

Australian's Peak Wildlife Body Celebrates World Wildlife Day

Friday 3 March 2023

Australia's peak coordinating body for wildlife health, Wildlife Health Australia (WHA) is celebrating World Wildlife Day today by highlighting some of the diverse and powerful programs it coordinates for Australia's unique wildlife.

Understanding the significance of the theme for World Wildlife Day in 2023; "Partnerships for Conservation", WHA embodies these principles by providing leadership through strong partnerships for national action on wildlife health that protect and enhance the natural environment, biodiversity, economy and animal and human health.

This week Wildlife Health Australia has profiled several of its Programs, demonstrating the depth and breadth of its operations supporting the health of wildlife, animals and humans.

Wildlife Health Australia CEO Dr Rupert Woods said:

"WHA takes a One Health approach to its operations, recognising that in our globalised world, the health of humans, animals, wildlife and the environment are fundamentally linked for survival. Animal diseases can affect the health of people, and human diseases can affect the health of animals. Because we all share one world, we all share One Health."

WHA's diverse operations have featured a national surveillance program that brings together government agencies, veterinary experts, universities and carer groups to collect and share national intelligence on emerging diseases and enable targeted responses. The recent work of its partners has identified a new disease emerging in Australia, triggering coordinated responses.

WHA has also developed capacity for creating line-of-sight arrangements for Australia's agencies involved in emergency preparedness and operations across many jurisdictions and harnessing various expertise in this space.

It has participated in the work of many experts from veterinary, academic and government fields over the past year to produce Australia's first national disease risk assessment – the Koala Disease Risk Analysis (KDRA). The protocols and approaches developed can now be rolled out to support many other iconic Australian species in future.

A new focus for Wildlife Health Australia in 2023 is to create two-way trusted partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island organisations with the aim of bringing together unique insights, knowledge, science and lore for the betterment of Australia's iconic and precious wildlife.

Wildlife Health Australia celebrates World Wildlife Day on 3 March - and therefore, the 50th birthday of CITES – through a series of social media posts and insights highlighting global efforts that recognise the strategic and natural value of supporting wildlife.