

ANNUAL REPORT 2025/2026





ABOUT US

Darling Range Wildlife Shelter

Darling Range Wildlife Shelter (DRWS) is a volunteer and not-for-profit organisation whose purpose is to rehabilitate native wildlife and promote the value of biodiversity.

Our Volunteers

DRWS volunteers rescue, provide care and rehabilitate Australian native wildlife in need including threatened, endangered and migratory species. Our aim is to work towards their release back into their natural environment. Each year we record over 1500 wildlife admissions.

The daily running of the Shelter is supported by almost 200 volunteers who participate in a variety of roles, giving over 40,000 unpaid hours annually. DRWS has developed, and continues to evolve, from a love of and commitment to wildlife and the natural environment. All of our members actively promote preservation of the natural environment and living considerately with wildlife.

DRWS is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC).

Our Motto:

Every Critter Counts

Our Vision:

Wildlife is valued and protected

Our Values:

Inclusion and respect for all members of our community
Competence and caring in our rescue, care, rehabilitation and release of wildlife
Committed and innovative in our mission of rehabilitating native wildlife and promoting the value of biodiversity

CHAIR

Trudie McCain



This is my third and last year as Chair of Darling Range Wildlife Shelter. Being the Chair of a large organisation can be daunting, and it is not without its challenges. Over the last 3 years I found I grew into the position. I became more confident in my decision making and problem solving. This was only possible through the support of our Vice Chair, Michelle Hazelwood, and other members of the executive committee. We work as a team and that is what I have always loved about DRWS.

Working with the other wildlife shelters as a collective under the name WRAGWA (Wildlife Rehabilitation Advisory Group WA) enabled me to better understand our wildlife legislation and become part of a group passionate about promoting the care of wildlife and the volunteers that run the sector. Together we have delivered the Beginners Wildlife Training Course, Black Walk Training, lobbied politicians and consulted with DBCA and DPIRD. We continue to collaborate with wildlife rehabilitation and emergency events, such as combined Black Walks and more recently HPAI (avian bird flu), attaining the best outcomes for wildlife.

In 2023 I forged a partnership with Act Belong Commit a mental health program available to our volunteers. Volunteering is a known pathway for improving mental health but also comes with challenges especially in the wildlife rehabilitation sector. I have worked directly with the volunteer team providing onsite and off-site support for volunteers. DRWS is a welcoming and diverse community with the potential for greatness.

The work of the shelter is only possible because of our volunteers. Being a volunteer based and run organisation has challenges, but we know everyone wants the best outcome for the wildlife that we admit. Thank you for to all our volunteers for your time and commitment.

It has been an honour and a privilege to work with likeminded people and everyone's support has been greatly appreciated.

Trudie McCain

WILDLIFE REHABILITATION & DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Kira Martin



Firstly, I would just like to say a massive *thank you*.

This year has been so exciting, and informative.

Darling Range Wildlife Shelter has allowed me to grow as a person, in my career, and my passion.

The 2025/26 financial year was a landmark year for us, marked by growth, innovation and an unwavering commitment to Western Australia's native wildlife. Birds accounted for an incredible 73% of all admissions, including a record number of magpie paralysis patients requiring intensive care. To meet this growing demand, we established a dedicated Bird Home Care Team and implemented significant improvements throughout our hospital, including new admission forms, feeding and medication charts, and updated treatment plans to ensure the highest standard of care.

We also saw record-breaking rainfall across the southwest, meaning that the Annual Cygnet Muster was not necessary this year. Phew!

This year also brought exciting opportunities to strengthen our organisation and the care we provide. We were delighted to welcome Dr Joan Deetman and her innovative laser therapy technology, giving our patients access to advanced rehabilitation techniques.

