NSW Volunteer Wildlife Rehabilitation Sector Strategy
Consultation Draft
The volunteer wildlife rehabilitation sector provides an invaluable service to the community that should be better appreciated, coordinated and supported to ensure it can meet future demands and expectations.

Photo: Wallumatta Nature Reserve (John Spencer/OEH)
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Have your say

Public exhibition is from 1 March 2019 to 12 April 2019.
You can provide your written submission in either of the following ways:

By mail:
Post your written submission to:
Wildlife Rehabilitation Sector Strategy
National Parks and Wildlife Service
Biodiversity and Wildlife Unit (Level 3)
PO Box 1967
Hurstville, NSW 1481

By email:
Email your submission to:
npws.bwt@environment.nsw.gov.au

Online:
Make a submission by using the online form at www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/native-animals/rehabilitating-native-animals/wildlife-rehabilitation-sector-strategy
Most of us at some time are likely to encounter wildlife that are sick or injured and in need of care. Volunteers, with the support of veterinary professionals, provide an invaluable service rescuing these native animals and invest considerable time and resources helping them recover so they can be released back to nature.

They are first responders to native animal emergencies, often working in challenging and confronting circumstances and bearing significant personal cost and stress.

The Office of Environment and Heritage vision for the more than 5600 volunteers in New South Wales is that they are supported to continue to deliver this important service. We want volunteers to feel understood, respected and appreciated and be equipped with the necessary skills and resources to perform their role. Their work provides a significant public good and is of high value to the community, government and the environment.

The NSW Volunteer Wildlife Rehabilitation Sector Strategy is a three-year plan to support and improve wildlife rehabilitation in New South Wales. The strategy will be implemented by the Office of Environment and Heritage in partnership with the sector and supported by the Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife and the Environmental Trust. Through the NSW Koala Strategy, $4.05 million has been committed by the NSW Government to implement this strategy and this will be augmented by an additional $1.2 million of funding provided by the Environmental Trust to the Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife.

The strategy contains actions that will benefit volunteers and the organisations that support them. It will also improve community recognition and acknowledgement of the sector. It is part of a longer-term program to assist volunteers and strengthen the capacity of the sector to support its volunteers and deliver on-ground services, the strategy accords with recommendations of the 2014 Independent Biodiversity Legislation Review Panel review into biodiversity legislation in New South Wales. It also aligns the sector with regulatory requirements subsequently established under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*.

A key element of the strategy will be the introduction of a system of accreditation for volunteer wildlife rehabilitation organisations that is underpinned by consistent standards of operation.

The NSW Volunteer Wildlife Rehabilitation Sector Strategy is the result of extensive collaboration with the wildlife rehabilitation sector including volunteers, wildlife rehabilitation service providers, the NSW peak body and veterinary practitioners, who shared their ideas and provided the evidence base for guiding our actions.

I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this strategy and those who will be working with us to implement it.

**Anthony Lean**  
**Chief Executive, Office of Environment and Heritage**
Wildlife rehabilitation in New South Wales

The provision of wildlife rehabilitation services in New South Wales relies heavily on volunteer participation and pro-bono services from private veterinary practices. The NSW Government regulates the sector and is responsible for providing consistent standards of operation that support the functions of local providers of wildlife rescue and rehabilitation services. A peak body, the NSW Wildlife Council, which is independent of government represents about half the volunteers and its stated mission is to optimise outcomes for Australian wildlife. WIRES, the largest single rehabilitation group in New South Wales, with almost half the sector in its membership of 2500, is not a member of the peak body.

Volunteer wildlife rehabilitators are passionate about helping native animals in distress and making a positive contribution to the environment. They have rescued on average more than 104,000 animals each year over the last four years, sometimes in difficult and stressful circumstances. Service providers annually receive over 180,000 calls for assistance and help educate and inform the community about ways to prevent future harm to wildlife. Volunteers contribute on average about 898 hours each year (17 hours each per week) and active carers spend about $4000 per person each year helping wildlife. It would cost a minimum of $27 million to replace the time and resources spent by volunteers each year on wildlife rescue and rehabilitation.

