

## Saving our Species project 2015-16 annual report card

### Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby

#### Species attributes

Scientific name:	<i>Petrogale penicillata</i>
NSW status:	Endangered
Commonwealth status:	Vulnerable
Management stream:	Iconic



Photographer: Mel Norton

**Key management sites:** Shoalhaven  
Jenolan Caves  
Wollemi  
Watagans National Park  
Green Gully  
Warrumbungles National Park  
Waterfall Springs Wildlife Sanctuary

**Project partners:** Office of Environment and Heritage  
Participating landholders  
Waterfall Springs Wildlife Sanctuary  
Friends of the Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby  
Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife  
Taronga Conservation Society Australia  
Central Tablelands Local Land Services  
Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary  
Blackbutt Reserve

#### Summary of outcomes

Over 2015-16, most of the planned activities—predominantly monitoring and pest animal control—were fully implemented. Predator control remains a critical action. New techniques used during the release of captive-bred rock-wallabies are considered to be markedly reducing post-release stress, which has been implicated in previous mortalities. Continual progress is being made on testing new monitoring techniques to be able to better understand the status of these populations.

**Office of Environment and Heritage expenditure: \$345,043**

### Project objectives (from NSW Recovery Plan)

- Increase recruitment at priority sites
- Decrease the rate of decline in range and abundance
- Prevent the decline of the species to a level at which the species would be at risk of becoming extinct in the wild
- Increase knowledge to enable more effective management of the species

### Management site outcomes

Site	Expenditure	Key outcomes
Shoalhaven	\$98,752	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Release of eight captive-bred rock-wallabies in the Kellets Creek colony using soft release approach. Despite permanent heavy baiting, some died from predation, triggering intensive trapping, shooting and camera monitoring. Investigations suggest that the predator may have been a feral dog.</li><li>• Community interest and participation in recovery actions is strong.</li></ul>
Jenolan Caves	\$94,512	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Two trapping sessions conducted but the November session was shortened due to the risk of separating mothers and young.</li><li>• The population continues to expand in number of animals, area of occupancy and extent of occurrence, with all animals captured in excellent condition and all females breeding.</li><li>• Thirty-five animals were captured in the April 2016 session, including one new male and seven new females.</li><li>• Some rock-wallabies were hit by cars. Signs have been designed and approved by Roads and Maritime Services for 2016/17 installation.</li></ul>
Wollemi	\$64,018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Scat plots were monitored at eight colonies and indicate a stable population.</li><li>• Baiting maintains a low level of fox activity in the area.</li><li>• The population appears to be secure.</li></ul>

## Management site outcomes (continued)

Site	Expenditure	Key outcomes
Watagans National Park	\$54,311	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fox, feral dog and feral cat control conducted on private property around the colonies.</li><li>• Surveillance cameras deployed to detect pest species travelling along fire trails.</li></ul>
Green Gully	\$15,450	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The status of these populations are still not well understood, pending development of an effective monitoring method.</li><li>• Further field assessment was conducted using the most promising techniques. Testing of aerial surveys with a drone was conducted and colony census by remote stationary cameras continued to be refined at several sites. Computer-based individual identification processes were refined. The potential for genetic enumeration continued to be explored. Synthesis of data from available sites refined interpretations of which techniques were worth pursuing.</li><li>• Helicopter surveys were conducted at Green Gully in Oxley Wild Rivers National Park.</li></ul>
Waterfall Springs Wildlife Sanctuary	\$18,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Best practice animal husbandry was carried out to ensure the welfare of the captive population.</li><li>• Routine maintenance was carried out of facilities including monthly volunteer working bees.</li><li>• The captive population is healthy and genetically diverse.</li></ul>