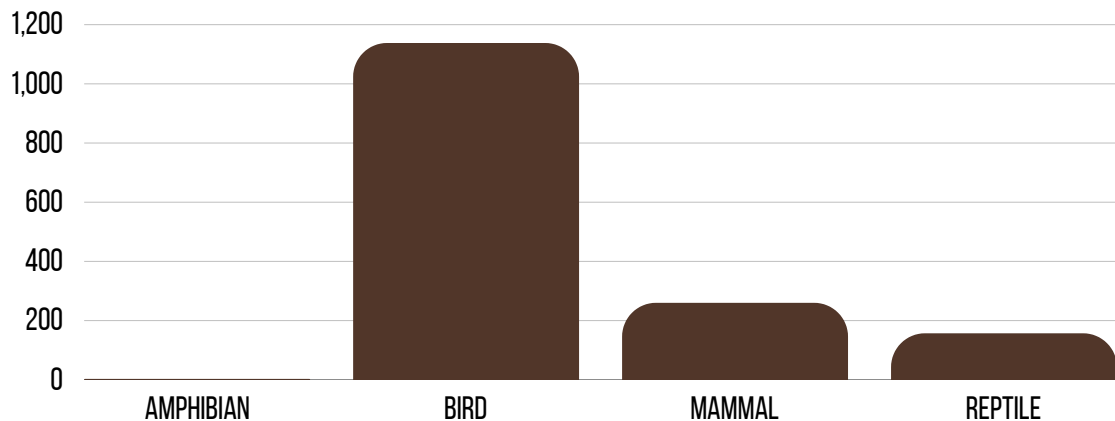
Our volunteers also benefited from an expanded training program, helping to build skills and confidence across the shelter, while new partnerships with Wild Faces and Newmont Boddington laid the foundation for future collaboration. The generous support of Vetafarm, through a substantial donation of critical rehabilitation supplies also further enhanced our ability to care for sick, injured and orphaned wildlife.

Together, these achievements reflect a year of remarkable progress and would not have been possible without the dedication of our volunteers, supporters and community.

WILDLIFE ADMISSIONS

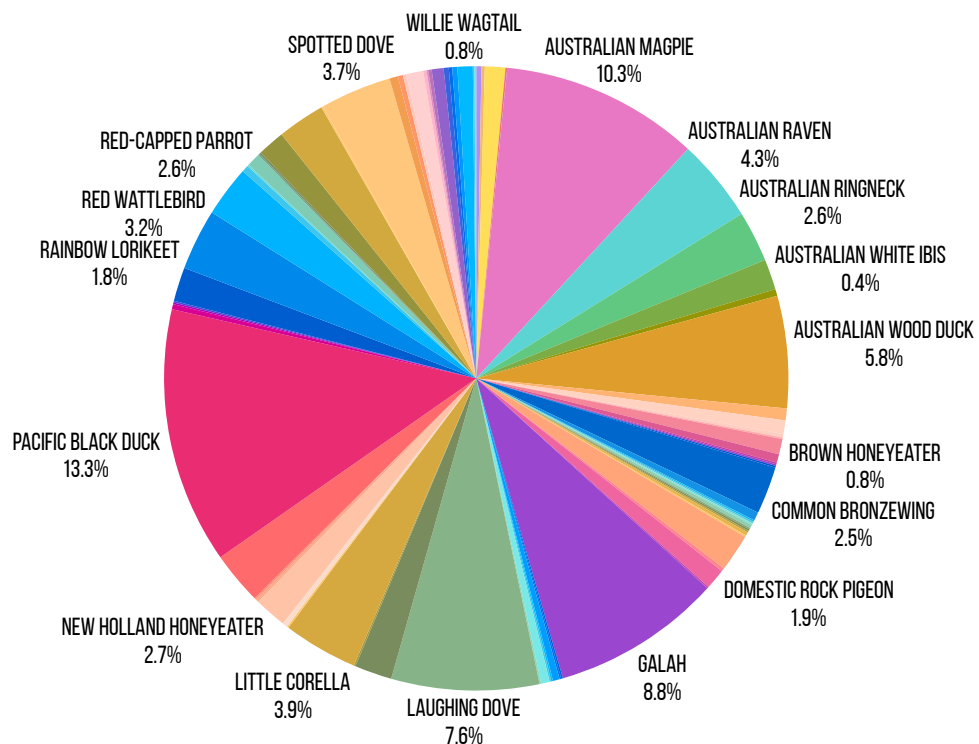
A recap on our fantastic 2025/26

Avian admissions accounted for a whopping 73%, with 1,138 passing through our doors this last year! Mammals took second place, with 260 admissions, and record-high brushtail possum pinkies in this year. Poor home carers really copped it last financial year!