5600 volunteer fauna rehabilitators in NSW

$27 million minimum value of volunteers’ annual contribution each year

Photo: Volunteer with wombat. (Philip Machin/Wildcare Queanbeyan)
Volunteers are dispersed across New South Wales and are mostly members of independent wildlife rescue and rehabilitation organisations. Most people involved rehabilitate animals in their own homes. This service is augmented by a small number of central facility-based organisations and wildlife hospitals attached to exhibited animal facilities, and individual licence holders.

Private veterinary practices and wildlife hospitals are also crucial partners in the assessment and humane treatment of native animals in distress. Our veterinarians and veterinary nurses treat over 21,000 free-living native animals and provide more than $1.8 million in free services and products to wildlife each year. Balancing the running of a private practice with the lack of time, facilities and resources for treating free-living wildlife is very challenging.

Recognition of volunteer wildlife rehabilitators is slowly increasing as is our understanding of their contribution to the Government’s conservation and natural resource management objectives.

- **$1.8 million**
  - minimum value of free veterinary services to wildlife each year

- **898**
  - average volunteering hours per survey respondent in the past year
Development of the strategy

We listened carefully to the wildlife rehabilitation sector to form the evidence base for the strategy.

**Stakeholder engagement**
- Survey of volunteers
- Survey of veterinary professionals
- Face to face consultation with wildlife rehabilitation providers
- Consultation and survey of past and present peak body members
- Audit and evaluation of services

**Feedback**
- 970 Responses to our volunteer survey
- 150 Responses to our veterinary survey
- 54 Audits undertaken
- 24 Service providers consulted
- 23 Responses to our peak body survey

Photo: Native vegetation, Wallumatta Nature Reserve (John Spencer/OEH)
‘There is a strong expectation from the community that the service provided by wildlife rehabilitation groups to sick or injured individual animals is valued and maintained.’

*Independent Biodiversity Legislation Review Panel*

**Timeline for development of the strategy**

- **June-July 2019**: Final strategy (Commence accreditation transition)
- **March-April 2019**: Have your say (Sector consultation)
- **February 2019**: Return customised Survey data back to the sector
- **July 2018**: Draft strategy (Proposed actions & Accreditation Criteria)
- **May 2018**: Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference (Communicate findings)
- **2016–2017**: NSW Koala Strategy launch
- **Surveys, Consultation Audits**

**More information**

Information about the strategy can be downloaded along with its support documents from the Office of Environment and Heritage website ([www.environment.nsw.gov.au](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au)). It includes the following resources:

1. *Review of the NSW Volunteer Wildlife Rehabilitation Sector: An evidence base for guiding future reform*
2. *Accreditation of volunteer wildlife rescue and rehabilitation services in New South Wales*
Challenges and aspirations

We undertook an extensive review of services across the sector to help identify good practice and focus areas for reform. Volunteers and veterinary practitioners also told us about the challenges they face and their future aspirations for wildlife rehabilitation.

Recruitment and retention of volunteers

Nearly 90% of volunteers who responded to our survey said finding and keeping new volunteers was very important to them. Also, only 64% said volunteering in the sector benefitted their mental health. Factors affecting participation included changing social demographics, time and financial demands, group politics, conflict and burnout.

Succession planning

Participants in the sector comprise an older demographic when compared to other volunteering pursuits. Leaders of wildlife rehabilitation groups are concerned there will be no one to replace them, leading to loss of skills, fragmentation of effort and less community support.

Consistent standards of operation

About 75% of volunteers said stronger standards of care are very important to them as was better mentoring and support. Sector-wide training standards and greater access to and sharing of resources will help improve animal care.

