

Newcastle Weekly

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FREE

Judy Sharpe
Lifestyle
changes

Taste
Scone
sale

Fashion
Tone it
down

Your go-to
trades and
services
guide P42

Real
Estate
P32

WIN

MISBEHAVIOUR MOVIE
DOUBLE PASSES
GREAT SOUTHERN NIGHTS AT
DASHVILLE DOUBLE PASSES

Digging deep

Cedar Creek
Wombat Rescue's
new hospital

cover story



Cedar Creek Wombat Rescue co-founder Roz Holme in front of the soon-to-be-finished wombat hospital in the Hunter Valley. Photo: Peter Stoop

Couple dig deep to build new hospital for wombats

For most people, Roz and Kevin Holme's property is in the middle of nowhere – many might not even know it exists.

But, for injured wombats, it is a safe place to call home and receive help.

Roz and Kevin have lived on the property near Cessnock for 16 years and, through their not-for-profit organisation Cedar Creek Wombat Rescue, they have been helping wombats in need for almost four decades.

"I was raised with wildlife," Roz said.

"My parents used to [look after animals] and, when I married my husband, he was into wildlife too and we just started finding more and more injured animals on the roads.

"I knew so many vets that had no idea and wanted to euthanise what they couldn't fix. [so] I decided that I wanted to get into helping wombats.

"I wanted to fix them and, the more I helped, the more I could train other vets.

"It's just for the love of it, you wouldn't do it if you didn't love them – the expense kills you, but I mean when you look at [their faces], you just can't resist it."

Roz's love for the species runs deep.

She and Kevin have spent the last few months building a new hospital in a bid to rescue and care for more injured wombats.

It is set to be equipped with specialised surgical equipment, three Intensive Care Units, and accommodation for visiting vets.

The hospital will open on Sunday 22 November and, while there is still a bit of work to do, Roz is confident they'll get it done.

The pair have dipped into their own pockets to fund construction but, earlier this year, they also received a vital \$30,000 donation from confectionary brand Kinder and the Australian Wildlife Society.

"A lot of it is out of our own pockets, but we don't mind," Roz said.

"It's all for the wombats."

The couple's passion for animals doesn't stop at wombats though.

When you visit their home, it is like a haven for all creatures, big and small.

Two dingo puppies, a deer, several kangaroos and joeys, rehabilitated wombats, a number of birds, and an emu are all lucky enough to call the place home.

Visit cedarcreekwombatrescue.com or find them on Facebook for more information.

- Elizabeth Symington