BIRD STATISTICS

Our bird admissions not only took the cake for the highest admissions in one class in a financial year, but they also had the highest diversity in speciation! We saw 82 different species of birds pass through our gates!



TRAINING AT DRWS

A recap on our fantastic 2025/26

- Basic Tube Feeding Training
- Advanced Tube Feeding Training
- Bird Capture and Handling
- How to Care for Baby Birds
- Basic Hospital Admission and Triage
- The Avian Diet
- Caring for Pet Birds
- Caring for Reptiles
- Rescue Training
- Snake Awareness Training
- Macropod Training
- HPAI Preparedness Training
- Micro Training:
 - Database: Admissions
 - Using the Animal Dashboard to Communicate
 - Monitoring Weight, Observation, and Escalation
 - Closing the Patient Case:
 - Outcomes, Accuracy and Accountability
 - Assessment in the Field
 - Recognizing Pain, Stress and Shock
 - How to Book a Vet Appointment



BIRD REPORT

*Michelle Hazelwood, Kira Martin
& Leah Perrin*



It has been an exceptionally busy year for our bird team. With birds accounting for 73% of all wildlife admissions. Our volunteers, home carers and coordinators have once again shown enormous commitment to the care and rehabilitation of our birds.

While other sections of this Annual Report highlight our record bird admissions and developments in training and care, one of the most significant new challenges for the Bird Team has been preparing DRWS for highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI).

Preparing for HPAI [H5N1]

The arrival of H5N1 highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in Australia in June 2026 created a significant new challenge for wildlife rehabilitation. First confirmed in a migratory seabird near Esperance in June, its arrival prompted heightened surveillance and preparedness across WA. DRWS established an HPAI Subcommittee, comprising Lucie Gillies, Michelle Hazelwood, Kira Martin, Trudie McCain, Leah Perrin and Colleen Yeomans, to coordinate our response across admissions, facilities, biosecurity and volunteer training.

Preparations have included strengthening PPE and biosecurity protocols, revising admission pathways for higher-risk species and providing volunteer training. Duckling House has been adapted for isolation and additional temporary isolation capacity is being investigated. DRWS has also sought advice from overseas wildlife rehabilitation organisations experienced in managing HPAI.

The DRWS committee is pursuing funding for a purpose-built isolation room through a DPIRD Bird Flu Wildlife Resilience Grant to support this work. DRWS has also been invited to join the State Bird Flu Wildlife Advisory Group, giving DRWS a voice in state-level planning as this emerging threat evolves.

Most importantly, thank you to our bird volunteers, admissions team, shift skippers and home carers. Caring for more than a thousand birds across such a diverse range of species takes an enormous collective effort. Your patience, adaptability and commitment have made an extraordinary year possible.



MACROPOD REPORT

Kate McDonald & Candice Manners

64 WESTERN GREY KANGAROOS

1 BLACK-GLOVED WALLABY

6 RED KANGAROOS

2 EURO WALLAROOS

It has been another busy and rewarding year for the macropod team at Darling Range Wildlife Shelter.

One of our biggest milestones was transferring our onsite joeys to our new outside soft-release pen in Mundaring. A huge thank you goes to Amity and her family for generously allowing us to use their property and providing our joeys with such a wonderful place to take the next step towards independence. After several months of adjustment and preparation, the mob was successfully released into the surrounding bushland. This was a significant undertaking involving many people, and we are incredibly grateful to everyone who contributed their time, care, and support.

