

HUMANE SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL  
WILDLIFE LAND TRUST

# Wildlife Lands





*Welcome* to our 28th edition of Wildlife Lands! Since our last edition our program has grown tremendously, reaching 900 sanctuaries across Australia and building the Wildlife Land Trust into an even more influential program. This year we have built a brand-new website with a streamlined look, fostered new partnerships with grassroots conservation groups and worked to support our members advocating for conservation issues in their communities. Stay tuned for even more updates!



The eucalypt woodlands and native grasslands of Oceans Reach provide habitat for an abundance of native species.

## Oceans Reach New South Wales • PILLAR VALLEY

**Oceans Reach is a 43-hectare property on Gumbayngirr land in the beautiful Clarence Valley of NSW.**

We arrived here two years ago from the Northern Territory with grand visions of setting up tiny accommodation for tourists, however a year-long flood event in the area forced us to really sit and take in the land of which we are now custodians. Much to our delight we observed an incredible number of rare and endangered flora and fauna and over the last year or so the wildlife has become very relaxed around us.

The land had originally been cleared for cattle farming many years ago, so we only have about 50 years of regrowth and some dense areas of pioneer species. This stage of recovery, we've been told by local mob, is a great time to establish cool burning practices which we have begun preparing for to restore the land to its former glory.

We have drilled hollows into a few trees around the house and have observed leaves being pulled into them. We also have one nest box installed with more coming from the Large Forest Owls Project. Glossy black-cockatoos frequent Oceans Reach to visit the food trees and drinking holes and, though they do not nest here currently, we have found potential hollows and are hopeful.

Feral management is something we spend a great deal of time on. We are the leading feral horse wranglers in the area with 34 sent to brumby rescue organisations already. However, we intend to close the trapping funnel soon due to the destruction the horses cause on this land.

We have opened a couple of campsites for travellers and guests, which is a great opportunity to share our newfound knowledge of the area with them. They love to hear about the wallabies, brush-tailed phascogales, gliders, goannas and rufous bettongs with their prehensile tails. We also love to tell them about the white-throated nightjars, barking owls, wrens, kingfishers, the deafening chorus of frogs in the evening and a million more critters.

We appreciate most of all when guests get involved with the work we are doing. We both have regular jobs and finding time and money to service this land is not always easy, however looking around we have come a long way in just a couple of years.



*Jen and Tav Oceans*

## About us

Australia is lucky to have some of the most unique and diverse wildlife on the planet, but our native species and the places they call home are disappearing. The Wildlife Land Trust (WLT) Australia is a national movement to help landholders save wildlife by conserving, restoring and enhancing their land.

The WLT is a network of privately-owned wildlife sanctuaries committed to preserving wildlife and habitats. Our members are found across Australia and include farmers, conservationists and any landowners who want to support native species on their land.

Fill out our application form to get started. We'll create a personalised Letter of Agreement for your property which is free, non-binding and can be cancelled at any time.

Learn more about this exciting program at:  
**wildlifelandtrust.org.au**

Or contact our Project Officer Helen Church at:  
**1 800 333 737** (phone)  
**helen@hsi.org.au** (email)



HUMANE SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL  
**WILDLIFE LAND TRUST**



HUMANE SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL  
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twitter.com/wlt\_au

**Head of Programs** Evan Quartermain  
**Project Officer** Helen Church

**Front cover**  
Victoria's riflebird (*Ptiloris victoriae*),  
Wairambar Rainforest.  
Image: Paul and Roberta Michna

**Right**  
Lolaland  
Image: Lola Topsom





The Heritage-listed area of Mount George is a prime example of the original native habitat of Adelaide Hills.

## Mount George

South Australia • MOUNT GEORGE

**Our sanctuary was part of the original Mount George homestead in the Adelaide Hills some 15 kilometres from the centre of Adelaide.**

A Heritage Agreement was established over the property in 1993 to protect the remnant native Adelaide Hills vegetation that covered around half of the land. We purchased the land in 2005 and built a home on the previously cleared portion of the site.

