

Darling Downs Wildlife Hospital

Evidence of Regional Need

The Darling Downs region currently lacks a dedicated wildlife treatment facility capable of providing coordinated triage, veterinary care, and rehabilitation support for injured and displaced native wildlife. Consultation undertaken in 2025 with wildlife carers, rescue groups and veterinary clinics identified significant wildlife treatment demand across the region.

Stakeholder Consultation (2025)

Stakeholders contacted	53+
Responses received	11
Stakeholder types	Wildlife carers, rescue groups, veterinary clinics

Wildlife Treatment Demand

Data provided by respondents indicates that **1,789 wildlife cases** were managed across only 11 contributors. This represents an average of **161 wildlife per month** or approximately **1,933 wildlife per year**. If similar activity levels are assumed across the wider network of wildlife carers in the region, total wildlife treatment demand could exceed **9,000 animals annually**.

Population growth across the Darling Downs is expected to increase wildlife injury and rescue demand. The combined regional population currently exceeds 259,000 residents and is projected to continue growing over the coming decades (ABS; Queensland Government projections). Research demonstrates a clear relationship between human population expansion and increased wildlife admissions due to habitat fragmentation, vehicle strike, fencing injury and domestic animal interactions. As development expands across peri-urban areas of the Darling Downs, demand for coordinated wildlife treatment services is expected to rise beyond current levels, reinforcing the need for a dedicated regional wildlife hospital.

Year	Estimated Population	Estimated increase in wildlife admissions*
2024	259,500	baseline
2030	~280,000	+8–12%
2035	~300,000	+15–20%
2041	~320,000	+20–30%

(Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021; Queensland Government Statistician's Office, 2023; Soulsbury & White, 2015; Taylor-Brown et al., 2019).

Reported Wildlife Categories

Wildlife Category	Cases Reported
Bird	520
Mammal	1262
Reptile	7
Amphibian	0
Total	1789

Species of Regional Interest

Respondents identified several wildlife species groups frequently requiring specialised care including koalas, raptors, echidnas, spotted-tailed quolls and bats. Increasing legislative protection requirements for some species, particularly koalas, further highlights the importance of access to appropriate wildlife veterinary infrastructure.

Project Vision

The Darling Downs Wildlife Hospital project aims to establish a regional wildlife treatment and rehabilitation facility to support wildlife carers, veterinary clinics and conservation organisations across the Darling Downs. The hospital will provide triage, veterinary assessment, stabilisation and rehabilitation support to improve survival outcomes for injured and displaced native wildlife.