

# 2017 Community Conservation Award

The award for 2017 was presented to Port Stephens Koala and Wildlife Preservation Society, who have been operating in the Hunter region of NSW for 40 years. This society is well established and well known in its local area. The group has built up a magnificent set of statistics on koala rescues and has been able to demonstrate conclusively the decline in the local population. This has led to efforts to have the local koala population classified as Endangered by the NSW Scientific Committee. The group has worked closely with the local council, with schools and with the University of Newcastle. Statistics provided by the group enabled a University of Newcastle legal team to stop the development of ecologically sensitive land in the Fishermans Bay area. This society is not just content to rescue and rehabilitate injured koalas, but over its 30-year history, it has campaigned to protect their environment and to influence policies which affect their welfare.

## Acceptance speech from Alison Blanch, Director and Promotions Officer, Port Stephens Koalas

Port Stephens Koalas are honoured to accept this prestigious award and thrilled that our group has been recognised as contributing to wildlife conservation. Being volunteers and relying on donations and grants to care for our koalas in the Port Stephens area has never been easy, but we are determined to keep going and make a difference. Many thanks also go to our members, who are our greatest asset, all volunteers and passionate about conserving our koala population. We have a clear vision of creating a world-class hospital facility for our local koalas, and we are pleased this will become a reality this year, along with a tourist facility and shop. The prize money associated with this award will certainly be put to good use. Thank you.



Back row L to R: Murray Black, Data Manager; Kate King, Hospital Coordinator; Tolley (koala); Di Lucas, Volunteer; and Di Kerswell, Volunteer.  
Front row L to R: Carmel Northwood; President; and Alison Blanch, Director/Promotions.