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**Newsletter of The Northern Tablelands Wildlife  
Carers ~ Issue No 81 April 2009  
Phone - 1800-008290 [www.ntwc.org.au](http://www.ntwc.org.au)**

## **A report on the Victorian Bushfires**

by *Dean Davidson*

I went on three deployments to Victoria with the Rural Fire

deployment was of 5 days duration. For all deployments we were based at Healesville and

and Marysville) and the Upper Yarra Valley from Woori Yallock through Warburton to Reefton and south to Powelltown. On the first deployment we arrived on Saturday 14th , one week after Black Saturday. The entire state

Some of the Northern Tablelands crew enjoying a break at Wesburn Staging area just before the rain began.



Service. The experience was both rewarding by helping the population after the unprecedented disaster and emotionally disturbing when talking to fire victims and seeing the damage that is far worse than shown by the media. Each

covered the area of Yarra Glen, Healesville, Toolangi State forest (near the devastated towns of Kinglake



**Burning Mountain Ash trees on Blowhard Road in Toolangi State Forest. These trees are up to 75 meters high. We found an injured thrush near here.**

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Northern Tableland Wildlife Carers is a network of trained volunteers licensed by NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. We rescue, rehabilitate and release injured, sick, orphaned & unwanted native fauna.

Any assistance please call the above numbers in your area.

Membership \$15 single and \$20 family year for authorised and support members All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

This Newsletter is designed by Colin Wood and printed by New England Credit Union. Telstra Country Wide are also proud to be a

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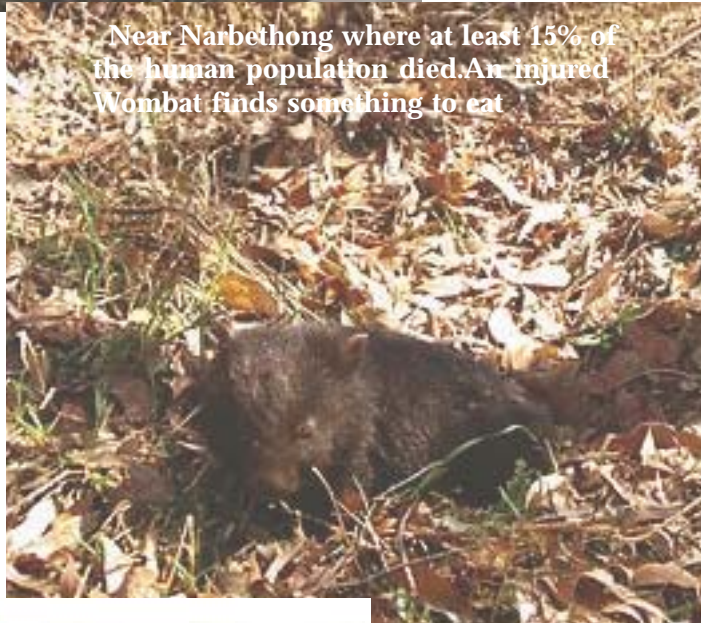
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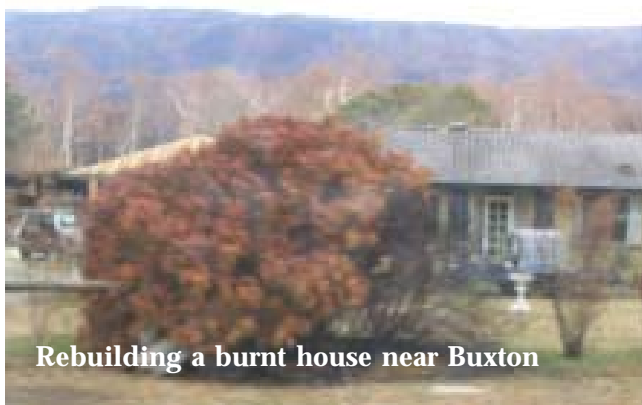
About to set out on patrol from Healesville staging area 15 Feb 2009. The sun is just rising over Mount Riddell, 3km distant through the smoke haze.

The first week the forests were silent and virtually no wildlife was seen. However, by the second week we began to see wombats, possums, Eastern Grey kangaroos, wallabies and thousands of rabbits! We rescued a thrush that

seemed to be in a state of shock, nevertheless they were overjoyed that the RFS had come to help. Our task was to relieve the Victorian CFA crews, mop up remnants of the fire, put in control lines to prevent further outbreaks and be on standby for property protection if the fire broke out of the control lines.



