



# OUR WILDLIFE IS TOO PRECIOUS TO LOSE

## CARING FOR OUR NATIVE ANIMALS

*The Greens' plan to help protect Australia's sick and injured wildlife*

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Every year hundreds of thousands of Australian native animals become orphaned, injured or displaced due to habitat loss, poisoning, car strikes, entanglement in rubbish or barbed wire, or attacks by cats, dogs or other feral animals.

Too many of our native animals die slow tortured deaths as a result of these incidents. Others are lucky to be rescued by one of the thousands of committed, caring volunteers who work across Australia to give our wildlife a better chance.

### > WILDLIFE CARERS ARE HEROES

Across Australia, every year thousands of volunteers come to the rescue of sick and injured native wildlife, including birds, reptiles, koalas, possums, wallabies and kangaroos. Where possible, they rehabilitate these creatures for release back into the wild.

Many wildlife carers travel great distances to respond to calls for help for injured wildlife, give countless hours, and often incur significant personal expense to carefully rehabilitate animals in their care. Caring for orphaned joeys or birds, for example, often involves around the clock monitoring and feeding.

These volunteers and their organisations also support the wider community in caring for our wildlife through their community education programs, wildlife training and all-important 24 hour wildlife hotlines to provide emergency wildlife care advice.

In New South Wales alone, WIRES reports that their 2200 volunteers help rescue and care for 56,000 animals every year, and respond to over 100,000 calls for advice on sick and injured wildlife. With the mounting threats of encroaching human activities and increasing feral predators, it is expected that the demand for these organisations' work will only increase in years to come.

Further, recent cuts by numerous state governments to parks, wildlife and environment agencies have reduced the capacity of these agencies to respond when members of the public alert them to wildlife emergencies. As a result a number of wildlife carer organisations are facing increased demand for their voluntary services. Yet most of our wildlife care organisations receive little if any state or federal government support for their invaluable work.

### > THE GREENS' PLAN TO SUPPORT WILDLIFE CARERS

With our wildlife under more pressure than ever before, the Australian Greens believe our wildlife carers deserve more recognition and support for their invaluable work.

**The Greens' plan proposes a national grants program of \$5 million per annum to:**

- Help subsidise **food and medical expenses for sick and injured wildlife;**
- Assist with purchase of **wildlife care equipment;**
- Support **training programs** for our wildlife carers;
- **Increase our knowledge** about successful wildlife care and rehabilitation; and
- Supporting other activities such as 24 wildlife care advice hotlines and community education.

These grants, available from 1 July 2014, will help wildlife carers and their networks continue their invaluable work, in the face of growing demand and cuts to state government services. These grants will be open to wildlife carers and wildlife carer organisations, and will be administered by the federal Environment Department.



## > THE GREENS' TRACK RECORD ON STANDING UP FOR OUR WILDLIFE

The Australian Greens have a long track record of fighting to protect Australia's unique and precious wildlife.

As part of the Clean Energy package, we secured the \$946 million Biodiversity Fund, to protect habitat and increase carbon stores in the landscape – we are now fighting to restore the \$470 million cut to this critical fund by the Labor Government.

The Greens initiated a Senate Inquiry into koalas which resulted in threatened species listing for this national icon. We also initiated a Senate Inquiry into the effectiveness of threatened species and ecological communities' protection in Australia. Over 170 submissions have been made by scientists, community groups and individuals across Australia. Hearings have been held in Canberra, Sydney, Perth and Melbourne which provided a critical opportunity for our national leaders to hear the significant concerns that our scientists and the wider community hold for the future of our threatened species and ecosystems and what more urgently needs to be done.

The Greens have proposed legislation for emergency listing of threatened species, and ensuring federal responsibilities for regulating Australia's most environmentally damaging projects cannot be handed to state governments – which both the old parties failed to support.

We have also announced our plan to secure the future of Australia's threatened species. This plan will invest \$120 million over three years into mapping and protecting important habitats and increasing funding for listing and protection of threatened species.

The Greens will also ensure Australia's national parks are protected under our national environment laws.

## > OTHER PARTIES

Neither the Coalition nor the Government have announced any support for our invaluable wildlife carer networks.

Rather than committing to the critical steps we need to take to turn around our biodiversity decline, the Coalition's environment policy is to hand off key federal environment protection powers to state governments – a step that experts and the community agree will be disastrous for environmental protection in Australia.

Coalition state governments have overseen opening up of national parks - home to much of our native wildlife - to recreational shooting and the opening up of native forests for logging. Handing these states federal environment responsibilities is a recipe for disaster for our native wildlife.

Despite having the opportunity to support Greens' actions in the parliament, Labor refused every time to ensure federal environmental protection powers remain with the federal government.

The Labor Government has slashed critical funding to the Biodiversity Fund, and despite having the power to stop environmentally damaging projects has consistently favoured short term profits of big business over long term protection of our unique flora and fauna.