

Our Local WIRES Lady: Christine Fowler



Catchment Champion

Josh Booth, Bryce Clarke, Jasmine
Firebrace and Melissa Kuhne

Hume Public School



Creative Catchment Kids

Creative Catchment Kids is an initiative of the Murray Darling Association and Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre. It aims to improve engagement between the Murray Catchment Management Authority and school students by providing opportunities for positive and authentic ventures that encourage students to develop creative solutions to natural resource management issues. www.murray.cma.nsw.gov.au/creative-catchment-kids.html

Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre

The Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre is located in Burrumbuttock, north of Albury in southern NSW. Since 1995, the centre, which is adjacent to Burrumbuttock Public School, has provided opportunities for discovery and learning about the natural environment, the ecology of the local woodlands and the beauty of native plants. www.wirraminna.org

Murray Darling Association

The Murray Darling Association has membership of over 100 Local Government councils in the Murray-Darling Basin, as well as community groups, businesses and individuals with an interest in ensuring that the Basin continues as a valuable asset for all Australians. Since 1950, the Association has initiated various school and community education programs on managing the Basin's land and water resources. www.mda.asn.au



Enviro-Stories is an innovative literacy education program that inspires learning about natural resource and catchment management issues. Developed by PeeKdesigns, this program provides students with an opportunity to publish their own stories that have been written for other kids to support learning about their local area. www.envirostories.com.au

Our Local WIRES Lady: Christine Fowler

Authors: Josh Booth, Bryce Clarke, Jasmine Firebrace and Melissa Kuhne

Teacher: Karen Bartlett

School: Hume Public School

Catchment Champions

In 2013, students involved in the Creative Catchment Kids program researched and wrote stories about 'Catchment Champions', people who have made important contributions to managing natural resources in their local community. The program was generously funded by the Murray and Murrumbidgee catchment management authorities.

The Catchment Champions books are part of the Enviro-Stories Education Program.



**Catchment Management
Authority**
Murray



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Murrumbidgee

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WIRES

WIRES stands for Wildlife Information Rescue Education Service.

They aim to actively rehabilitate and preserve Australian Wildlife and inspire others to do the same.

WIRES has 27 branches around NSW and over 2000 volunteers.



History

WIRES started in 1985 in Sydney when an injured Ibis was found in Hyde Park. There was no organisation who could take responsibility for its rescue or care.



WIRES get calls from RSPCA, zoos, government departments, local councils and the police.

About Christine

Christine Fowler is married with two adult daughters.

She completed her WIRES training in Albury and started volunteering at WIRES in 2008.

She also works as a nurse when she is not volunteering at WIRES. Her previous volunteering included occasional child care, various jobs at schools including coaching netball.

She was inspired to volunteer at WIRES because when she was on a holiday she saw a lady walk past with 20 bats that she had rescued.