Currently onsite, we have 25 pre-release joeys from last season who are getting closer to making their own move to a soft-release pen. This year we will be working alongside Rocky Ridge, utilising one of their larger pens to accommodate our 2025/26 mob, which is considerably larger than last year's group.

Another exciting development is the arrival of our new joey house, which will be located at the rear of A Pen. The new facility will provide considerably more room for our onsite joeys as well as a dedicated assessment area, helping us improve both their day-to-day care and the way we manage new admissions. Our existing joey house will be repurposed as a duck house for the time being.

And this season is already well underway, with 16 joeys admitted!

The addition of new rescue equipment, together with improved access to sedation when clinically appropriate, has also been an important step forward for the shelter. It has increased our capacity to assist macropods in situations where previously our options were limited, while also providing better support for our own joeys when intervention is required.

Rescue Outcomes

During this period, our macropod rescue work included:

- 9 treatments
- 6 transfers
- 6 relocations
- 11 euthanasias

Every one of these figures represents an individual animal and a team of people working to achieve the best possible welfare outcome, even when that outcome is not always the one we would have hoped for.



We have also begun establishing a specialised Roo Team within the shelter. An important part of this is having a designated person on each shift focused specifically on our joeys. These volunteers develop a greater understanding of each animal's individual needs, behaviour and personality, while helping provide greater consistency in their daily care. We are looking forward to continuing to develop and strengthen this team.

Finally, I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who makes this work possible. To our shelter volunteers: thank you for the enormous amount of time, patience and care you give to our joeys every day.

To our foster carers: the work you do behind the scenes is extraordinary. Your commitment, often over many months and at all hours, never goes unnoticed, and I am deeply appreciative of everything you contribute.

And to our wonderful veterinary teams: thank you for continually making time for our joeys and providing them with such dedicated care and support. Your expertise, compassion and willingness to help are invaluable to both our animals and our team.

Caring for macropods is very much a team effort, from the moment an animal is rescued through rehabilitation, pre-release and, wherever possible, their eventual return to the wild. Thank you to everyone who continues to be part of that journey.





POSSUM REPORT

Dallas Bird

64 BRUSHTAIL POSSUMS

3 WESTERN PYGMY POSSUMS

3 WESTERN RINGTAIL POSSUM

1 BRUSH TAILED PHASCOGALE

It was another very busy year for our possum team, with plenty of furry little characters keeping the volunteers on their toes. We were lucky enough to care for a few ringtail possums, which was a lovely experience for the volunteers, as well as a few of the much smaller (but equally adorable) pygmy possums.

One of the definite stars of the year was Karen. In fact, Karen may go down in DRWS history as the spiciest possum we have ever encountered. Karen had experienced some trauma during her first placement at another shelter, where she had sadly become trapped in a browse pipe for quite some time before being found. Understandably, this left her with some strong feelings about holes, and specifically, holes in possum boxes.

When Karen arrived at DRWS, she made it very clear that entering the possum box was absolutely not on her agenda. Instead, she took up residence in the hanging hollows, where she was much happier. From there, she could keep a close eye on everything happening around her and, on occasion, terrorise the volunteers. Karen was always watching. Always. Thankfully, not all our possums were quite so intimidating!

This year, around 80% of our possum patients have been victims of rodenticide poisoning and heartbreakingly, that includes some tiny pinkies. It's devastating to see these little babies go through so much before they've even had a chance to properly emerge from the pouch. On a slightly more unusual note, we also had three possums this year who were missing the ends of their tails. They certainly had a tail to tell!

We ran a wildly successful "Living with Possums" talk at the Roleystone Community Centre last month, and when I say successful, I mean packed-to-the-rafters, not-a-chair-left, someone may have been sitting on a pot plant.