Strategic support

Almost half of the people who responded to our surveys said they did not know what the peak body did or is meant to do and less than 25% were satisfied with the support provided by Government. A more representative peak body, stronger advocacy, leadership and greater access to funding opportunities were identified as important to volunteers.

Lack of funds

About 96% of volunteers reported incurring expenses in the year prior to the survey. These funds pay for operational capacity, wildlife emergency preparedness and group administration costs. The sector would benefit from more assistance with developing funding bids and greater access to funding opportunities to help improve standards and service delivery.
Veterinary assistance

Veterinarians and veterinary nurses told us that most aspects of their formal education were not very useful for dealing with free-living wildlife. The most common complaints received from veterinary respondents about the wildlife rehabilitation sector were about volunteer response times and the behaviour of volunteers and their group leaders.

Value and relevance

Volunteers consider their work to benefit the environment. More effective collection and use of the data generated by the sector will contribute to stronger wildlife and threatened species management outcomes, as will research into post-release outcomes.

Acknowledgement and expectation management

About 85% of volunteers said it was very important to them that the community better understands they are not paid staff and are limited in their capacity. Volunteers and veterinary staff seek greater acknowledgement and appreciation of their service.
The strategy at a glance

**Vision**
- People who participate in wildlife rehabilitation are acknowledged, respected and supported.
- Services delivered to the community are undertaken in accordance with agreed standards.
- Wildlife rehabilitation is recognised as part of Government’s chain of services for delivery of natural resource management objectives.

**Principles**
- Wildlife rehabilitation is an important and valuable service that provides benefits to people, the environment and community.
- The Strategy is a living document focused on continual improvement in volunteer support, standards of care and delivery of services.
- The planned actions in the Strategy will be co-designed and implemented in collaboration with participants in the wildlife rehabilitation sector.
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<th>Focus areas</th>
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| Volunteer support and culture     | • Improve standards of governance  
• Help new leaders adjust to their role  
• Attract younger participants to the sector  
• Facilitate a unified peak body and new strategic agenda  
• Improve the sector’s access to funding | • The sector has a positive culture and is buoyed by the intake of younger participants  
• Providers are well-represented by an effective support network  
• Volunteers have capacity to meet the demands of wildlife care |
| Standards of care and training    | • Standard induction and specialised species training for volunteers  
• Enhance mentor and species coordinator support  
• Wildlife care training for vets and vet nurses  
• Update triage and treatment protocols  
• Create service provider access to standard compliance assessment tools and continue random audits | • Volunteers are skilled and capable to meet minimum standards of care in the sector  
• Vets and vet nurses have the skills and resources to treat wildlife  
• The sector has access to tools for ensuring standards are adhered to |
| Knowledge and information access  | • Streamline reporting and improve access to data  
• Connect volunteers to other professional networks  
• Conduct post-release monitoring of rehabilitated animals | • Data collected by volunteers is utilised for wildlife management and research purposes  
• Better understanding gained of the success of wildlife rehabilitation |
| Community awareness and recognition | • Introduce a single wildlife rescue number  
• Guide community education about wildlife  
• Promote awareness about volunteer participation in wildlife rehabilitation | • Community access to rescue services is enhanced  
• Community recognition and appreciation of volunteers and native wildlife is improved |
| Government regulation and support | • Introduce a system of accreditation for volunteer wildlife rehabilitation organisations  
• Implement a more flexible policy framework  
• Provide ongoing strategic support services | • Services across the sector are consistent, reliable and in accordance with set standards  
• More effective regulation and support for the sector |
Photo: Kangaroo
(Philip Machin/Wildlife Queanbeyan)
The five focus areas

Over the next three years the Office of Environment and Heritage will partner with the sector to implement actions in these five focus areas:

- **Volunteer support and culture**
- **Standards of care and training**
- **Knowledge and information access**
- **Community awareness and recognition**
- **Government support and regulation**
Wildlife rehabilitation relies on its volunteers and we want to ensure they are well supported. We also need to be certain that wildlife rehabilitation organisations have capable leaders and tools to adequately manage their volunteer workforce. The organisations themselves must be well represented and effectively coordinated to communicate their interests and meet the strategic challenges of the sector.