Our sanctuary is surrounded by the Mount George Conservation Park and is home to many rare and endangered flora and fauna species. It is characterised by tall eucalypt forest with magnificent examples of the rare candlebark gum. We are also fortunate to have displays of rare orchids in springtime including the blue star, sun and bearded orchids.

Native animals abound with kangaroos, echidnas, bandicoots, koalas and abundant birdlife. Migratory yellow-tailed black cockatoos return every year to the same candlebark gums to breed, staying from late September until March. Black-chinned, crescent, white-naped and yellow-faced honeyeaters call this area home and enjoy the flowering plants. Kookaburras keep us happy with their morning territorial calls, and we occasionally see sacred kingfishers.

The Heritage-listed portion of our site has never been cleared so is a great example of the original native habitat. This is even more important with so much

destruction within the region from clearing, farming and housing. Land like ours is extremely rare and must be treasured.

The climate is cool temperate and a small creek flows through the property from April to November. The creek forms an important habitat for moisture-loving plants including rare fishbone ferns and annual rock ferns, and the more common maidenhair fern grows abundantly together with water ribbons.

We spent many of the earlier years removing large infestations of blackberry, broom and gorse and have an ongoing program of biannual weed control to ensure that the Heritage bushland is maintained in excellent condition. We are strongly committed to our weed control program which has created a pocket free of invasive species.

The adjoining Mount George Conservation Park struggles with weed control due to inconsistent and limited resources available for the task, whereas we have employed the same environmental weed control professionals for over 10 years to assist us. In recent years we have been fortunate to have the State Government partially fund our weed control program until 2025.

*David and Belinda Dawson*



Sustainable agriculture and science-based habitat regeneration is at the heart of this sanctuary.

## Spring Hills & Black Kite Downs

Queensland • ROCKYVIEW

**Spring Hills is a mountainous grazing property on the outskirts of Rockhampton, Queensland. It has forested mountains, previously cleared hills and grassland dotted with regrowth, creek flats and a few permanent water holes as well as farm dams.**

We purchased the property recently, accumulating several lots of overgrazed country. Our goal is to improve vegetation cover, repair the water cycle and restore soil health through regenerative farming.

The past two years have been a flurry of activity. The potential of the block was obvious to us—looking past the moonscape of rock-strewn ridges, piles of car wrecks and kilometres of old tangled fences, we feel so lucky to own this beautiful place with its unique views and many assets. There were bare patches of ground, mountains of lantana, rubbervine and harissa.

We saw the opportunity in a blank canvas - tidied the rubbish, built roads, fencing and water infrastructure and started treating weeds as well as controlling invasive animals. We destocked completely and about one third of the country was contour ripped and seeded to establish grasses and legumes and allow water penetration into the compacted soils. There are still years of work on landscape improvements ahead of us.

We were lucky to have a couple of good seasons and the change in the landscape has been amazing. There has been an increase in ground birds such as quails,

bustards and emus. Squatter pigeon communities are expanding and as a result we see many more birds of prey hunting. We see a lot of snakes and dragons and hear frogs sing when it rains. Marsupials have moved in and seem to live here more permanently now. We now rotationally graze the country and pride ourselves on our low-stress handling, where cattle can be mustered into lanes simply by calling them.

To make wildlife observations more meaningful we were able to engage BirdLife Capricornia to map and survey sites on the property. We have also joined a microfauna survey conducted by Central Queensland University and a carbon sequestration project is being developed for the block. These independent baseline studies will allow us to measure some of the changes over time and indicate where there is room for improvement and where the best results can be achieved.

Our goal is to keep fostering strong preservation of wildlife, land and community and produce ethically raised beef to the highest standard. With this, we also hope to inspire our regular visitors to connect with nature, wildlife and food production.

*Veronika Zeil, John Rolfe, Isabel and Marius Zeil-Rolfe*







With a high, reliable rainfall, Wairambar Rainforest supports a wide range of ecotones, microclimates and species.