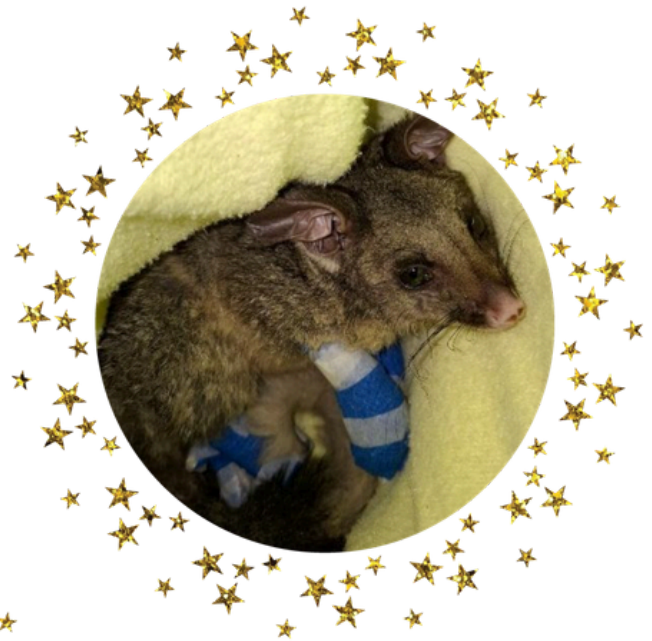
It was genuinely heartwarming to see so many locals turn up; all deeply invested in the noble art of co-existing with the tiny roof goblins who have claimed their backyards as sovereign territory. Nothing brings a community together quite like collectively admitting, "Yes, I too have been personally terrorised by a possum at 3am."

We are very lucky to welcome some new home carers to the possum group, as well as gain a few new release sites. Having new people willing to open their homes and new safe places for our possums to return to the wild is always incredibly exciting.

All in all, it was another busy, entertaining and occasionally slightly terrifying year in the world of possums!

A massive thank you to everyone who admitted, cared for, and home-cared our beloved possums – you are now officially possum-approved, which is basically the highest honour one can receive without being asked to share a tree hollow.

Your dedication, your compassion, and your willingness to negotiate with small nocturnal drama queens has not gone unnoticed. The possums have spoken, and they deem you worthy.



REPTILE REPORT

Lucie Gillies



Another busy year for reptiles at DRWS!

First, huge thank you to Tania Cowley, who recently stepped down as reptile's coordinator. Tania is passionate about all things reptiles, and her contribution to the team has been nothing but impressive. We will miss her expertise dearly.

Some numbers for the 2025-2026 financial year:

Bobtails: 64 admitted and a 74% recovery rate. The main reasons for admissions were Dog attacks, followed by flu/illness.

King skinks: 24, with dog or cat attack the main reason of admission. 15 survived and were released. Southwest Snake Neck Turtles: 58 are on the database for this period. This seems like a big number, but 33 of these were eggs, and only 15 of them hatched. Some of these eggs were extracted from a deceased mother by Perth Pet Vet, 8 of them came from a disturbed nest, and the others were laid in care by recovering female turtles.

We received 16 adults SWSN Turtles, either suffering from motor vehicle injuries, or displaced far from water source. 9 hatchling turtles were found in an unsuitable location.

We also admitted 4 Bearded dragons, 1 Sand goanna, 2 small lizards, a gecko and 4 frogs.

One of the most notable rescues from last year was, no doubt, the black walks through Alison Baird Reserve in Kenwick, following a bushfire in December. Volunteers of DRWS and Kanyana teamed up and rescued many animals from burns or smoke inhalation, 8 of them reptiles, including a 2 grams Dwarf Skink.

Our projects for the coming year are:

- refurbishing the onsite turtle ponds
- recruiting more fantastic carers to leave bobtails onsite more often so volunteers get to experience caring for our scaly friends



MAINTENANCE REPORT

John Deaf

To All DRWS Volunteers,
Here we are and DRWS is another year older with many changes over the past year, both with new volunteers and changes occurring at DRWS.

Five years with my involvement with DRWS and I always assumed that “MAIT” was short for MAINTENANCE.. to my embarrassment I only found out last month that it is in fact an acronym for Maintenance And Improvement Team.