**Improved standards of governance**

We will work with the sector to adopt Volunteering Australia’s National Standards for Volunteer Involvement and identify and develop resources that help wildlife rehabilitation organisations meet the standards relevant to their operations. Also, we will help develop a ‘Welcome Kit’ for new volunteers to complement their induction training. The objective of the kit is to orientate volunteers to the ethics and values of wildlife rehabilitation and the policies and procedures of their organisation. A short video outlining the Office of Environment and Heritage’s appreciation and expectations of new volunteers will be included in the kit.

**Helping new leaders adjust to their role**

To transition the next generation of volunteers into leadership roles within their organisation we will help develop online training resources that enhance their skills in leadership, communication, conflict resolution and teamwork.

**Facilitating a unified peak body and new strategic agenda**

A key priority of the strategy is to ensure the interests of wildlife rehabilitation organisations are well represented by encouraging the creation of a unified peak body. We will seek to do this by encouraging the two main bodies representing wildlife rehabilitation volunteers in New South Wales to reform into a single peak body. Alternatively, we will consider creating an advisory board comprising members from government, existing wildlife rehabilitation organisations and non-government representatives from the animal welfare, veterinary and natural resource management sectors.
The Office of Environment and Heritage will partner with the newly configured peak body (or Advisory Board) in the development of a plan that meets the ongoing strategic priorities of the sector over the next three years. Key initiatives would include:

- co-designing standards to be adopted by the sector
- developing strategies that increase volunteer participation in the sector including opportunities for participation from a wider demographic group
- establishing resources to manage volunteer stress including reviewing conflict resolution guidelines
- enhancing support for mentors and species coordinators
- developing a charter for volunteer engagement with veterinary practices
- creating a list of trainers endorsed to deliver speciality species training to the sector and developing resources to help train new and inexperienced trainers within wildlife rehabilitation groups
- connecting the sector with other participants in the wildlife and natural resource management sector such as Landcare
- promoting more efficient management of wildlife rehabilitation organisations’ fiscal and volunteer services
- exploring opportunities to augment home-based care with enclosures built by wildlife rehabilitation providers on government or corporate owned land
- introducing a volunteer wildlife rehabilitator of the year award
- We will formalise this new relationship with the coordinating body with a new ‘Service Partnership Agreement’.

*An organisation that is able to demonstrate compliance with the standards is well positioned strategically to recruit and retain more volunteers, as well as attract funding or sponsorship for new initiatives*.  
*Volunteering Australia*

**Improving the sector’s access to funding**

Environmental Trust funding of $1.2 million awarded to the Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife will be used to develop a program to support and engage wildlife carers in the important work they do. These funds will also help to set the wildlife rehabilitation sector up for success in the face of growing demand for services. This is additional to the $4.05 million committed to this strategy by the NSW Government via the [NSW Koala Strategy](#).

The Office of Environment and Heritage will also work with the coordinating body to continue to develop new opportunities for funding from corporate and government funding sources. Priority will be given to developing joint applications from wildlife rehabilitation providers that seek to deliver benefits at a regional scale.

We will also seek to secure a patron to help advocate and promote the services of the sector.
Volunteers provide a critical frontline role in the treatment and rehabilitation of sick and injured native animals. To successfully perform this role, volunteers need to have skills that meet accepted sector-wide standards of care. They also need to be guided by mentors and periodically monitored by species coordinators to ensure they continue to learn and comply with these standards. This will optimise the potential for animals to be successfully rehabilitated and returned to the wild or otherwise provided with a humane outcome. Veterinary practitioners will also benefit from additional training in wildlife care and access to technical resources.