Near Narbethong where at least 15% of the human population died. An injured Wombat finds something to eat



Rebuilding a burnt house near Buxton

must have hidden in a bush of burrs and was no longer able to fly due to the burrs. I removed the burrs and then delivered him to Animal Aid shelter at Toolangi.

We were divided into strike teams of five tankers. In our team we  
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## Do you utilise Our Website as much as you could? [www.ntwc.org.au](http://www.ntwc.org.au)

Main advantages of using the website

You can print out your

- Membership form
- Foster Care report
- Milk request form
- Animal transfer form
- Animal report form
- Travel expenses claim form

You can have access to most carer organisation throughout Australia

Have access to lots of useful links for education and help for native animals

Read the latest and older issues of you newsletter

See lots of photos of animals in care and those that have been released

Lots of stuff to help you care for our native animals

Check out the snakes in our area and see which are non; partly or very venomous

Leave a message for our committee

In future, to save on postage and paper we will be sending out emails with the website address of the latest newsletter to all who have internet access.

Please register you email address with Colin at [turton37@bigpond.com](mailto:turton37@bigpond.com)

## Reptile Awareness talk

by Colin Wood

I had an email from John Davidson of the international club of the New England University asking if we could arrange a talk on our native snakes for the overseas students. He explained that most of the overseas students that study here are aware of our venomous snakes and are afraid "to go outdoors" for fear of being bitten.



Kelly, Amanda, Sasha & Andrew

I spoke to our team of snake handlers and got together with Andrew, Kelly and Sasha and four of Andrew's non-venomous snakes and met about 30 overseas students near Wright's Village one afternoon. I spoke for a while about our mostly very shy snakes and the fact that all they wanted to do was get away from our after all "you are too big to eat so they really don't want to bite you". Then Andrew unveiled his pythons and, I was surprised, most of the students were very comfortable handling them, even two young children "had a go". John thanked us and said could we make it a regular occasion.



A new hope - three weeks after the fire

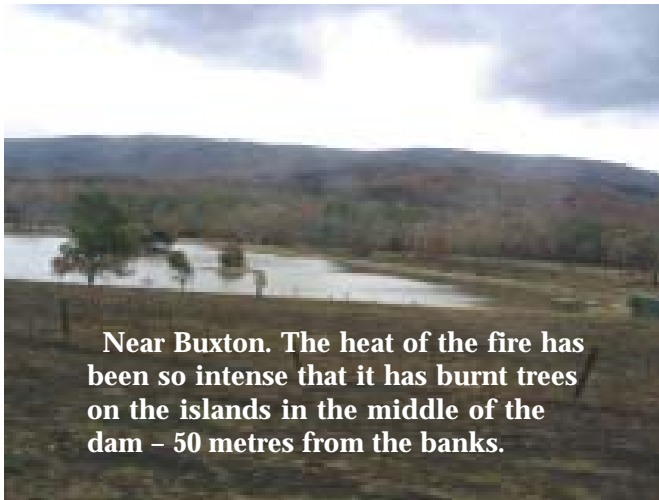
had one from Armidale, one from Uralla, one from Glencoe and one from Glen Innes. These were crewed by RFS members from Tenterfield to Nowendoc

The photo of Burnt forest, Long Gully Road near Tarawarra. The snow like

substance is about ½ meter of ash. Nothing could survive this and nothing could live in it after the fire. It is still and quiet, not a trace of wildlife and not a sound of a bird



How could any animal live in this ~ Long Gully Road near Tarawarraat. In places ash 1/2metre thick



Near Buxton. The heat of the fire has been so intense that it has burnt trees on the islands in the middle of the dam - 50 metres from the banks.

20 head of cattle were seen attempting to survive around what was a very large dam near Yarra Glen. At this time, Victoria had only 2mm of rain since Christmas. People who enjoy Yarra Glen wine should save it for special celebrations. There will be no 2009 vintage. Many vines are destroyed, if they survived burning then the grapes are shrivelled up due to heat or tainted by smoke.

The RFS deployed more than 3600 firefighters from over 900 brigades to Victoria

### Important note for contributors

All articles supplied to be in txt, word or RTF format with no headings in capitals, no double spaces between paragraphs. Pictures to be JPG no larger than 200dpi and 200kb in size and "named" not just camera details. If in doubt contact Colin at [turton37@bigpond.com](mailto:turton37@bigpond.com).