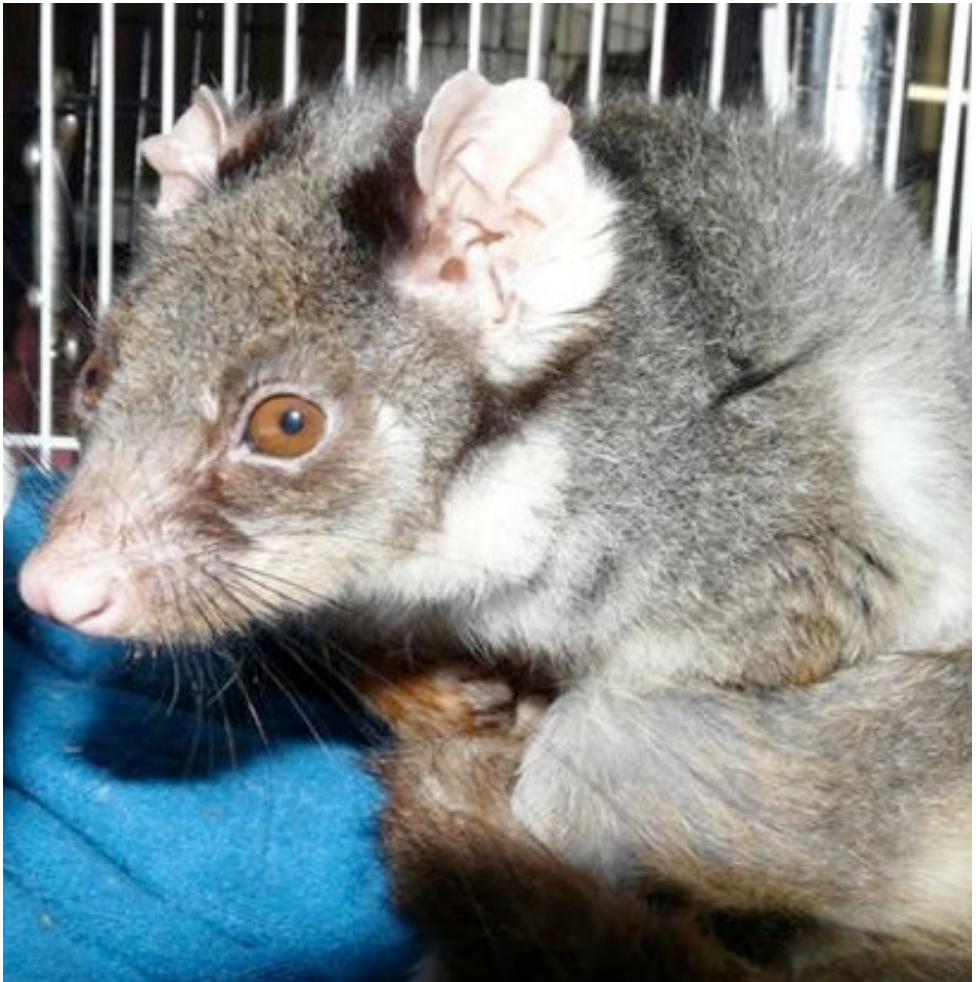
Training

To volunteer at WIRES you have to be aged 18 or over. You have to have a driver's license and an animal license.

WIRES also runs specialist courses which are held at Wonga Wetlands. It takes two days for the information sessions.

The training includes procedures to help save old, sick or injured native animals.





Equipment

The equipment that assists WIRES to help native animals includes cages and boxes that provide protection for the rescuer and the native animal. Towels and blankets are used to keep them warm and to clean them. They also use thermometers to keep track of the animal's temperature.



Rescuing Animals

Christine told us that, “spring is the busiest time of the year.” During spring WIRES assist about 10 to 15 native animals a day. That means they all need to be prepared.

Christine’s worst scar is on her right finger where she was bitten by a female possum. Scratches and bites can put WIRES volunteers in danger of infection. They must make sure injuries are properly treated and that they keep up to date with their vaccinations.



Fundraising

WIRES fundraise whenever the opportunity arises. They fundraise by having community barbeques. WIRES also have a stall at 'Paws in the Park' plus a stall at the Sunday Market a couple of times a year. At the stalls they sell things like chocolates, key rings and magnets.





Success

One of Christine's success stories was the rescue of a female Sea Eagle. It was cared for over six weeks. The Sea Eagle is the second biggest eagle in Australia. Prime news did a story on its rescue, rehabilitation and the release. The eagle was released back into the wild on Table Top Mountain.



Future

Christine is looking at slowing down working as a nurse, which would give her more time with the native animals and to visit her daughters and care for her pet galah.

As for the future of WIRES, they need more money, more volunteers and more appropriate habitats for the native wildlife.



We would like to thank Christine for being our Catchment Champion. We loved hearing her story and are thankful that our community has someone to look after our native wildlife.



Back Row: Jasmine Firebrace and Melissa Kuhne
 Front Row: Bryce Clarke and Josh Booth

2013 Year 6, Hume Public School

The 2012 and 2013 Creative
 Catchment Kids writing
 program was showcased
 at the Seventh World
 Environmental Education
 Congress, held in Morocco
 during June 2013.



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