**Standard training for volunteers**

An ambitious action under this strategy will be to introduce minimum standards for volunteer training. We will work with the sector to scope and develop a training framework that includes:

- essential learning outcomes and performance criteria needed to demonstrate achievement of these outcomes
- establishment of shared learning resources
- assessment methods required to assess competency.

We will also explore opportunities for experienced wildlife rehabilitators to stay in touch with developments in wildlife ecology, veterinary medicine and treatment practices, and interact within other professional networks. To help facilitate this, we will work with the sector to develop a program of priority workshops for wildlife rehabilitators in regional areas of New South Wales over the next three years, to augment their refresher training and help keep their skills up to date.

**Mentors and species coordinator support**

Wildlife rehabilitation organisations that invest in a mentoring program are more likely to have satisfied volunteers and higher standards of care. Good mentors, as well as being capable wildlife rehabilitators, must also be excellent communicators, problem solvers and team players. We will require organisations to have a mentor program in place and provide resources to help train mentors in

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‘There is considerable room for improvement with training standards. However, this is no fault of the organisation rather a lack of standardised training across the board by appropriately qualified trainers’.

*Wildlife rehabilitator*
communication, teamwork and conflict resolution skills. Innovative ways to help optimise and share mentoring resources within the sector will be encouraged.

**Wildlife care training for vets and vet nurses**

The Government has allocated $1.5 million over three years via the NSW Koala Strategy to Taronga Zoo in partnership with Sydney University and the Office of Environment and Heritage, to increase wildlife care professional development for veterinarians and veterinary nurses. One outcome of this work will be enhanced technical resources for the handling, triage and treatment of wildlife. Providing standard resources will also help alleviate time and skill constraints reported by veterinary practices and enhance opportunities for volunteers to access services.

About 70% of animals brought into veterinary practices are by the community not volunteer wildlife rehabilitators. We will collaborate with the peak body for veterinary professionals to ensure free-living wildlife is managed in accordance with best practice in the industry and adequate records are kept prior to their transfer to a wildlife rehabilitation organisation.

**Updated triage and treatment protocols**

Continuous improvement in animal care outcomes is reliant upon volunteers having access to triage and treatment protocols that are current and represent best practice. We intend to work with the sector to review existing protocols and make them available to volunteers on a platform that can be shared by all wildlife rehabilitation providers. This will form a valuable resource for volunteer training.

**Promoting stronger compliance**

All the initiatives identified above will help promote stronger compliance with standards of care in the sector; however, ongoing monitoring of volunteers’ adherence to these standards can often be a challenge for species coordinators and the leadership teams of wildlife rehabilitation providers.

We will develop and make available to the sector standard templates for doing internal compliance audits against our codes of practice and future conditions of accreditation. Wildlife rehabilitation providers will need to implement periodic audits of their volunteers and maintain a record of compliance. We will supplement this work by implementing a random inspection campaign to help the sector better enforce standards of care.
Knowledge and information access

Outcomes

- Data collected is more effectively utilised for wildlife management and conservation purposes
- Better understanding of the success of wildlife rehabilitation

Volunteers provide valuable information about the native animals they rescue. They tell us the name and type of species, where it was found, the probable cause of its injuries and its fate. At a landscape level, the data can inform government of potential emerging diseases and help land managers design and implement targeted conservation programs.

Over 1,000,000 native animals across 800 species have been rescued by volunteers since the year 2000. Over the last four years, 104,000 animals have been rescued on average each year.

Streamlined reporting and improved access to data

Improving how volunteers capture data about the animals they rescue and rehabilitate will maximise the potential for this information to be better integrated into existing natural resource management programs. We will work with the sector to review existing reporting...
protocols and adopt revised standards for data collection and reporting.

This will help streamline the capture of data and improve the consistency and quality of information to be imported into the OEH Atlas of Wildlife and SEED – the NSW Government’s new Sharing and Enabling Environmental Data Portal. We will also investigate new technological approaches for capturing and validating data collected by volunteers.

