

40 Years of Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation

Milestones, Achievements & Impact



About WIRES

Since 1985, WIRES has provided rescue advice and hands-on assistance for more than 2.2 million Australian native animals. WIRES is Australia's largest wildlife charity dedicated solely to the rescue, rehabilitation and protection of native wildlife.

Today, more than 2,000 users across 18 wildlife groups nationally use WIRES systems to improve rescue outcomes, whilst the WIRES Wildlife Rescue Office now receives over 230,000 calls annually, with demand to help native animals in distress increasing by up to 20% per annum.

2.2M+

native animals
assisted

230,000+

rescue calls
received in 2025

3,480

trained volunteers
(FY25)

WIRES Volunteers – The Heart of the Organisation

For 40 years, WIRES has invested in the people at the heart of wildlife rescue. Volunteers are supported with training, resources, and community to ensure the best possible outcomes for native wildlife across metropolitan, regional, and remote communities.

WIRES has three entry pathways for volunteers, with the majority joining a WIRES Branch. There are 29 WIRES branches across NSW, with 3,480 trained volunteers at the end of FY25 - including 951 trained Rescue 101 volunteers and 242 trained Community Manage Treaters.



Volunteer Support & Benefits

- Food costs for animals in care are 100% covered by WIRES Head Office.
- Volunteers have access to fuel subsidies and a wide range of free and heavily subsidised training.
- Rescue and care equipment may be provided through Head Office equipment programs or branch-level funding — all funds raised locally by branches are directed back to local wildlife rescue and care.
- All volunteers are covered by WIRES insurance, with increased investment in WHS processes and systems.
- A dedicated membership team provides frontline support, data management, communications, and daily systems assistance.
- Access to free Lyssavirus vaccinations
- Volunteers have access to the National Emergency Worker Support Service (NEWSS), delivered by the Black Dog Institute — providing free and confidential mental health support for emergency services workers and volunteers, including wildlife responders.

WIRES Rescue Office



The WIRES Rescue Office operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, receiving over 1,000 calls a day at peak times for urgent rescue advice and assistance. The Rescue Office coordinates thousands of volunteers across NSW to rescue and rehabilitate native animals — from injured kangaroos on highways and orphaned joeys, to birds caught in fishing line and animals impacted by heatwaves, fires, and floods.

Emergency & Disaster Response



Over the past five years, WIRES has dramatically expanded its emergency response capacity. The WIRES Emergency Response Team (ERT) now comprises eight highly skilled professionals operating year-round in fully equipped Wildlife Ambulances across New South Wales, and in Tasmania and South-East Queensland.

Emergency Responders carry comprehensive rescue equipment and medical supplies, enabling them to handle the most challenging rescue scenarios and respond to emergencies Australia-wide. A further 100+ volunteers participate in the Volunteer Emergency Response Team (VERT) program, extending reach and ensuring rapid assistance within local branch catchment areas and surrounding regions.

Through the WIRES Disaster Relief Program, 27 external organisations and two WIRES Branches received support following natural disasters in the past year alone. Funding covered first aid supplies, food, PPE, rescue equipment, and animal enclosures.



Training & Education



WIRES has continually expanded its training footprint to strengthen wildlife rescue capability across Australia. Three introductory courses provide entry-level pathways for new volunteers:

- WIRES Rescue and Immediate Care Course (RICC)
- WIRES Rescue 101 Course
- WIRES Community Mangle Treatment Course

There are currently 19 species-specific training courses offered for WIRES Members. In addition, to support sector training nationally WIRES is currently assisting with training for 48 wildlife rescue organisations around the country. There are 12 national training programs including governance currently available for external organisations.

Rescue 101

Launched in 2021 and piloted initially in the Northern Beaches of NSW, Rescue 101 provides a streamlined entry-level training pathway enabling volunteers to attend straightforward rescues — including birds, possums, reptiles, turtles, and frogs — and assist with veterinary transport alongside the member of the public who made the original rescue call. The program has since expanded across NSW, with 951 trained Rescue 101 volunteers at the end of FY25.

Veterinary Training Hub

Established in May 2025, the WIRES Veterinary Training Hub is a free online platform supporting veterinary professionals and students with wildlife-specific education and clinical guidance. Enrolments span Australia and internationally, extending WIRES' educational reach well beyond its volunteer network.

In addition to training, WIRES has run multiple Lyssavirus vaccination grant rounds for vets to increase capacity and treatment accessibility for bats.



Rehabilitation Facilities



WIRES is committed to developing dedicated rehabilitation facilities that enable volunteers to care for native animals in safe, well-equipped environments — improving recovery outcomes and supporting the successful return of animals to the wild.

Native Animal Recovery Centre — Randwick

A state-of-the-art rehabilitation centre delivered in partnership with Randwick City Council and the NSW Government. Officially launched in 2025, the centre strengthens wildlife care capability across metropolitan Sydney.

