



## Pouch checking saves lives



Bella was rescued from mum's pouch

Spring is the season for wildlife orphans, and a peak period for calls to our Emergency Response Service. We are constantly reminding people to check marsupial pouches for orphaned babies!

Little Bella is a velvet swamp wallaby who lost her mum in a road accident.

Fortunately, a passing driver stopped when they spotted Bella's mum on the side of the road. They called Wildlife Victoria and the Emergency Response Operator talked them through the process for checking a marsupial's pouch.

Now the little wallaby is in safe hands with a registered wildlife shelter. She's only about four or five months old, so she'll stay at the shelter for many months before she can be released back into the wild.



## Raven returns home

We often receive calls from people who are worried about young birds flailing around on the ground during Spring. Often these birds are just fledglings, trying out their flying and flapping skills. Normally they are just finding their wings and don't need saving.

In this case though, the juvenile raven had fallen out of its nest that was way up high in a tree on a private property. It was just a little too small to be out of the nest by itself.

The property resident called us to ask how to help the bird. He could see that the parents were still in the vicinity.

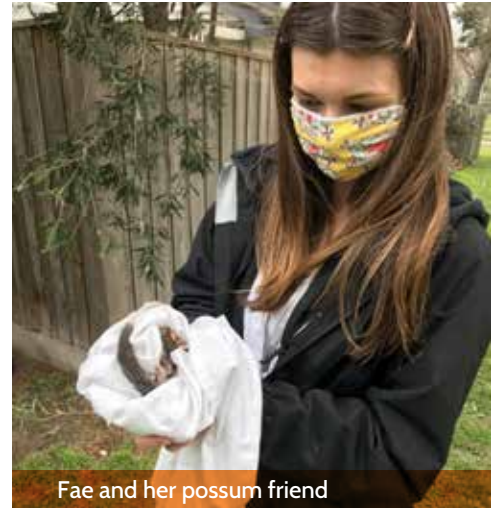
The best thing for the bird was to return to its nest.

With a little bit of ingenuity, a pulley system was rigged up and the bird was returned home safe and sound!



Raven hoisted to safety

## Ringtail rescue



Fae and her possum friend

Shannon phoned us about a small ringtail possum who had been on her neighbour's roof and under attack from a raven. In an attempt to escape, the possum jumped to a tree on Shannon's property. However, it looked like he may have been injured.

Wildlife rescuer Fae went out to help.

The possum was high up in the tree in a very tricky spot that was not secure enough for a ladder.

At first Fae, Shannon and her partner John tried to entice the possum down with a strawberry on the end of a pole, but that wasn't working (although the ringtail was mad keen on the fruit). He ended up climbing to the highest part of the tree.

John saved the day by climbing on top of the roof and nudging the possum down with the pole until finally it fell into the neighbour's waiting arms.

"Fae, the Wildlife Victoria rescuer, was great and directed us as to what to do. We (and the possum) were so lucky and fortunate that she could arrive so quickly," said Shannon.

Shannon and John named the little fellow Ringo. Funnily enough Ringo was taken to a registered shelter where he met another newly arrived ringtail - Bingo!

Last spring our Emergency Response Service took more than 3,000 calls about wildlife orphans. Thanks to your support, we are able to get orphaned wildlife the care they need.



# Supporting wildlife through the challenges of 2020

What a roller-coaster of a year 2020 has been! We started the year with the terrible Black Summer bushfires, followed immediately by a global pandemic. The journey of recovery for people affected by these events may take years. For many this has been a year of loss – homes, jobs and even loved ones lost before their time. The loneliness and isolation experienced by some as we stay apart to avoid virus transmission has certainly taken its toll. So much has changed since this time last year. We have all been given a reminder that nothing can be taken for granted.

At Wildlife Victoria we have been able to continue the Wildlife Emergency Response Service without interruption during the pandemic. In March we set up our phone operators with home-based workstations, and continued to respond to reports of sick, injured and orphaned wildlife. In the 2019/20 year, our operators answered 45,485 phone calls – over 5,000 more than the previous year. A generous first-ever contribution

by the State Government allowed us to expand our services to the Victorian community.

During “lockdown” periods the number of animals hit by vehicles – mainly kangaroos – dropped by 40%, one of the few positive outcomes of COVID-19 movement restrictions.