Once data collection has been streamlined, we will prepare an annual report and make it available to the sector and the community. This will help track trends in sick and injured wildlife and provide the sector with a resource to use for environmental education and grant application purposes.

**Connecting volunteers to other professional networks**

We will help connect the sector with other scientific and veterinary networks to expand sharing of knowledge about wildlife ecology and improvements to best practice in wildlife treatment and care.

**Post-release monitoring**

About 34% of native animals rescued are rehabilitated and released. We need to have a better understanding of the survival of these animals to inform improvements to rehabilitation practices and release site selection. The Government has announced funding through the NSW Koala Strategy for post-release monitoring of rehabilitated koalas. We will explore opportunities with research institutions and wildlife rehabilitation groups to undertake post-release monitoring of other species.
Improving access to services provided by the sector will help the community immensely. Nearly all wildlife rehabilitation groups operate and pay for their own exclusive phone service and some have their own road signage. The rescue service extended by groups is generally restricted to a particular geographic locality for each group, potentially creating confusion about who to call when an animal needs to be rescued.

In addition to calling for rescues, the community also seeks help with common wildlife problems. Wildlife rehabilitation groups make an important contribution to raising awareness in the community about wildlife and conservation issues and volunteers regularly attend schools, scout groups, environmental events and other forums. The community will benefit from increased access to up to date information about how to positively interact with wildlife.

Wildlife rehabilitation volunteers want government and the community to know their work is challenging and something of value. Recognition and acknowledgement of the contribution of volunteers and veterinary practitioners is needed. The focus will be on increasing appreciation of the effort and skill of volunteers and the nature of their work.

A single wildlife rescue number

The Government has announced funding through the NSW Koala Strategy to introduce a single wildlife rescue number, to make it easier for people to find the right person to help them if they find sick or injured wildlife. We intend to have standard road signage to accompany the number and a marketing campaign will be used to promote the new service.

The number will be the first point of contact for people across New South Wales who require wildlife rehabilitation services. It will help increase community recognition of the services provided by all wildlife rehabilitation providers in the state and enhance measurement and reporting of rescue locations.
Guiding community education about wildlife

We will develop resources that help wildlife rehabilitation groups educate and raise awareness in the community about managing interactions with problem urban wildlife species and promoting ecological sustainable behaviours that prevent injuries to animals and reduce the volume of animals requiring rescue.

Promoting awareness about volunteer participation in wildlife rehabilitation

Media will be developed that seek to improve community awareness and understanding about wildlife rehabilitation volunteers and their contribution to wildlife and the environment. The Office of Environment and Heritage will do this by promoting the diverse range of wildlife rehabilitators’ stories and their varied interactions with wildlife. We will also enhance our website to better communicate the scale of work undertaken by volunteers and the factors that can result in animals requiring rescue.
The Office of Environment and Heritage wants volunteers to know that it is a partner in the delivery of wildlife rescue and rehabilitation services in New South Wales. A focus for us going forward will be to work with the sector to shift the regulation of service providers from existing licences to a system of accreditation. This new approach will reduce red-tape for volunteer wildlife rehabilitation organisations. It will also improve outcomes for wildlife by ensuring services are being delivered to the community in accordance with established standards.

The implementation of the new system of accreditation will necessitate changes to the Office of Environment and Heritage policy that underpins regulation of the sector. An important action will be to review existing policy and procedures to ensure they provide the flexibility and support to enable the sector to thrive and meet demand for services.

**Accreditation of volunteer wildlife rescue and rehabilitation organisations**

All volunteer-based organisations that organise and promote themselves as providers of a wildlife rescue and rehabilitation service will require accreditation under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016.*

The intended benefits to the sector include greater community recognition of service; improved volunteer support and management; transferability of skills between organisations and stronger compliance with established codes of practice. It will also reduce regulation and provide a more flexible framework for accredited volunteer organisations to operate in New South Wales.