We are privileged at DRWS to have a group of MAIT volunteers who are always ready to step up to take on a task whenever requested this includes many not on the MAIT team. It would be unfair for me to single out any one person because there are too many to mention.

As the DRWS Maintenance Coordinator it makes my job so much easier when I can rely on individuals to complete tasks, large and small, when requested.

Here is a summary of the past year:

- Commissioning of the three water pens after delays caused by seasonal rainfall and site flooding, work also included refurbishment to A6-A7-A8-A9 enclosures.
- Installation of our second mains water tank opposite our main gate. This will solve our acute water shortage in the summer period. Though we all still need to be water wise!
- Four corporate/school groups have attended through the year for a “volunteer day” to assist with general maintenance, aviary and garden work. This is very much appreciated as it helps to keep up to date with the required maintenance
- Joey pens have received regular maintenance work and improvements
- Extra undercover areas for the MAIT shed and outdoor sinks at water pens and between hospital and laundry, and A10 aviary (round house) minor refurbishment
- Damaged roof panels have been replaced over the drop toilets
- Removal of some dead trees and bushes.
- Replanting has also begun with plants donated by Wattle Grove Plant Farm and our volunteers

Thank you all for your on-going support.



HABITAT PROJECTS TEAM

Matt Olsen & Mandy Bond



Habitat sales continue to be strong. Members of the MAIT team including Trucky Finch have come onboard to add the finishing touches to the boxes. The boxes themselves continue to evolve as minor improvements are made. Our boxes are now made out of marine ply making them more durable.

Unfortunately, due to work commitments we can no longer offer installation.

A huge thankyou to Steve Manson for continuing to work with us building our boxes.

Thanks everyone.

We appreciate all your support.



Mandy Bond, Stuart Spencer & Ray Halligan

- Operating shortfall was (\$42,589) in 2026 compared to (\$138,481) in 2025.
- Operating revenue excluding grants & bequest was up \$51,549 – mainly from increased donations.
- Operating expenses were down \$44,344 from previous year. Highlighting significant savings in employee and veterinary costs.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

Our small Marketing Team has had another busy year, connecting Darling Range Wildlife Shelter with the community, supporting fundraising and raising awareness of the important wildlife rehabilitation work we do. Thank you to everyone who volunteered their time, attended events, shared our messages and supported these projects.

Planning also commenced for Wild for Art 2026, our inaugural major art fundraiser. Bringing together wildlife, art and community engagement, the event will provide another exciting opportunity to welcome people to DRWS while raising funds and awareness for our work.

ENGAGING WITH THE COMMUNITY

The Australasian Ornithological Conference was a special opportunity for DRWS to share our work with conservation professionals from across Australia. Young Phoebe, together with mum Cassie, helped make our presence particularly memorable. Special thanks to Cassie House, Phoebe and Dr Rochelle Steven for their support.

Closer to home, DRWS was represented at community events including the City of Gosnells Plants for Locals, Give Our Bushland a Boost and the Kelmscott Show. These events provide valuable opportunities to talk with the community about wildlife rehabilitation, habitat protection and how people can support our work.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

DONATIONS

Fundraising remains an important part of the Marketing Team's work, helping DRWS continue to rescue, rehabilitate and release native wildlife.

A highlight this year was our second planned End of Financial Year digital fundraising campaign. The campaign successfully reached beyond our existing supporter base, generated new donations and, importantly, attracted new regular donors who will continue supporting DRWS into the future.

Theatre, raffles and social media campaigns have all helped with raising funds to cover our ever increasing costs.

