

1300ANIMAL

Leonie Rickard
Wildlife Officer
RSPCA Qld

Janet Gamble
State Wildlife Coordinator
RSPCA Qld

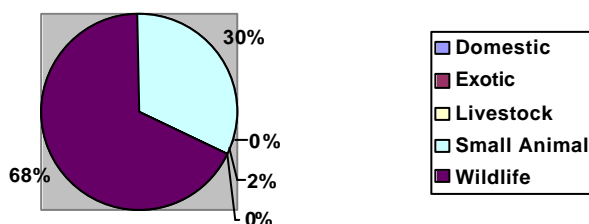
The 1300ANIMAL number is an initiative of and operated by the RSPCA for all animal welfare emergencies. The 'ANIMAL' corresponds with alphanumeric numbers on a phone keypad (264625) making it very easy to remember. All calls to the 1300ANIMAL number are directed to the RSPCA call centre, which operates 24 hours a day and 7 days a week, to coordinate assistance / rescue based on the RSPCA's shelter-mate database. The RSPCA database enables the call centre operator to match the animal type with a suitable and approved rescuer or carer in a nearby location to the caller. This system will not only assist with the delivery of care to injured animals but will also provide a high profile service for those that find injured animals and are unsure of what action to take.

The 1300ANIMAL concept was conceived from numerous reports of difficulty and the time involved in finding help for injured animals. For instance, an animal is hit on the road (wild or domestic) and the driver stops in a panic to try to help. They have their mobile but who to call? They often get in touch with several agencies before finding someone who can assist. By this time the animal may have died or be suffering needlessly.

The 1300ANIMAL number aims to abate this problem. With a comprehensive database of wildlife rehabilitators and rescuers, council agencies and other animal organisations state-wide and by using a centralised phone number manned by RSPCA staff, it will be quicker to find assistance for injured wildlife. The database allows for searches in regards to the type of animal and the suburb and to match up with a 1300ANIMAL hero (rescuer, carer and / or veterinarian).

RSPCA Qld is a charity organisation with an operating budget of about \$16 million pa, and receives just \$170 thousand pa in Govt. support. The RSPCA has been fielding calls for injured animals since its establishment in Queensland in 1876.

eg RSPCA Qlds Brisbane Ambulance jobs by animal type 2007



The Gold Coast ambulance jobs by animal type is about 90% wildlife.

The 1300ANIMAL number was launched in August 2006. The next phase is to increase awareness of the number and its purpose. Signs are being erected on roadways throughout the state but people need to know the number before they are on the road so they are prepared for an animal emergency before it occurs.

Queenslands' Department of Main Roads has been reluctant in the past to erect signs displaying contact numbers for groups that care for injured wildlife, mainly due to the high number of different contact details and regular alterations. Qlds' DMR have committed to erecting 1300ANIMAL signage and have developed a protocol for erecting the 1300animal road signs.

RSPCA is now in the process of promoting and marketing the 1300ANIMAL program by speaking at conferences, writing articles and targeting specific areas (suburbs lacking assistance) and / or expertise (veterinarians). The RSPCA has made a commitment to this becoming a national number for animal welfare emergencies eventually. In fact, the Call center is already receiving enquiries from interstate.

1300ANIMAL needs to become more than a telephone number and because people have seen 1300ANIMAL advertised, used 1300ANIMAL, or talked about 1300ANIMAL, 1300ANIMAL can become more than a telephone number and a memory.

The process involves the following;

Let's call the complainant "Joe".

Joe calls "Kirsty" at the Call Center on 1300ANIMAL.

Kirsty determines that he is at Surfers Paradise with a possum which she enters in the wildlife search panel.

A list of potential helpers appears for Kirsty to call.

1st on the list is Jasmin but she's at a conference unable to attend this time – Kirsty records her inability to attend.

2nd on the list is the group Wildcare and they are able to help, Joe is transferred directly to Wildcare to talk personally.

If required, Kirsty can also look up a carer in the suburb that Joe might himself be able to take the animal too. On this occasion Greencross Vets at Southport are able to take the possum for Joe.