Western Sydney University Koala Facility — Richmond NSW

A purpose-built rehabilitation facility supporting koalas from the Blue Mountains and surrounding regions. The site features six specialised enclosures integrated within Western Sydney University's Wildlife Facility, enabling collaborative care between trained carers and veterinarians.



Mullyang Wildlife Centre — Fitzroy Falls

Officially launched in March 2025, Mullyang is WIRES' dedicated raptor rehabilitation centre, focused on the care and recovery of birds of prey. With over 1,737 calls for raptor rescue advice and assistance received in 2024, this facility addresses a critical gap in specialist raptor care for WIRES volunteers and the broader sector.

Coffs Harbour Pre-Release Facility

Opened in 2025 and located in a quiet natural setting behind the Coffs Regional Community Gardens, this facility supports the critical final stage of rehabilitation prior to release. It currently serves possums and native bird species, improving post-release survival outcomes.



Major Collaborations & Sector Support

Following the 2019–20 Black Summer bushfires and unprecedented public and global support, WIRES became the largest independent funder of wildlife rehabilitation and recovery in Australia. WIRES has since collaborated with hundreds of organisations to strengthen wildlife rescue and care capacity across every state and territory.

National Grants Program

Launched in 2021, the program has allocated over \$4 million to 359 wildlife rescue and rehabilitation projects across Australia, strengthening frontline capacity nationwide. In addition, the WIRES and Landcare Australia Wildlife Relief and Recovery Grants have supported 64 environmental groups nationally to restore wildlife habitat impacted by bushfire and drought.

Research Grants Program

Launched in 2022 following the Black Summer bushfires, the Research Grants Program invested in research that supports the wildlife sector nationally and addresses critical knowledge gaps surrounding Australian wildlife and their habitats. Over \$1.2 million was allocated to 27 research projects across Australia.

In addition to this program WIRES has collaborated with over 20 universities across Australia, investing millions of dollars on critical wildlife projects to help improve long-term outcomes for native species.

Key Partnership

Woolworths Food and Disaster Relief Support

Since 2020, Woolworths and WIRES have partnered to protect vulnerable Australian wildlife, support wildlife carers, and reduce food waste. The Woolworths & WIRES Food for Wildlife Program is Australia's largest free food program for rescued native animals, providing surplus fresh produce, meat, and fish to wildlife carers for the rehabilitation of birds, mammals, and reptiles.



Hundreds of stores and wildlife groups and carers are involved in the program. Approximately 260,000kg of surplus food has been saved from landfill so far.

In addition to utilising surplus food the program supports hundreds of carers with specialised food support and disaster relief support.



WIRES has provided significant funding for the following partnerships:

WildSeek Project — Community Wildlife Intelligence Hubs

A national conservation network launched in partnership with Landcare Australia and Queensland University of Technology. The initiative combines technology, citizen science, and community hubs to improve species detection and conservation response.

Sydney Basin Koala Network

Three years of funding to establish the Sydney Basin Koala Network, strengthening community engagement, citizen science, and policy advocacy for koala protection at state and federal levels.



Taronga Conservation Society Australia

A multi-year partnership supporting conservation of the platypus and the critically endangered plains-wanderer. Funding supports the Platypus Rescue HQ at Taronga Western Plains Zoo and advanced monitoring technology for plains-wanderer recovery.

Australian Wildlife Conservancy

Following the Black Summer bushfires, WIRES funded AWC across three key projects:

- Recovery of seven threatened species on Kangaroo Island.
- Bushfire recovery projects in NSW.
- Conservation efforts to prevent the extinction of the Northern Bettong.

Jaliigirr Biodiversity Alliance

Five-year funding support for habitat rehabilitation and protection of Grey-headed Flying Fox breeding and winter foraging habitat in the Bellingen and Coffs Harbour regions.

Great Eastern Ranges

WIRES funded coordinated projects to protect, restore, and reconnect habitat in the Upper Clarence, Greater Blue Mountains, and NSW South Coast following the 2019 bushfires.

Building Capacity in Tasmania

Multi-year funding support for the Tasmanian Government's Wildlife Rehabilitation Sector Strategy and Action Plan (2022–24), providing field-based rescue support, volunteer training assistance, rehabilitator grants, and improved access to specialist wildlife veterinary services.

Currumbin Wildlife Hospital QLD

Funding was provided to expand its facility and to be better equipped to treat a rapidly increasing number of sick native animals coming into the facility. Funding contributed to construction of an extension of the hospital as well as the medical fit out costs. WIRES also supporting ongoing emergency rescue assistance in the region with a dedicated emergency rescue responder and emergency vehicle based at Currumbin to improve rescue response capability.



Wildlife Advocacy

WIRES plays an active advocacy role at local, state and federal level, drawing on decades of frontline rescue data to inform policy on native wildlife protection. This includes formal submissions to parliamentary inquiries and government reviews, direct engagement with regulators on legislation affecting wildlife rescue and rehabilitation, and ongoing collaboration with government agencies to strengthen animal welfare frameworks. WIRES' scale and reach, spanning 29 branches, 3,480 volunteers and 230,000+ annual rescue calls, gives it a uniquely evidence-based voice in shaping policy that affects native species across the country.