EOFY CAMPAIGN DIGITAL IMPACT

Meta Accounts Reached
8 309

Donations during campaign
27

Givenow visits
91

new donors
18

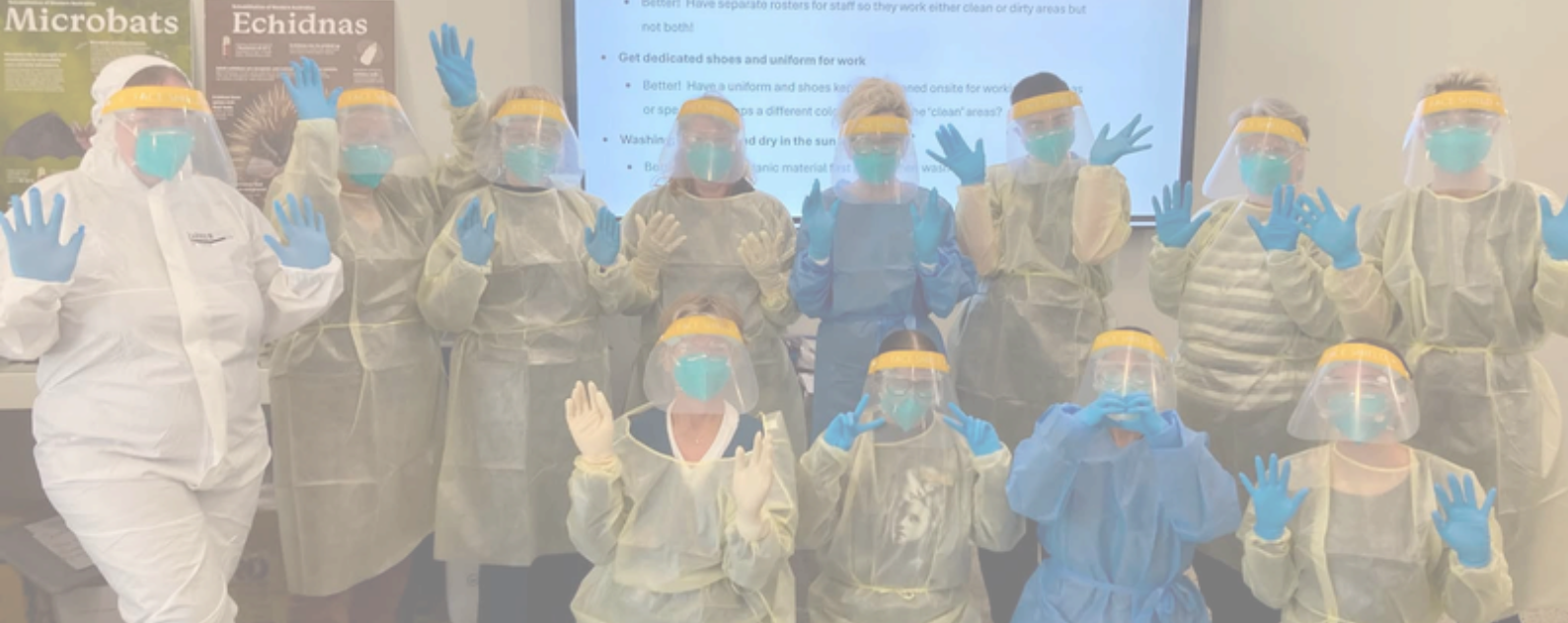
Funds Raised
\$3 056

BUILDING AWARENESS

Our National Kangaroo Day celebration brought plenty of fun and laughter and included the launch of our popular joey pins, designed from an image of one of the joeys admitted into DRWS care.

We also introduced Wild Faces x Darling Range Wildlife Shelter merchandise, together with new magpie pins, volunteer uniform shirts and DRWS bumper stickers. Updated donation brochures and community advertising have also helped strengthen DRWS's visibility and give our volunteers and supporters more ways to proudly represent the Shelter.





OUR VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteers are the backbone of Darling Range Wildlife Shelter. They hail from far and wide to provide some of the very best husbandry and wildlife rehabilitation in the state. We are truly honoured to have such a fabulous and diverse team!

We currently have 240 active volunteers who have worked hard to fulfil over 230,000 volunteer hours this last financial year.



