

Fighting for the 'Little Fella'

Friends of the Brush-Tailed Rock-Wallaby
Recovery Strategy

August 2022



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A Community Partnership

One of the things that makes the Kangaroo Valley rock wallaby work so unique and important is that this is a colony that is not in a National Park. On the face of it this presents formidable challenges. For example, there are more dogs, cats and foxes and every single landowner has to consent to activity on their land. This makes conservation so much harder!

And yet...

If a rural community can embrace an endangered species then it can be a beacon for other parts of Australia. Ultimately the future for wildlife can't only be in a few protected areas and we as humans need to learn to live alongside animals. By working with and through a community we are building bonds. People who know, understand and fight for an animal will have a deeper and more profound relationship with a species than can ever be achieved by visits to protected areas.

So what is our strategy?

A symbol of the Kangaroo Valley area.

Our vision is that Kangaroo Valley becomes known as the "home of the rock wallaby". Locals will feel proud of their contribution to conservation and visitors will become aware and intrigued by the species through statues, events, displays and merchandise. Specific ideas include;

- In 2022 we will be unveiling a bronze statue in the centre of the town
- We are applying for funding for a children's trail
- We will have a presence at the Folk Festival, KV Show and other events

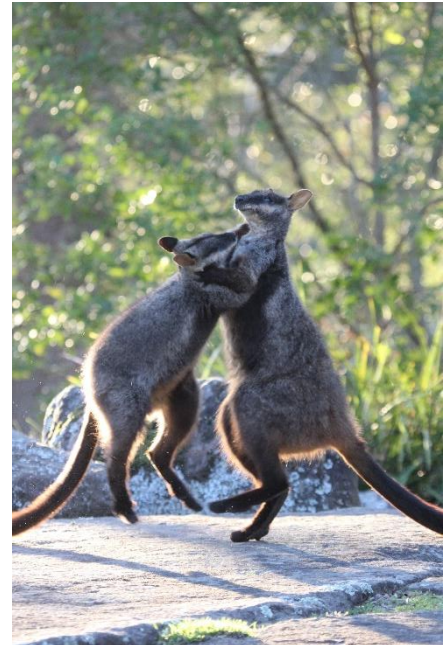
Building a passionate extended team

Over the Covid period we have not had the usual opportunities to run events and connect with the community. In 2022 we will reverse this. We have applied for funding for a community coordinator. This individual will be tasked with increasing our membership to 200 and widening our volunteer pool to 50 – especially targeting young people.

Promote awareness of and emotional connection to the rock wallaby.

The Brush-Tailed Rock Wallaby (BTRW) is a highly charismatic and loveable species, but very few people get to see them.

- We are recruiting a team member to work directly with local schools running sessions to build awareness of the BTRW
- We will bring the magic to life first hand by partnering with two young film makers to produce a short film of our local population.
- We are partnering with Scot's College to run a program for their young people researching the suitability of their grounds for BTRW. This could be the first step in inspiring many locals to realising the potential of their property for wildlife.



Helping the wallabies reclaim the Valley

We are passionate about a future where the rock wallaby thrives in the Shoalhaven region.

When we were formed a small population under threat in particular from fox predation was on the edge of survival. Over the last twenty years we have been delighted to see the population stabilise into two colonies.

Our vision is that the two colonies living in the valley begin to expand, so that the rock wallaby starts to reclaim its ancient habitat across the valley.

We have a unique partnership with SoS, NPWS, Crown Lands, Water NSW, Local Land Services and Local Landowners. Here is our strategy...

PHASE ONE: SAVING THE SPECIES (ONGOING)

In 2009 there were only 9 wallabies in the two Kangaroo Valley populations. The first challenge has been to stabilise the populations.

Predator Control

Over 150 bait stations are maintained, plus 20 in colony predator cameras and 19 outer colony predator cameras are maintained. Whenever predators are spotted, contract shooters / trappers are called in.

Population Monitoring

Ongoing population monitoring through 20 cameras and a six weekly roll call

Captive Release

Both captive bred and wild to wild translocations are used strategically to ensure genetic diversity and to bolster numbers.

We are delighted to say that so far the results of phase one are positive. There are now **33** wallabies in the Valley with the two colonies standing at 20 and 13 individuals respectively.

PHASE TWO: RESEARCHING POSSIBILITY (2022-25)

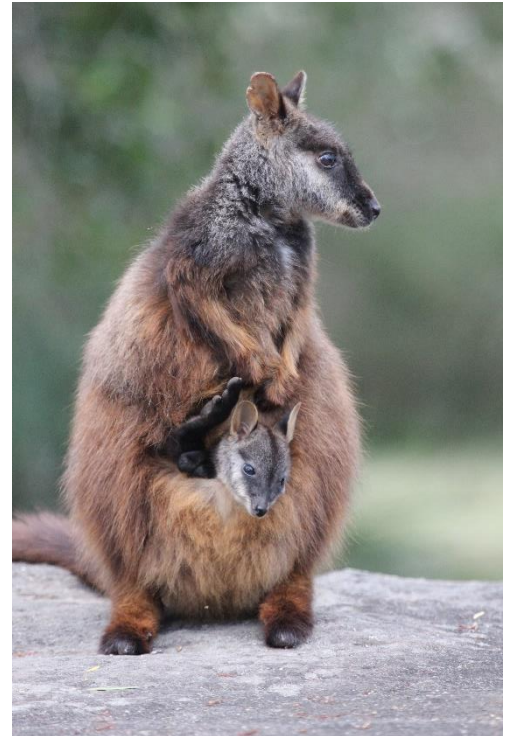
Key Goal: To collect the data that allows us to establish when and how the vision for a self-sustaining meta population may be achieved.

Identifying 'hidden' populations

There is a huge amount of wilderness in the Shoalhaven and rock wallabies are notorious for occupying remote locations. The first heli-survey using habitat modelling showed remarkable results. This work will be extended to gain a full picture of the species in our area.

Understanding Dispersal

Critical to expanding our populations is understanding how young males move territories. We first bought collars in 2020 for three



young males. In 2022 this will be repeated with three more and we anticipate continuing this research until a full picture emerges.

Habitat Mapping

A species distribution model has been built for BTRW. The goal of this workstream is to identify suitable habitat and recommend locations into which wallabies could expand as well as critical corridors.

PHASE THREE: REBUILDING POPULATIONS (2025+)

This phase will depend on the outcomes of phase two. The data from habitat monitoring will allow us to identify potential new locations for establishing a meta population. Partnerships can be built with landowners to protect and manage this land for the rock wallabies and active conservation strategies can be applied to help our population expand and grow through the Valley.