## Honey ~ beware

from Jenni Drewit

'Honey is not recommended for debilitated animals as its high levels of fructose and glucose give a quick energy hit followed by an equal or greater let down. Honey can also contain dormant endospores of the bacteria *Clostridium botuli-*

*num*, these endospores can transform into toxin-producing bacteria in immature intestinal tract, leading to illness and even death.

Honey or glucose is not recommended by a well known wildlife vet to hydrate dehydrated animals/birds as delivering either honey or glucose directly into the stomach of a **dehydrated animal causes the stomach to draw vital fluids from other parts of the body into the stomach** to dissolve the honey/glucose content of the hydration fluid, causing further dehydration instead of correcting the problem.'

Equipment  
for sale & swap  
Contact Colin at  
[turton37@bigpond.com](mailto:turton37@bigpond.com) and  
advertise your equipment in  
newsletter and website.

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## Armidale Bird Watching Programme 2009



The Armidale birdwatching group is an informal organisation of people who enjoy birdwatching. Regular outings occur on the first Sunday of the month except January and July; there are extra events as well. The meeting place is at the Armidale Visitors Information Centre, 82 Marsh Street, prepared for departure at 8.00 am after rationalising cars. Bring food (morning tea and sometimes lunch) and something to drink, binoculars, sunscreen, hat and wear stout shoes. Anyone wishing to join the group should phone Shirley Cook: 02 6772 7262 or email [shirleycook1@bigpond.com](mailto:shirleycook1@bigpond.com).

2 – 3 May Regent Honeyeater surveys west of Armidale. To be confirmed.

7 June we will go to Mt Yarrowyck Nature Reserve via Blackfellows Gully, Teatree Creek and Bo

1 –2 August this will be the second Regent Honeyeater survey weekend. To be confirmed.

6 September Hillgrove

4 October Dumaresq Dam

1 November Sunnyside TSR (if there is anything left after the Sunnyside realignment of the New England Highway).

29 November to 4 December – Australasian Ornithologist Conference 2009 will be held in Armidale. All birdwatchers, both amateur and professional are welcome to come, and particularly students for whom there will be some sponsorship. Registration will be on-line (details will be provided soon).

6 December Yina Nature Reserve.

THERE WILL BE NO OUTING IN JANUARY

## Community Partnership Account with NECU

from NECU website  
www.necu.com.au

New England Credit Union offers a Community Partnership Account (CPA) which assists community-based organisations with their fundraising activities. The CPA is a full access savings account that offers a competitive interest rate and a guarantee that NECU will reward the account holder's nominated community group with an annual bonus payment. The Account holder WINS with a competitive transaction account, the community group WINS with financial support and NECU WINS as we are able to direct more funds back into the communities in which we operate!

### How does it work?

Interested Community Groups need to register with New England Credit Union to become a Recipient Organisation. NECU will then place the organisation's name on our list of recipient organisations and individual members can elect to support their favourite groups by opening a Community Partnership Account.

On 30 June each year NECU

calculates the average annual balance of accounts held by supporters of each recipient organisation. This amount is then used by NECU to make a 1% bonus payment to the chosen Community Organisation.

### How can you support your favourite community group?

You can support your chosen community organisation without it costing you anything. As long as you have money in your account, your chosen organisation will receive an annual bonus from NECU. Thanks to supporters choosing their favourite community organisation, the recipient can continue to enjoy this bonus payment each year.



Colin Wood presenting Kevin Dupé with a thank you plaque for all the help the NECU give us

The more supporters an organisation obtains the more they will receive in their annual bonus payment—encourage your relatives and friends to become supporters today.

### How can I access funds in the CPA?

The Community Partnership Account is an everyday transaction account with a variety of access methods to suit you! Access your funds at call through a cheque book, EFTPOS, ATM, Web Access (Internet Banking), Swift Access (telephone banking), VISA Debit card and BPAY®.



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## Focusing in on life as a Wildlife Carer.

by Julia Rose

What is wildlife caring all about you might wonder, as you hand over a baby bird to a Northern Tablelands Wildlife Carer. Well with fifteen years with NTWC this volunteer can



tell you. After completing training and becoming authorised to care for native animals a whole new world opens up. There are so many new skills to learn.