# Wairambar Rainforest

Queensland • TOPAZ

*Under subdued light in the quiet rainforest drizzle permeates*

'The Daintree' by Margaret Foster

Perched behind Queensland's highest mountain, sacred Choorechillum (Mount Bartle Frere), in the cool wet tropics, on the traditional lands of our neighbours, the Ngadjon—People of the Rainforest, Ngunyunbara Clan—Wairambar Rainforest is an ancient refugium with very high biodiversity.

Our 24 hectares adjoins the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. The Endangered southern cassowary is a frequent visitor and present on-site most of the year. We have not established whether they are breeding but have identified 24 individuals since 2011. In an ongoing project we have also identified around 600 species of flora and fauna.

Repairing and enhancing the integrity of this patch of rainforest, primarily by controlling invasives and sealing rainforest edges using a variety of planting techniques, has been our motivation since purchase in 2002.



With time we have found growing delight within the tiny details of the rainforest, the delicate filigree pattern of a lichen encrusting a twig, a strangely shaped fruit, a spider spinning a web or an insect industriously nibbling a pattern in a leaf. The closer one looks, the greater the complexity and degree of interdependency.

The sense of sound and smell emerge as identifiers. The flick of leaves or the out-of-pattern oscillation of a leaf hints at a presence but rarely the creature responsible. Sound takes on dimensionality, calls given, distant replies receding into infinity. Smell is musty, complex with nuanced changes as you traverse your way. Areas peaty wet and flinty dry, logs sweetly rotting, the fragrance of flowers out of sight high in the canopy, recent and not-so-recent kills are discovered.

Sound and smell are senses closer to the soul, primeval senses harking back to ancient primate ancestral lines. Living here we are an integral part of the Wood Wide Web, a network that holds answers to questions we have yet to ask.

*Paul and Roberta Michna*

# National Nature Laws

Australia is in the midst of a once-in-a-decade opportunity to rewrite our national environmental laws to halt and reverse the extinction crisis.

Our current federal environment law, the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) is a broad ranging Act covering myriad environmental issues. But what we've seen over the last 20+ years is that the Act still allows for the destruction of biodiversity.

Humane Society International Australia is part of the Places You Love Alliance, a group of conservation organisations calling on the Australian Government to introduce stronger national environmental laws. With this alliance we are advocating for the new laws to:

### 1. Enact National Environmental Standards

To ensure our new laws deliver strong environmental outcomes we need strong, legally binding and enforceable National Environmental Standards for decision making and clear guidance on what impacts will be considered unacceptable.

Decisions on how to apply these Standards must be made by a new independent regulator—Environment Protection Australia (EPA), who must also take an active role in monitoring and enforcing the law.

### 2. Protect critical habitat

Significant impacts on habitat that is critical to the survival and recovery of threatened wildlife and their habitats must be prohibited under our new laws. We must also better manage key threats, including land clearing and climate change.

