank you again to all our sponsors and partners for your support of native animals, we are very grateful for your ongoing involvement.

### PLATINUM PARTNERS



### GOLD PARTNERS



campaigntrack





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## FINANCIAL UPDATE

The major financial event of the 2020 Financial Year was the receipt of \$90,432,248 through the Emergency Fund appeal during and after the Black Summer bushfires.

NSW Wildlife Information, Rescue and Education Service Inc. (WIRES)' audited Financial Statements for financial year ending June 30, 2020 (FY20) are available on the ACNC website [www.acnc.gov.au](http://www.acnc.gov.au)

Additional explanatory information is also available via the ACNC Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission website and copies of WIRES' FY20 financial statements are available on request by emailing [info@wires.org.au](mailto:info@wires.org.au)



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## 2021 PRIORITIES

- 1.** Build strong alliances with vets, wildlife hospitals and other rescue groups to collectively and consistently rescue and care for more native animals nationally
- 2.** Recruit and train more wildlife rescue volunteers to increase our capacity to attend calls & provide ongoing care to injured wildlife
- 3.** Expand wildlife information and education programs, particularly in relation to threatened species
- 4.** Improve WIRES and national systems for wildlife rescue and rehabilitation, to deliver the fastest possible rescues and best practice care for native animals
- 5.** Increase emergency preparedness to be able to better respond to wildlife in distress every day and in the event of major emergencies
- 6.** Commission critical wildlife research to improve rehabilitation and conservation outcomes
- 7.** Increase the rehabilitation skills for wildlife carers nationally across all species by sharing resources and
- 8.** Collaborate on projects to protect, preserve and restore critical wildlife habitat
- 9.** Create and manage long-term programs to protect and preserve wildlife in the wild, including threatened species projects



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## GET INVOLVED

WIRES is committed to increasing and improving wildlife rescue, rehabilitation, information and education services nationally, and dedicated to protecting and preserving Australian wildlife for future generations.

Our rescue to release work, returns life to the wild, and it is community support that makes our work possible.

By donating to WIRES you are supporting the rescue, rehabilitation and recovery of native wildlife. Gifts \$2 and over are tax-deductible within Australia and donations can be made at [wires.org.au](https://wires.org.au)

We thank every individual and organisation that is part of our journey already for the impact that you have had, and we look forward to working with you long-term to help more sick, injured and orphaned animals. Be sure to stay in touch via our [newsletter](#) and [social media](#)

If you would like to collaborate with us to improve outcomes for wildlife, partnership opportunities or leaving a gift in your will please email [support@wires.org.au](mailto:support@wires.org.au)



**Thank you for sharing our mission to actively rehabilitate and preserve Australian wildlife and inspire others to do the same.**



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**Incorporation No. Y0116216**

**Rescue Line: 1300 094 737**

**Donations P: (02) 8977 3396 F: (02) 8977 3399**

All gifts to WIRES \$2 and over are tax-deductible within Australia

**[www.wires.org.au](http://www.wires.org.au)**

**[info@wires.org.au](mailto:info@wires.org.au)**

WIRES is licenced to rescue and care for wildlife by the NSW  
National Parks & Wildlife Service, licence no. MWL000100285.