Rescuing native animals, especially in urban areas, is always a challenge if it is a snake or kangaroo or even a possum from a chimney.

Most animals will bite and scratch to defend themselves which isn't much fun. When captured, if animal is ok there is the problem of where to release or relocate within its territory. NTWC is able to help home owners by putting possum boxes in back gardens for the ousted ceiling dwellers. Koalas do not usually come

down poles without help from a cherry picker with a licensed operator and be warned frightened koalas can really bite and scratch. Another big job is answering the incoming calls, we might need to think about a wide variety of problems locally or even further afield. Many callers just want information. If the animal needs help then we try to find a rescuer or local carer to travel and collect animals. Sometimes after big storms, strange coastal birds drop in which we have never seen before, so out come the identification books or we log onto a web site. After that there is the dilemma of finding fresh fish for the birds dinner, feeding them first and finding some-

thing else for us later. Rescuing bats and flying foxes means more than a training course, it means being vaccinated for Rabies. Having birds in care also means keeping feed on hand from composts and a garden with healthy worms and grubs.

If we decide to become 'Mum' for a possum or macropod joey, an incredible journey begins for six to nine months and each animal is different with a character all of its own. Late night feeds you thought were a thing of the past, not when there is a tiny kangaroo or possum in care. But it is all so rewarding just to see them grow and then go back to being a native animal. Our vision of ideal habitat changes and we become very

aware of possible dangers and needs of different animals. Ideal habitat is hard to find so we turn to revegetation areas.



Ring-tail Possums

If animal care is not on the agenda there are many jobs to keep an organisation running. You could become an advertising expert and make all sorts of amazing contacts. Join a fundraising team and run raffles or conduct functions. If writing letters and submissions is a skill then NTWC has a job vacancy.

NTWC relies upon grants, fundraising and donations.

Producing a newsletter or being a web page manager are all skills which go towards running a wildlife carer group.

NTWC is licensed by National

Parks and this requires keeping detailed records of every call and animal coming into care, then collating and submitting an annual return. Another job is that of a 'data collator' and license officer. Or how about running training courses for carers? Just four years ago a NSW wildlife council was formed, representatives now attend quarterly meetings in Sydney.

Become a volunteer wildlife carer and discover the magic of our native animals and know what a privilege it is to care for them all.

## Koalas Are the Latest Victims of Climate Change

It seems that, once again, "human problems" are showing how they effect non-humans as well. In the latest display of the climate change domino-effect, Australia's native koalas are the victims.

New studies show that the rising level of carbon dioxide pollution in the atmosphere depletes nutrients from the leaves of the eucalyptus tree- the primary, and often only source of food for the koala.

Researchers working on the study

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also found that the amount of toxicity in the leaves of eucalyptus trees rose when the level of carbon dioxide was increased.

Ian Hume, emeritus professor of biology at Sydney University, estimated that if current levels of global CO2 emissions remained stagnant, it would result in a noticeable reduction in the koala population in only 50 years.

Koalas, who have already been displaced from the most nutritious trees on fertile land due to farming and suburb production, only eat the leaves of about 25 of the 600 species of eucalyptus in Australia, a number that Hume believes will be reduced drastically in the very near future.

## Recovery From Fires in Victoria

By Stella Reid

It is day 46, our world is very quiet, just the wind and gentle rain. No sounds of electricity, no tv or radio. This is a lovely place, I do not think about the loss of the little ones at the moment. We look forward to building a new home for the ones to come. Without them our world would have no meaning. The little ones fill our hearts and minds. I have started to look at homes to build and would like to build what I call a large wombat hole, which we will call a home and the little ones will call home. We will be living with them. In to the earth, covered by earth. I went to the library and have lots of books to look at. We will be closer to the little ones,

if we can work out how to live like them. Thank you for all your kind letters and e mails, we will reply in the near future. If you have any ideas for me, If you were starting again, how would you live, your ideas and thoughts would be a joy for me to see and read. Even if you think it strange, do let me know. In our world nothing is strange.

## Beware ~ Barbed Wire

For anyone who is not aware of it there is a website <http://www.wildlifefriendlyfencing.com/>

collecting data on barbed wire incidents and spreading the word about alternate fencing options etc...**Reporting incidents**, over time, will help calculate just how much harm is done by barbed wire.'