Accreditation will be administered by the Office of Environment and Heritage and be assessed in accordance with the following six categories of volunteer support and service delivery:

- **Governance:** The structures, activities and operations of a wildlife rehabilitation provider are in accordance with the principles of legal compliance, probity, transparency and accountability.

- **Training and support:** There is a structured program of training and support in place that ensures fauna rehabilitators are competent to effectively perform their role.
• **Standards of animal care:** There is a system of quality assurance in place for the management of animals in care.

• **Service capacity:** There is an efficient phone rescue service and sufficient capacity to effectively respond to calls for assistance.

• **Record keeping:** There is a system in place that ensures data integrity in reporting, and organisations have a demonstrated history of compliance with Office of Environment and Heritage reporting obligations.

• **Veterinary services:** There are policies and protocols in place that ensure interactions with veterinary practitioners are conducted in a consistent, positive and ethical manner.

To avoid adverse impacts on service delivery a transitional approach to accreditation will be implemented. Transitional accreditation will require existing wildlife rehabilitation providers to apply to the Office of Environment and Heritage and demonstrate they meet the accreditation criteria (refer to the Accreditation support document). The criteria are based on those aspects of good practice currently being implemented in the sector.

Over the next three years, the Office of Environment and Heritage will collaborate with the sector to refine the criteria and develop standards where they don’t already exist.

**A more flexible policy framework**

The Office of Environment and Heritage [Rehabilitation of Protected Fauna Policy](#) has successfully supported the delivery of wildlife rehabilitation in New South Wales. The policy will need to align with the introduction of accreditation and enable providers to have more flexibility in how they operate. To achieve this the Office of Environment and Heritage intends to:

• Retain its preference for services to be provided by groups but allow greater flexibility in where members of groups can reside. We will do this by allowing up to 20% of a group’s members to reside outside their boundary without requiring a memorandum of understanding with the neighbouring group.

• Encourage new groups to seek accreditation in areas where specialist species support is needed. Preference would be given to the establishment of central facility style wildlife hospitals.

• Explore additional opportunities for augmenting home-based care with more central-based facilities.

• Reduce red tape and enable groups to transport animals interstate for treatment and rehabilitation without the need for additional approvals.
Ongoing strategic support services

The Office of Environment and Heritage will continue to give strategic support to the sector to help implement this plan over the next three years. We intend to:

• work with the Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife to develop a business case for allocating the $1.2 million funding provided by the Foundation

• implement $4.05 million of wildlife rehabilitation actions identified in the NSW Koala Strategy

• dedicate two new staff toward implementation of priority actions in this plan

• continue to allocate $25,000 each year toward the public liability insurance requirements of the sector

• advocate for greater understanding within other NSW Government departments of the important work undertaken by the wildlife rehabilitation sector

• help wildlife rehabilitation providers leverage compliance by undertaking random audits and investigating alleged breaches

• maintain and update data, produce an annual report, and update resources on our website

• review and promulgate relevant policies in accordance with the new directions set through this strategy.
Implementation, reporting on and evaluating the strategy

The Office of Environment and Heritage will coordinate implementation of this strategy in accordance with commitments made in the NSW Koala Strategy. Workshops will be held with volunteers to help develop and implement projects in each focus area. Annual reports will be published and an update on progress will be given to key stakeholders each year. An action implementation plan will be prepared once the final strategy is completed.

Acknowledgements

The Office of Environment and Heritage would like to thank all the people and organisations that contributed to the evidence base underpinning this strategy. Approximately 970 volunteer wildlife rehabilitators and 150 veterinarians, veterinary nurses and support staff from around 70 practices responded to our surveys.

A special thanks to all the wildlife rehabilitation service providers who shared their time, resources and knowledge about being a volunteer and what is needed to support them.

Our thanks go to:

- NSW Wildlife Council
- WIRES
- Australian Veterinary Association
- Taronga Conservation Society
- Veterinary Practitioners Board of NSW
- Veterinary Nurses Council of Australia
- NSW Environmental Trust and the Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife.