

The Australian Wildlife Society Community Rehabilitation Award

This award was introduced in 2016 by President, Suzanne Medway to highlight the incredible work done by wildlife rescuers and rehabilitators and contribution to wildlife preservation in Australia.

Our Society knows that many organisations and thousands of volunteers are already working tirelessly to save our threatened species as well as the humble and more common Australian species and the precious wildlife habitat in which they live. We are all aware of the wonderful work being carried out by volunteers across the country in saving our sick and injured wildlife. They spend many hours and days caring for a single animal that has been injured by a car, savaged by a feral animal or hurt in bush fires. We want to recognise and help these individuals or conservation groups continue with their good work on behalf of the whole community. Our Society will present a trophy and a cash award of \$1,000 to the winning individual or conservation group that is helping to save our precious Australian wildlife.

The inaugural Australian Wildlife Society Community Rehabilitation Award was made to Roz Holmes of Cedar Creek Wombat Rescue and Wildlife Refuge.



Suzanne Medway with Roz Holme

Roz, who was born and bred into wildlife and is also a trained vet nurse, takes on animals with illness or injuries that may have otherwise been euthanised. Roz and her husband Kevin began this journey in earnest when they became aware of how many local wombats were affected and dying from sarcoptic mange. Roz began studying ways in which wombats with sarcoptic mange could be treated and hopefully saved from a slow horrible death. It started with a few calls from locals letting them know when a wombat was seen that appeared to have mange. They would treat as many as they could and attempt to educate the public. It has grown into a Herculean effort where they travel many kilometres and treat wombats of all ages, sizes, and stages of disease as well as treating wombats that have been injured in other ways. Animals that until recently would have died if left untreated are given a chance to recover and continue to help maintain the population.

Cedar Creek Wombat Rescue and Wildlife Refuge is dedicated to rescuing not just orphaned joey wombats but also sub-adults and adults that are in need of medical care whether it be from accident, injury or mange. Along with wombats, they care for many species of native animals with the focus being on animals that are in need of more than routine care to get them to the point of release.

In the past, few people would attempt to rehabilitate any wombat that was much bigger than about 10kg, finding them too difficult to handle. Many sub-adult, as well as adult wombats, have been successfully treated by Cedar Creek Wombat Rescue for a variety of illness such as vehicular trauma, dog attack or mange and released back into their home range.

On accepting her award from Suzanne Medway, Roz gave a short thank you speech:

I've been treating wombats for over 35 years. The wombats that come into care are mainly suffering from mange, injuries from a car accident or attack by dogs. The wombats come to me for treatment and rehabilitation from all over New South Wales. Cedar Creek Wombat Rescue is the only wombat hospital of its kind. Its foundation is thanks to Sophie Brenton who raised funds and organised it all for me (without her I'd be lost). Special thanks to Robin Crisman for her help in obtaining equipment to fit the hospital out and to my husband Kev who has to put up with my long hours spent saving wombats – and for building of pens, I always seem to need more. Thank you.