Regards Daryl Dickson

**During Carol and Alan Rose' leave the following positions will need to be filled:**

- Training Officer
  - NPWS Licencing Reports
  - Flying Fox/Bat Co-Ordinator
  - Deepwater Co-Ordinator
  - Form updates & register.
- Please contact Julia Rose on 1800 008 290 & volunteer to help.

## Raising funds for Victorian wildlife carers

by Julia Rose

Those of us who log onto Ozark will have been reading the postings from the carers involved with wildlife rescue and the devastating fires in Victoria.



Jill Chetwynd and others at the last meeting began to collect donations to do something for those who have lost so much. I wish to thank Pearl Doyle at the Creeklands Clinic and Jill and Rene Pauvert ( Rene on the Mews Café) for having collection boxes on the counter. Many others have sent cheques to NTWC which have been posted direct to Wildlife Victoria with a stamped addressed envelope for a receipt by return mail. Those who requested a receipt from NTWC have had one posted this week, please let me know if yours has not arrived.

I have divided the funds thus, \$289.00 for Nigels Animal Rescue, \$289.00 for Help for Wildlife and

Wildlife Victoria received \$1,390. There is more to send and this will be finalised next week. I have asked the recipients to send us a brief message for members and local media to give some detail of how the funds raised had helped.

We included some Brenda wraps to cheer them up which we know they will do.

## More wonderful Brenda wraps

and jockey bags from our wonderful supporters Brenda and John Martin in Guyra. This

time we have some 'just right jockey bags' in lots of wonderful cheery colours. THANKYOU, we know the joeys and carers will have happy smiles now. Each jockey gets a special new " Brenda wrap/bag'.

Don't forget to send Brenda a photo of the joeys in care in their special rugs too.

## Bobby the Boo-Book & The Governor's Tale

By Robyn & Piers Foa

was a fairly innocent little fellow, but his presence in our shelter produced the most amazing chain of events.

He started his sojourn with us in quite the "normal" way, found by the side of the road disheveled, hungry

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and very much in need of repair. So after the necessary TLC, medication, and “physio”, we decided that his right wing had just a hint of untidiness about it, but we didn’t have the facility to test fly him, without danger of having to chase him all over the paddock if he was, in fact, not viable. The Beechworth Prison had only recently completed a structure to house large raptors in need of R&R from Healesville, so we asked the Prison Governor if we would be



able to try out this fantastic facility and find out if Bobby could once again sustain flight.

Not bad; but obviously in need of rebuilding his muscles, it was decided that Bobby the Boo-Book be consigned to “B’ cell in “B” block for a short sentence while he regained strength, their first “inmate”, he quickly became quite a celebrity. The suggestion was made that the “Community Gang” might be able to construct a suitable flight aviary at our shelter, resulting in our being inducted as deputies, or more accurately, as “Prison Volunteers”, while

the most wonderful enclosure took shape. Our “boys” were a lovely bunch, all due for release in the relative short term, and “Captain Crook’s Cottage” took shape in between copious cups of tea, tall stories, that would curdle milk, and a gentleness that belied their history as they melted under the charms of the various creatures in our care.

One such patient was a Lace Monitor who had been found with his tail in an appalling state, gangrenous and flyblown, we had to amputate all but a short section which was all neatly sewn up and bandaged. The dressing, obviously had to be changed fairly regularly. The leader of our lads was a huge man, covered in tats, battle scarred and built like a side of a barn, but he became the self-appointed nurse-aide and at that stage the goanna had not been

named. As with all decisions concerning the labeling of things from babies to bridges, a great deal of thought was given as to a suitable name and of course there were a great many suggestions, some of which could never be described in a narrative such as this, many with reference to some of the less popular guards, and some that were just totally offensive to anything or anyone in a position of authority. With some very careful manipulation of the debate, some fairly inoffensive and tame persuasion, we managed to have everyone agree to calling him “The Governor”!! The Governor has since been

released into the wilds of the Beechworth Historic Park. The leader of the “gang” has also gone home, who, upon the day of his release, came around to say goodbye to us at the shelter, and Bobby the Boo-Book from “B” Cell in “B” Block has also been released, but that is another story for another day. Robyn and Piers run a shelter in Beechworth, Northern Victoria.