LONG-STANDING VOLUNTEER ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Celebrating 5 years of commitment to Darling Range Wildlife Shelter

- Sharon Hamlet
- Rachel Shein
- John Deal
- Daniel Newman
- Jasmin Pitt
- Beverley Krebs
- Les Halicki
- Olivia Goodchild
- Robyn Spencer
- Michael Breen

Celebrating 10 years of commitment to Darling Range Wildlife Shelter

- Cathy Conacher
- Deb Lockhart
- Anne Noonan
- Sue Abiss

Celebrating 20+ years of commitment to Darling Range Wildlife Shelter

- Deb Bucholz
- Glenda Olesen
- Sue Manual
- Michelle Hazelwood
- Yvonne Giblett
- Jan King
- Steve de Grunchy
- Trudie McCain



OUR SOCIALS

Social media remains one of DRWS's most powerful tools for sharing our work, promoting conservation messages and rallying support for wildlife. Across Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and TikTok, our stories connect the Shelter with a growing community both locally and further afield.

It was a big year for storytelling. We shared behind-the-scenes glimpses of wildlife rehabilitation, updates on HPAI biosecurity training, calls to action through our Step Up for Wildlife advocacy campaign, and began building excitement for Wild for Art 2026, our inaugural fundraising art event.

Our online community continued to grow, with our Facebook audience reaching 17,000 and Instagram 1,700. We also expanded our presence on LinkedIn, strengthening connections with conservation professionals, organisations and potential partners, while TikTok is providing another way to introduce new audiences to the wildlife and people of DRWS.

One little post made a particularly big splash! Our Don't Forget to Water Your Wildlife! reel became our best-performing post of the year, reaching an extraordinary 530,987 people and generating 15,553 interactions.

Social media also played an increasingly important role in fundraising. Our first targeted End of Financial Year campaign demonstrated how digital storytelling can translate into meaningful support, generating donations and attracting new givers.

Every post gives us another opportunity to educate, engage and inspire our community to value and protect wildlife.



	FACEBOOK	INSTAGRAM	LINKEDIN
REACH	165 680	5.4K	1K IMPRESSIONS
CURRENT AUDIENCE	17K	1.7K	100

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Trudie McCain: Chair, Orientations Team Member, Shift Skipper, Marketing and HPAI Team Member

Michelle Hazelwood: Vice Chair, Grants, Marketing and HPAI Team Leader, Shift Skipper, Bird Coordinator

Mandy Bond: Treasurer, Habitat Box Coordinator

Emily Thompson: Secretary, Shift Skipper

John Deal: Maintenance Coordinator, Committee Member

Steve De Gruchy: Risk Management, Event Coordinator

Caroline Jones: Grants, Strategic Planning Team Leader

Daniel Newman: Business Management, Maintenance Team Member

Karin Lee: WHS, Shift Skipper

Stuart Spencer: Accountant

Kira Martin: Wildlife Rehabilitation and Development Officer (Part-time), Bird and Rescue Coordinator, Marketing, Social Media, and HPAI Committee Member, Shift Skipper

SHELTER SUPPORT

Sue Manuel: Volunteer Coordinator

Helen Baseley: Rosters

Dallas Bird: Possum and Orientation Coordinator, Marketing and Social Media Committee Member

Lucie Gillies: Reptile Coordinator, Rescue Team Trainer, Shift Skipper, and HPAI Team Member

Leah Perrin: Bird and Quenda Coordinator, Hospital Supervisor and Trainer, HPAI Team Member

Kate MacDonald: Macropod Coordinator

Candice Manners: Macropod Coordinator

Hilary McGowan: Orientation Team Member, Hospital Supervisor and Trainer

Robyn Spencer: Bookkeeper, Supplies Purchase Officer

Maritess Hankinson: Volunteer Hours

Corrina Dwyer: Laundry Coordinator



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

and thank you

We have a number of incredible friends who donate directly to us on a regular basis.



MAJOR SUPPORTERS AND DONORS



VETERINARY SUPPORT



GRANTS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



**Rothwell
Family Trust**



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PO BOX 732, GOSNELLS WA 6990

PHONE (08) 9394 0885

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