Species-Specific Support

Koalas

WIRES has delivered multifaceted support to address significant pressures facing koala populations, including rescue and rehabilitation, veterinary sector support, citizen science initiatives, breeding programs, and specialised rehabilitation facilities.

Key partnerships include the Koala Health Hub at the University of Sydney, Western Sydney University, Koalas Life, Science for Wildlife, and the Sydney Basin Koala Network.

WIRES has also funded a wide range of organisations through its National Grants Program to strengthen koala rescue, treatment, and rehabilitation across the country.



Wombats

WIRES has been a national leader in tackling sarcoptic mange — one of the most significant threats to wombat welfare. This parasitic disease has reached alarming proportions, affecting up to 90% of some wombat populations.

- In 2022, WIRES launched the Community Mange Treatment Program, enabling trained members of the public to treat wombats safely. Together with 207 WIRES members trained to treat mange, the program has treated over 600 suffering wombats.
- WIRES has partnered with BRAVECTO® to provide critical mange treatment to carers and external wildlife groups.
- Funded University of Tasmania for project to improve effectiveness of treatment.



 Farres Owida

Flying Foxes

Flying fox populations across Australia face increasing threats from habitat loss, mass starvation events, and extreme heatwaves. WIRES has played a vital role in flying fox rescue and conservation, including:

- Funding misting systems during extreme heat events to reduce mortality.
- Protecting breeding and foraging habitat in Bellingen and Coffs Harbour.
- Establishing a national veterinary vaccination program supporting 77 clinics and 187 veterinary staff across Australia.
- Developing a specialist treatment guide for vets covering assessment, hydration, and pain management for flying foxes and microbats.
- Invested in research with Macquarie University regarding bacterial pathogens and antibiotic resistance.



 Mark Thomas

Rainbow Lorikeets

Lorikeet Paralysis Syndrome (LPS) predominantly affects wild rainbow lorikeets, causing paralysis and leaving birds unable to fly or feed. During outbreaks, large numbers of birds can be impacted rapidly.

When a major outbreak occurred in the Northern Rivers region of NSW, WIRES helped establish emergency triage centres to manage affected birds requiring urgent care. The WIRES Emergency Response Team worked closely with Wildlife Health Australia, the NSW Environment Protection Authority, RSPCA Australia, and Vets Beyond Borders to coordinate treatment, monitoring, and response.

WIRES has provided funding to the School of Veterinary Sciences at the University of Sydney, and the 2025 Pat Connors Avian Grant was awarded to the University of Queensland to support research into the causes of Lorikeet Paralysis Syndrome.



 Amanda De George

40-Year Timeline

1985	WIRES established in New South Wales by a small group of volunteers committed to improving outcomes for injured and orphaned native wildlife. First rescue call received in August 1985.
1986	Official launch at Bradley's Head, Sydney Harbour.
1990s	Development of structured wildlife rehabilitation training. WIRES introduced formal training courses to support safe rescue and rehabilitation practices.
2007	Developed a custom rescue and rehabilitation database, moving records online to improve rescue and care management.
2014	Implemented a rescue communications platform to improve volunteer coordination and speed of rescue response.
2015	Launched WIRES' first mobile-friendly website, enabling the public to report a rescue online for the first time.
2019-20	WIRES leads wildlife response to the Black Summer bushfires — the most significant wildlife emergency in Australian history. Unprecedented public and global support enabled WIRES to become the largest independent funder of wildlife rehabilitation and recovery in Australia. Launched Emergency Relief Grants, distributing over \$2mil in wake of the fires
2020	Transitioned to 24/7 rescue advice and assistance, 365 days a year, for all species.
2021	Launched National Grants Program, distributing over \$4 million to 369 wildlife rescue and rehabilitation projects nationwide. Launched and expanded the Rescue 101 program, providing a streamlined entry-level pathway for volunteers to assist with straightforward rescues.
2022	Launched Research Grants program.
2025	Opened three new rehabilitation facilities: Native Animal Recovery Centre (Randwick), Mullyang Wildlife Centre (Fitzroy Falls), and Coffs Harbour Pre-Release Facility. Established the Veterinary Training Hub — a free online platform for wildlife-specific veterinary education.
2026	Launching a new, best-practice rescue and rehabilitation management platform to support the next decade of wildlife rescue.

Thank you!

Whilst we can never bring back the billions of native animals that perished in the 2019/20 Australian bushfire crisis, we can continue to do everything possible to re-establish the populations we've lost and safeguard their future.

As a result of the worldwide outpouring of grief and generosity in the wake of the Black Summer bushfires, WIRES has established new, long-term programs for the future survival of Australian wildlife, and distributed tens of millions of dollars to help build the capacity of wildlife rescue and rehabilitation in Australia, paying particular attention to improved emergency response, the restoration of threatened species habitat and the funding of critical research for our most vulnerable native species.

On behalf of the hundreds of thousands of vulnerable native animals that are assisted by WIRES every single day, thank you.