Throughout this challenging year, our wonderful volunteers across Victoria have continued to respond to animals in need of rescue and transport to get them the help they need. Veterinarians have continued to provide free services to wildlife, and the amazing wildlife shelters and foster carers have continued to give animals a second chance at a wild life.

Due to the incredible generosity of donors to the Bushfire Appeal, we have been able to distribute over a million dollars in grants to volunteer wildlife rescuers and carers. These dedicated volunteers have historically had extremely limited access to grants,



with most costs coming out of their own pockets. The Wildlife Victoria grants have aimed at bushfire recovery, increased capacity to care for wildlife, improved infrastructure and preparing for future disasters.

An enormous THANK YOU is owed to our many donors and supporters – from those who have been donating regularly for many years, to the new donors who provided much needed funds to the Bushfire Appeal. Your generosity has made a transformational difference to wildlife rescue and care in Victoria.

**Dr Megan Davidson**  
CEO



Wildlife Victoria CEO Dr Megan Davidson with Andy Meddick MP and some furry friends.

## Defending our native animals

### What is wildlife advocacy?

It is any action that promotes the interests of wildlife, to protect and defend their welfare and life.

At Wildlife Victoria we engage in advocacy on behalf of wildlife in many ways.

### Everyday advocacy

When taking a call from the public our phone operators advocate for the animal's best interests and welfare. This might be by persuading the caller that the fledgling bird does not need “rescue”, that they cannot keep the baby wombat they found in a dead mother's pouch, and that they are not allowed to trap and relocate or kill possums on their property.

Sometimes we advocate by seeking to remove the cause of animals becoming injured or trapped. For example, we ask property owners where wildlife has been caught on barbed wire to remove the

wire or to take action to reduce the risk to wildlife.

Where a case involves cruelty or suspected illegal activity, we report the details to the authorities and follow up to ensure that action has been taken. In one case a man who killed a threatened Grey-headed flying fox trapped in his fruit-tree netting was reported to us by his neighbour. We were able to get the local police to attend and the man was arrested and charged with cruelty and firearms offences.

### Advocacy with policy and decision-makers

Advocating with governments and their departments to influence policy and legislation is the way we can potentially have the greatest impact on wildlife welfare.

We advocate by speaking and meeting regularly with key government department staff, by writing directly to

# Grant win for raptor shelter

Thanks to our donors, we have been able to issue more than 300 grants this year; providing vital support for wildlife carers, rescuers and shelters all over Victoria.

Wildlife shelter operator, Nalini, was a recipient of our donor supported grants program.

A passionate raptor lover, Nalini says she'll take in any bird that needs help, but the owls fascinate her.

"We mainly see the Brown Goshawk, Nankeen Kestrel, Collared Sparrowhawk and Australian Hobby around here. Local owls include the Southern Boobook and Barn Owl and very occasionally the Powerful Owl – Powerful Owls are an endangered species so they get taken straight up to Healesville Sanctuary."

Nalini said birds have a preservation reflex – even when sick or injured they will sit up and pretend they are ok.

"The Raptors are incredibly stoic. Birds will arrive in a compromised,

often critical condition. Their ability to hunt has been impacted and they may not have drunk or eaten for a number of days. A lot of them don't survive."

Through Wildlife Victoria's donor supported grants program, Nalini was able to purchase essential PPE, sanitis-ers, waterproof waders, a raptor net and an inflatable boat amongst other things.

"A little boat can be so handy! Sometimes we have to do a waterbird rescue. There have been occasions when I've thought to myself, how on earth will I get to this bird?"

"I did a rescue of an Australasian Darter last year at Lilydale Lake that had an entangled beak and I had to find someone with a boat to help me get out to her."

Nalini also purchased a second-hand humidicrib with funds received from Wildlife Victoria.

"I already have an intensive care unit at the shelter, but now with this humidicrib, a much larger bird can be hospitalised in



Barn Owls in rehabilitation

a quiet, warm and dark space. It is particularly helpful for treating animals in shock."

"I used it for the first time recently for a Brown Goshawk cruelty case, but unfortunately he did not survive," Nalini said.

Nalini passed on her thanks to Wildlife Victoria supporters who made the grants possible.

the responsible Minister, by representation on the Stakeholder Reference Group of the Office of the Conservation Regulator, and by making formal submissions to reviews of legislation and public consultations.