Anyone, and everyone can, and should be, a 1300ANIMAL hero.

A 1300ANIMAL hero can be a wildlife carer or a wildlife rescuer (wildlife transport) and in effect becomes a volunteer of the RSPCA which brings with it some responsibilities and a duty of care to the hero. RSPCA Qld has produced a document called the "Wildlife Heroes Volunteer Handbook", an essential guide to being a 1300ANIMAL hero.

The following text has been edited from the workbook and has been adjusted for Queensland legislation.

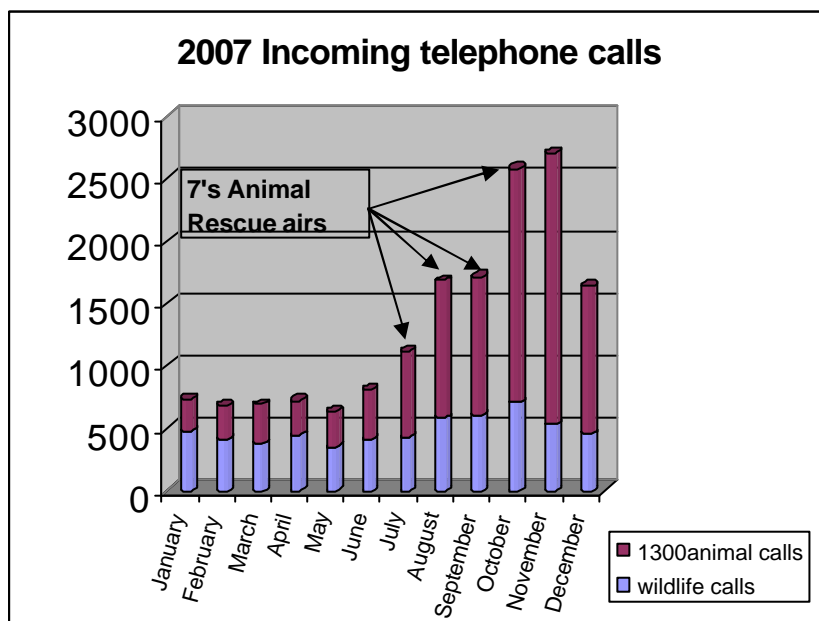
The Queensland Society has worked to improve the welfare of animals and to protect them from cruelty and ill treatment. Helping animals: Enlightening people: and Changing lives. The RSPCA is an independent, non-government and not-for-profit organisation, and the largest and oldest animal welfare organisation in Queensland. RSPCA Qld is the only charity that has powers of Prosecution under the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001. We strive to educate the community on its responsibilities in relation to animal welfare and to continue to protect and enhance the welfare of animals.

- When we ask a 1300 ANIMAL Hero if you can help wildlife in distress, we ask you to take them to the closest vet, experienced and registered wildlife carer or RSPCA shelter.
- A permit is not required to rescue wildlife in distress, however, if you rescue them you are bound by a Duty of Care to provide for the animals welfare. Legislation includes The Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 and The Nature Conservation Act. The removal of any healthy protected species (basically anything native) from the wild is prohibited.
- To be a wildlife rehabilitator you must have a current permit issued by The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Eco Access Department and also abide by The Code of Practice for Wildlife Care and Rehabilitation of Orphaned, Sick, Injured Protected Animals by Rehabilitation Permit Holders and Wildlife Care Associations. RSPCA Qld prefers that you belong to a local licensed Wildlife Care Group, visit www.qwrc.org.au
- When performing a rescue always consider the D of D.R.A.B.C. D = DANGER. For example: Don't run onto the highway in front of vehicles. Don't handle bats, snakes or platypus unless you know what you are doing and have the appropriate personal protection and equipment, including vaccinations. In fact, don't handle any animal that you are not comfortable with.
- The Basic Kit - A pillow slip in the glove box, a towel, a folded cardboard box in the boot, and a mobile phone will get you out of trouble in most instances.
 - Contain the animal - use the pillow slip technique to capture and transport.
 - Don't panic, don't sit the patient on your lap or free on the seat, and don't put them in the boot.
 - Don't call your friends to come and have a look.
 - Don't try to feed or give water.
 - Do not attempt to climb any trees, cliffs, river banks, fences, walls, structures or building at any time. If any of these are required to rescue an animal, the task should not be undertaken without the provision of suitably trained persons, supervision

and/ or the appropriate equipment to initiate the manoeuvre or task safely.