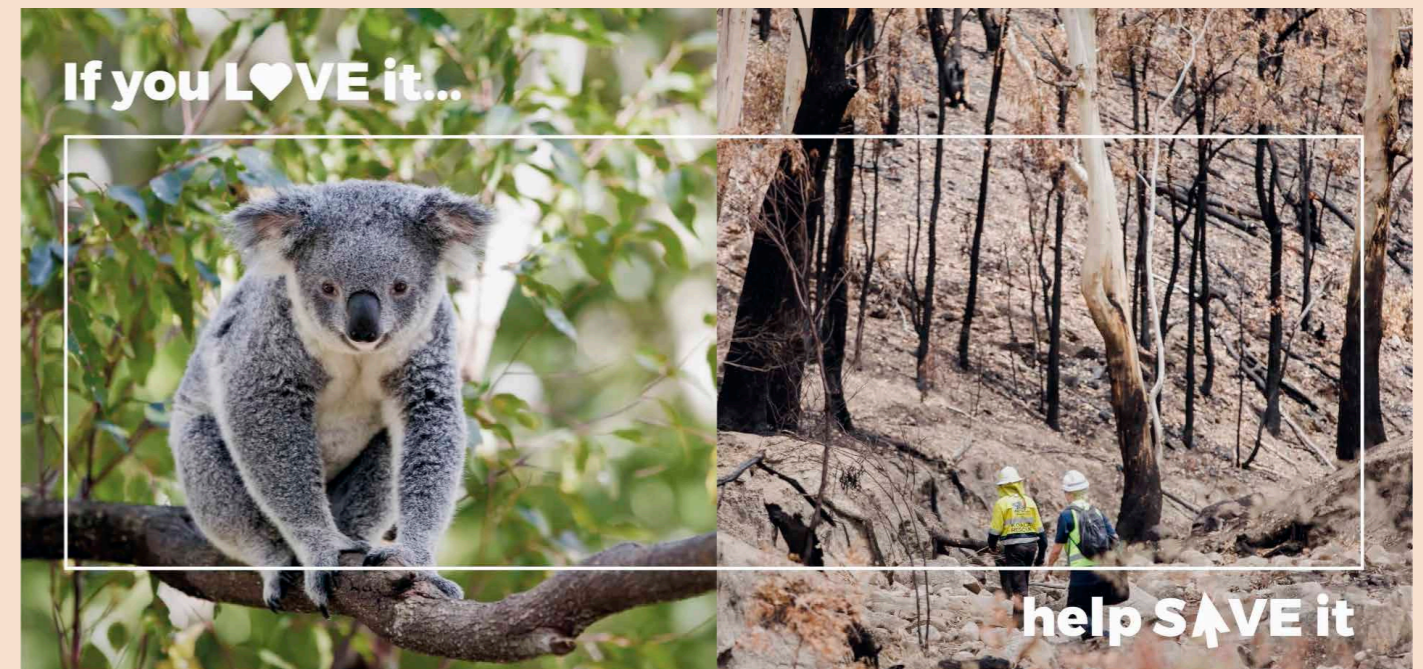
To stop the managed decline of wildlife and their habitats, the use of offsets (areas intended to compensate for approved harm) must be tightly constrained.

### 3. Drive recovery

Every threatened species and ecological community must have a recovery strategy in place, including legally binding guidance for decision makers on how to avoid further impacts, address threats, protect critical habitat and support recovery.

Australia is investing only a fraction of the \$2 billion annually that science tells us we need to recover our threatened species and communities—that urgently needs to change.

*by Dr Megan Kessler*



**Now is a critical time for the Government to hear that Australians support strong nature laws and want the current reforms to create transformational change – laws that will halt and reverse the extinction crisis and leave Australia a better place for future generations.**



## Threatened ecological community profile

# The journey to protect an iconic Sydney habitat

Cumberland Plain Woodland in the Sydney Basin Bioregion once spanned huge swaths in the driest regions of western Sydney. Currently, less than nine percent of the community is left in pockets across the Cumberland Plain.

### The community

This woodland is characterised by grey box and forest red gum, with secondary trees including narrow-leaved ironbark, spotted gum and thin-leaved stringybark. The understory is diverse, dominated by blackthorn, kangaroo grass and weeping meadow grass. Threatened plants in the community include the downy wattle, native pear and juniper-leaved grevillea.

Many threatened species are found in this ecosystem, including quolls, yellow-bellied gliders, gang-gang cockatoos, regent honeyeaters and swift parrots. The community is also home to the Sydney koala population, one of the largest and healthiest groups of koalas in NSW.

These species live in pockets of the community, often on the border of urban areas and farmlands. The constriction of their habitat and gradual disappearance of movement corridors has put enormous pressure on wildlife in this community as well as putting them in danger of road strikes and predation.

Evolved in an area prone to floods, fires, storms and drought, the Cumberland Plains Woodland is incredibly resilient. Many of the plants found here have adapted to harsh conditions with profuse seed production, underground lignotubers and fire-resistant bark. Unfortunately, the plains can't evolve to survive human activities.