You can find copies of these submissions on our website:

- 2019 – Commercial Kangaroo Shooting Code
- 2019 – North-East link project
- 2020 – Independent enquiry into 2019-2020 Victorian fire season
- 2020 – Consultation on use patterns for anticoagulant rodenticide products
- 2020 – Enquiry into ecosystem decline in Victoria

Some of the successes of this type of advocacy in recent times are the revocation of the Governor in Council Order that unprotected wombats in large areas of Victoria, and the inclusion of regulation of domestic fruit-tree netting and the banning of glue traps in the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Regulations 2019.

This year the Minister for Environment announced a long-overdue review of the *Wildlife Act 1975*. This is a once in four-decade's opportunity to advocate for laws that better protect our native wildlife, and we will be putting considerable resources into this project.

## Advocacy for bushfire response

An important activity this year has been advocating for improvements in the state response to wildlife affected by bushfire. In the past two bushfire seasons, wildlife volunteers trained by DELWP have not been included in the bushfire response. Wildlife Victoria, with other organisations, are working with DELWP to improve the system to achieve better welfare outcomes for wildlife affected by bushfire and advocating for the inclusion of volunteer rescuers and vets in the incident response.



## New regs for fruit tree netting

New regulations coming into effect in 2021 will ban the use of dangerous nets with large holes. If you can poke your finger through the net, it is not safe for wildlife. Animals can easily become entangled in the net.

Most birds and animals (mainly flying foxes) trapped in these nets experience severe injuries and need to be euthanized. Survivors can take months of costly rehabilitation before they can be released.

Please ensure any netting you use complies with the new regulations.



# Reminder...

There are three ways you can report sick, injured and orphaned wildlife to Wildlife Victoria:

- Phone 03 8400 7300
- Web reporting form via our website [www.wildlifevictoria.org.au](http://www.wildlifevictoria.org.au)

- Snap Send Solve app (download from Apple or Play Store)

Reporting by web or app means that you do not have to wait on the phone on hold. Our operators will deal with these reports in the order received.



Joanne volunteers at a local shelter

Wildlife Victoria has a very special group of donors who have committed to supporting native animals through our WildFriends regular giving program.

It's been such a tough year for many in our community, so we are extra appreciative for our WildFriends' ongoing commitment. Over recent months, we've been telephoning our

## Meet our WildFriend Joanne

WildFriends to thank them for their generosity and support.

Meet Joanne, one of our WildFriends who has been donating to Wildlife Victoria for about four years...

**Q: What motivated you to become a WildFriend?**

**Joanne:** I have always adored Australian wildlife, and have kangaroos living on my property now. I started noticing the roadkill and then saw someone hit a kangaroo, so stopped and called Wildlife Victoria for help. I gained a great appreciation of the human impact on wildlife and wanted to give back. As well as becoming a WildFriend I started volunteering at my local wildlife shelter once a week, and I bring my children along so they too learn the importance of protecting our precious wildlife.

**Q: Why did you choose Wildlife Victoria?**

**Joanne:** I was aware of your organisation over the years and always admired your work. You were the first people I thought to call that day I saw the kangaroo get hit by the car, and you were so very helpful.

**Q: When did your love of Wildlife start?**

**Joanne:** As a very young child. I grew up on the Mornington Peninsula and had lots of wildlife around and had a sense of being part of nature. My parents were nature enthusiasts, so we did a lot of bushwalking and camping growing up. I would always get so excited when I saw an animal.

**Q: Do you have a favourite native animal?**

As well as kangaroos, I would have to say I adore wombats! We also have a pair of wedge tailed eagles that live near us - they are so magnificent and I have even seen them with their baby.

**Q: Have you ever needed to use Wildlife Victoria's services apart from that first time when you saw the kangaroo get hit?**

Yes, I've called Wildlife Victoria when I've seen kangaroos on the side of the road so they could perform a pouch check for any joeys. I also called for advice when I saw a kangaroo on our property that had part of its tail missing.

## Yes! I want to help sick, injured and orphaned wildlife

### I will give:

\$25  \$50  \$100  My gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to make this a regular monthly donation

Donations \$2 and over are tax deductible.

ABN 27 753 478 012

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

### I will give by:

Cheque or Credit card:  Visa  Mastercard  Amex

Card number

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Expiry date  /  CVV

Cardholder's name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Please post this form to:

Wildlife Victoria, Reply Paid 86041, Abbotsford VIC 3067

or call (03) 9445 0310 to make a donation. Thank you for your support.

Donate online at [www.wildlifevictoria.org.au/donations](http://www.wildlifevictoria.org.au/donations)