## The snake in the ute

by: Manfred Zabinskas

It's Sunday afternoon and the phone rings. It's a snake call from Hopetoun Park, Bacchus Marsh. The woman caller is frantic for help. There is a snake in her car and she desperately needs to use the vehicle. She begs me to come straight away.

I quickly ask some questions about the snake and am concerned about the possible difficulty and danger of trying to locate and then remove the snake from the inside of a car. I had visions of it twining itself into the springs under a seat. She couldn't tell

me what the snake looked like or how big it was. I explained that the snake might be difficult to find and could possibly even escape before I got there. After all, it must have found a way in. “No, no!” she exclaimed. “It's in the back of the Ute”. Well, that sounded a bit easier but surely there was an even greater chance now of it disappearing before I got there. “It can't go anywhere – it's tied up in a garbage bag” she states.

Not sure that I heard correctly, I checked and yes the snake was inside



Juvenile Brown snakes

a tied plastic garbage bag and placed in the back of the Ute. Her husband caught the snake and put it there himself. I politely asked why her husband could not then carefully remove the bag containing the snake. “He's in hospital!” the woman replied. Yep. He got bitten twice as he

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shoved the snake into the garbage bag. And there was no way she was going anywhere near it. Seriously, she wasn't going within 50m of the car. I immediately jumped into my car and raced to Hopetoun Park as a matter of urgency.

Because the woman needed her car you ask? Because the husband was in hospital and she needed to be with him? No. I was worried that the snake might be suffocating! Sure enough, there was the bag in the back of the Ute. About 15 very tight knots I estimated. I quickly took the snake down to the nearby river and released it into the dense vegetation along the river bank. It was a juvenile Eastern Brown Snake. I returned to the woman to let her know that the snake was in the bag and that I had safely released it well away from her property, never to return. Well, not until it grows up anyway. She thanked me profusely and asked how much she owed me for my troubles. She admitted that she did not have very much money with her. Embarrassed about how easy it was and sympathetic to the fact that her husband obviously didn't intend to harm the snake, I agreed that whatever she had on her to cover my petrol costs would be fine. I received \$12.65. As I drive home and reflected on how I had just spent 2 hours of my Sunday to earn \$12.65, it hit me. I probably missed a golden opportunity to buy a very cheap Ute! If I told her that the snake had escaped from the bag, I suspect she would

possibly have given me the car. I

did at least get to save a beautiful Eastern Brown snake and watch it safely slither away.

## **Thank you Wildlife Carers ~ A poem**

*by Annette Frederenko*

My flesh is burnt, my fur is singed  
I'm blinded by the heat  
My paws are sore, I fled so fast  
The flames I tried to beat.  
My home is razed, no grass to graze  
My hollow tree is gone.  
I have no nest, no place to rest  
But still my will is strong.  
I need your help, I am confused  
But blindly do my best  
I pray that soon I will be found  
And at a Carers, rest  
They'll do their best to care for me  
My burns and eyes they'll treat  
They'll search for us in blackened bush  
And leave out food to eat.  
And if with Grace I do survive  
This Horror I've been through  
You can thank all Wildlife Carers  
For the loving work they do.

*Written for the Wildlife Carers*

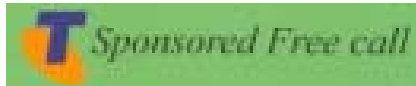
*Published in Wildlife Matters February 07  
edition; A publication of Wildlife Victoria*

<p>We have lost one of the more experienced snake handlers in Andrew Tann, who is leaving Armidale for a teaching position in Picton south-West of Sydney.</p>
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**Northern Tablelands Wildlife Carers is a network of trained volunteers licensed by NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. We rescue, rehabilitate and release injured, sick, orphaned and unwanted native fauna. If you need assistance with a native animal, please call:**

Armidale - Julia Rose 1800-008290  
Wendy Beresford 6775-3747  
Jill Chetwynd 6772-5854  
Tamworth - 1800-008290  
Tenterfield - Pam Brice - 6736-2462  
Glen Innes - Kelly Stumbles 67321838  
Snake Co-ord - Colin Wood - 67752026

Write to NTWC PO  
Box 550 Armidale 2350



**Telstra country Wide are proud to be a sponsor of NT Wildlife Carers...Local people working together.**

This newsletter is designed  
by Colin Wood  
turton37@bigpond.com and  
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**[www.ntwc.org.au](http://www.ntwc.org.au)**