### The listings

With increasing range reduction, fragmentation and the loss of its key ecological functions, this community is in trouble. HSI was the original nominator for the woodlands to be listed as Endangered in 1998, resulting in the first ever EPBC Act Threatened Ecological Community listing.

Unfortunately, the impacts continued, and another nomination was needed to have the community uplisted to Critically Endangered in 2009, helping to provide vital recognition and the highest possible protection for this beleaguered ecosystem.

However, gaining legal protection is not always the end of the story for threatened communities. Since its listing, HSI has continued to fight to preserve this community against further destruction.

### The fight continues

HSI's work in advocating for the Cumberland Plain continues to this day, most recently with our opposition to the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan which seeks to authorise the destruction of this threatened community for promised but unproven future environmental gains. In its current form, the Plan would allow for the destruction of over 500 hectares of this Critically Endangered community.

Although approved by the former NSW Government, the current NSW Government are looking at whether the plan needs revision. It will also require approval from the Federal Government before it can be implemented. We're working with state and federal governments to revise the Plan, ensuring that the woodland and the species that depend on it will remain protected.



Black cockatoos are some of the most striking visitors to Wildlife Land Trust sanctuaries. On the left is a pair of glossy black cockatoos on Jens and Ute's Refuge and on the right is a red-tailed black cockatoo on Nature's Wonderland.

## Threatened species profile

# Building a sanctuary for black cockatoos

**Striking, iconic and uniquely Australian, black cockatoos are some of the most beloved birds in the country. They belong to the genera *Calyptorhynchus* (meaning "hidden beak") comprising the red and orange-tailed birds, and *Zanda*, made up of the yellow and white-tailed cockatoos.**

These cockatoos have adapted to feed on seeds, cones and nuts – their large, hinged bills are able to both delicately grasp and easily crush tough seed pods. They have two toes facing forward and two facing back, giving them a strong grip for perching and allowing them to manipulate cones and seeds with their feet.

Black cockatoos prefer to live in old-growth forests, where they can roost, forage for seeds and grubs and raise their nestlings in large tree hollows. However, these birds have a remarkable ability to adapt – their nomadic lifestyle and curious, intelligent nature means that they can find food and habitat in a range of altered environments like pine plantations and farms.

Black cockatoos are found on Wildlife Land Trust sanctuaries in every state. They may visit in large, noisy flocks for a feed, roost overnight, stop by for a drink or, if you're very lucky, raise their chicks in a nearby tree hollow or snag.

If you live in black-cockatoo country, you can support these birds by improving habitat on your land.

### Conservation

The first step is to preserve what you already have, by allowing dead trees to stay standing, keeping livestock away from woodlands, altering your fire management

strategies and managing invasive weeds or pests that can prevent natural bush regeneration.

To regenerate habitat, plant locally indigenous eucalypts for nesting habitat and banksias, grevilleas, hakeas or she-oaks for food trees. A mix of over and understory plants will help to create a complex habitat that will support a wide range of plants and animals over time.

Connections are important – if you have nearby habitat, creating linkages and corridors can have a huge benefit to wildlife like black cockatoos. Collaborating with your neighbours can help to build seed stock, coordinate regeneration efforts and give you a better chance of receiving sponsorship or funding.

### Monitoring

Luckily for us bird lovers, black cockatoos are usually described as conspicuous! They're easy to spot and hear in the skies, and they often congregate in large, noisy family groups to feed. Have a look under cone-bearing trees for chewed-up cones and pieces of bark, which can give you an idea of the number of birds nearby and their food of choice.

Keeping records can help you to see whether your work is helping to increase black cockatoo numbers. The data can also help researchers to track birds over the landscape.

If you'd like to learn more about HSI Australia's work in improving the future of our natural spaces, look into our Extinction Fighters campaign.

[hsi.org.au/australian-wildlife-and-habitats](https://hsi.org.au/australian-wildlife-and-habitats)



IMAGE: MIKHAI NATURALIST VIA FLICKR

Cumberland Plain Woodland is home to many threatened species like the juniper-leaved grevillea.