- Water rescues - lakes, rivers, oceans, should not be undertaken without the provision of suitably trained persons, supervision and/or the appropriate equipment to initiate the manoeuvre or task safely.
- Zoonoses are diseases or parasitic infections that can be transmitted from animals to humans. To avoid contracting zoonotic diseases, you should always practice good hygiene - wash your hands appropriately after handling animals and address any injuries or illnesses you have promptly. Be aware that all animals have the potential to carry zoonotic diseases, these are diseases that you can catch. It is important to remember that to reduce the incidence of zoonotic diseases we must:
 - Be aware that such infections exist and that apparently healthy animals may transmit them.
 - Reduce unnecessary exposure to animals or environments that may be sources of zoonoses.
 - Practice good hygiene which will minimise the spread of most infections. This includes activities such as hand washing and wearing shoes.
 - Undertake appropriate prophylactic (preventative action) whenever possible. This includes instigating best practice worming regimes in our pets (hydatids).
- Please, for the animal's sake, don't say yes I'll attend and then not attend. Please say no if you are unable to attend in the first instance. Failure to attend will compromise the animals' welfare and our data base can track if an animal in distress was not attended to.
- Every wild animal coming into human care will be stressed, particularly sick and injured wildlife patients. Not only from the original trauma (car / pet), but also from simply being close to people. They see people as predators and do NOT know you are there to help. Wildlife generally do better when put into dark, quiet, warm environments to lessen the stress on them. Lifting the cover on a cage defeats the purpose - PLEASE DON'T unless of course you are performing an examination or husbandry procedure. Please don't harass a patient for your benefit of 'a look'. Wildlife commonly mask illness for fear of being predated - they probably consider that you are a predator and use all their strength, which is needed to recover, to try to look "healthy" so you don't eat them.
- Wildlife are not pets to be passed around or shown off. Immediately put them in a darkened, warm, quiet environment to simply relax - they are not to be taken to any other areas (shop / school / workplace) prior to initial assessment by a Veterinary Surgeon or an experienced Wildlife Rehabilitator.

- Wildlife must be 100% “fit and healthy” to be given the optimum chance for a reasonable quality of life after release. The patient may be regarded unsuitable for release and therefore it will generally be unsuitable to persist with treatment in care. Whilst this might seem a failure on your part, please remember that the patients’ welfare is paramount and to play a role in reducing a patient’s pain and suffering should be a positive outcome.
- Also remember that the rescue is not about you, it is about the animal. Volunteers are the backbone of the RSPCA and are an essential component of many aspects of the Society’s work. The RSPCA extends its heartfelt thanks to you for your care and compassion, and commitment to making a difference in the world we live in.



Thank you for taking the time to represent the RSPCA and supporting the 1300ANIMAL rescue network and 1300ANIMAL Hero program.

Ultimately our efforts are to reduce unnecessary suffering and to rehabilitate our wildlife for successful return to their wild homes after an often, traumatic experience. The 1300ANIMAL program is an integral step in helping distressed wildlife get into the hands of experienced and resourced personnel to lessen their suffering. Wildlife rehabilitation and education is necessary due to the increasing number of people encroaching on their habitat. Many animals are hit by cars, injured by pets, poisoned, shot, kept as pets, displaced by habitat destruction and entangled in fences, traps, fishing lines, netting, etc. Conditions caused by humans not nature.

We would like to thank the Brisbane City Council for their continuing support and sponsorship for the RSPCA Wildlife Department in attending the NWRC annual conferences.