# WLT welcomes these new member sanctuaries

**44**  
new members  
added

**900**  
sanctuaries  
nationwide

**85,773**  
hectares  
preserved

New Sanctuary	Owner / Manager	Location	Size (ha)
<b>NEW SOUTH WALES</b> 21 new sanctuaries (681 ha) • Total: 394 sanctuaries (30,781 ha)			
Sunny Ridge	Aline Duerr	Quorrobolong	44
Collaroy Slopes	Jane Bennett and David Slip	Collaroy	1
Tallygang Retreat	John and Penny Smith	Wombeyan Caves	97
Spenser's Property	Spenser and Pauline Wilson	Doonbah	3
Dannii and Adam's Refuge	Dannielle Warner and Adam Vicha	Mountain Lagoon	6
Oceans Reach	Jen and Tav Oceans	Pillar Valley	44
Nerring Hill	Timothy Pembroke and Louise Pryor	Bendalong	10
Andrew and Cate's Refuge	Andrew and Catherine Colson	Forest Reefs	12
Ken and Judy's Refuge	Ken and Judy Bailey	Pyree	2
Noonameena	Roslyn Runciman	Main Creek	9
Jenny's Refuge	Jenny Wilson	Kangaroo Valley	8
Oullaburra	Samantha Fearnley, Mark Wilson and Jolene Collins	Wamban	33
Buroo Cottage	Sue McKellar	Wallagoot	1
The Torr	Elissa Caldwell	Bexhill	3
Wombat Hollow	Henry Detjen	Windellama	73
Treetops Wildlife	Paula and Ian Paananen	MacMasters Beach	2
Thinking Tree Farm	Nicholas Everingham and Ashleigh Barnes	Brogo	40
Amber's Refuge	Amber Moloney	Merriwa	132
Ouroboros	Scott Barber	Woodside	127
Forest Park	Tristan and Natalie Davies	Binjura	19
Liesl and Michael's Refuge	Liesl Perryman and Michael Pottinger	Reidsdale	15
<b>SOUTH AUSTRALIA</b> 3 new sanctuaries (21 ha) • Total: 51 sanctuaries (3,416 ha)			
Mish and Wade's Refuge	Mish and Wade Simpson	Onkaparinga Hills	9
Mount George	David and Belinda Dawson	Mount George	4
28 Birds	LC McDonald and I Mulligan	Willunga Hill	8
<b>VICTORIA</b> 5 new sanctuaries (160 ha) • Total: 86 sanctuaries (2,700 ha)			
Wartooki	Pam and Matthew May	Wartook	21
Plateau's Edge	David and Marie Lowe	Erica	11
Shangrila Stud	Leanne Whitham	Monbulk	12
Carolyn and Peter's Refuge	Carolyn and Peter Golding	Monbulk	2
Billawin	Tamasyn and Robin Ramsay	Victoria Valley	114

New Sanctuary	Owner / Manager	Location	Size (ha)
<b>TASMANIA</b> 1 new sanctuary (120 ha) • Total: 47 sanctuaries (3,432 ha)			
Milford	Robyn Lewis	Cambridge	120
<b>WESTERN AUSTRALIA</b> 3 new sanctuaries (89 ha) • Total: 52 sanctuaries (5,341 ha)			
Lori-Ann and Colin's Refuge	Lori-Ann Shibish and Colin Ingram	Chadwick	5
Karlup Animal Sanctuary	Claire Pragnell and Michael Jackson	Forest Hill	71
Thomas and Yulia's Refuge	Thomas Cudahy and Yulia Novikova	Balingup	13
<b>QUEENSLAND</b> 11 new sanctuaries (1,532 ha) • Total: 265 sanctuaries (39,584 ha)			
Kangaroo Country	Samantha Tro and Albert Stewart	Beecher	16
Jim and Deidre's Refuge	Deidre and Jim Taylor	Mount Glorious	1
Kangaroo Tales	Andrew and Kirsty Black	Midge Point	2
Honey's Refuge	Honey Butz	Chapel Hill	1
Wairambar Rainforest	Paul and Roberta Michna	Topaz	24
Spring Hills and Black Kite Downs	Veronika Zeil and John Rolfe	Rockyview	1012
G O Lee	George and Leeanne Radford	Herberton	253
Melissa and Sinead's Refuge	Melissa van Herk and Sinead Davies	Shell Pocket	9
Frog Hollow	Sean and Vanessa Gillen	Mungalli	168
Jodie's Refuge	Jodie Bonney	Lammermoore	9
Teembin Pines	Jordan Hunt	Caboolture	37

IMAGE: URLUP WILDLIFE SANCTUARY - RON AND SANDRA CLARK



# SANCTUARIES YOU CAN STAY

Looking for a vacation off the beaten track? Our Sanctuaries You Can Stay program features some of the best wildlife and nature destinations in Australia.

Check out our website for a variety of retreats to suit any holiday at:

[www.wildlifelandtrust.org.au/stay](http://www.wildlifelandtrust.org.au/stay)



NEW SOUTH WALES

## Wildside Sanctuary

The perfect weekend getaway for nature lovers, Wildside Sanctuary is set in the stunning woodlands of Mountain Lagoon, bordering Wollemi National Park in New South Wales. Stay in The Bower, a spacious eco cottage with a private spa, sunlit deck and firepit.

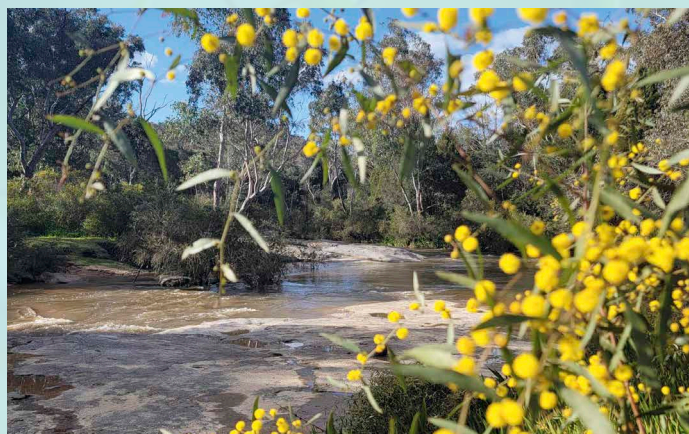
Wildside Sanctuary offers birding and wildlife tours where you can spot gang-gang cockatoos, gliders, wallabies, wombats and nocturnal birds and learn how they thrive in their woodland habitats. You can also take part in local conservation projects, helping ecologists to track and monitor koalas on the land.

Your stay will support the conservation work of the owners, John and Sarah, who have built a thriving ecosystem for a diversity of native and threatened species on this woodland refuge.

Contact John and Sarah at:

email: [hellopossums@wildsidesanctuary.com.au](mailto:hellopossums@wildsidesanctuary.com.au)

mobile: 0418 408 769



VICTORIA

## Mittagong Talia

Set in Victoria's picturesque Woolshed Valley, Mittagong Talia offers an immersion into nature and the colonial and Indigenous history of Eldorado.

The sustainable, self-contained cottage can house up to six – play fun board games, unwind by the fireplace or sample local wines and produce on the deck. The cottage also features a two-person outdoor bath where you can relax to the sounds of nature.

Take your time exploring the ironbark woodlands, granite mountains, waterfalls and creek habitats, where you may spot resident wallabies, wombats, native birds or koalas. You can also head to the nearby towns of Milawa, Wangaratta and Beechworth to learn about the region's colourful history or embark on one of the many nature trails to see the incredible natural beauty of the area.

Contact Kat and Steve at:

email: [stay@mittagongtalia.com.au](mailto:stay@mittagongtalia.com.au)

mobile: 0415 895 141

*Thank you* for your continued support of the Wildlife Land Trust Australia. Together we are all working towards a better world for wildlife, and making Australia a more vibrant, diverse and beautiful home for people and animals.

[wildlifelandtrust.org.au](http://wildlifelandtrust.org.au)