

Australian GEOGRAPHIC



Brush-tailed rock wallabies are among the rare species found on the property. IMAGE CREDIT: Shane Ruming / NSW NPWS

Queensland family contributes \$18.5m to conservation research

BY JOANNA KHAN | APRIL 20, 2017

Australian wildlife research has received a huge funding boost from two Queensland philanthropists, with a new facility for teaching wildlife management techniques and improving conservation of the region's natural landscape.

IN WHAT IS THOUGHT to be the largest family contribution to conservation in Queensland history, Graham and Jude Turner of the Turner Family Foundation have donated \$18.5m towards establishing a conservation facility on their south-east Queensland property.

The multi-million-dollar Hidden Vale UQ Wildlife Facility is the first of its kind in the region and will run captive breeding programs for endangered native wildlife, practical courses for science students and provide an ideal field base for wildlife ecology researchers.

The Turner family's donation will fund the building, operation and ongoing research capability of the new facility as a joint venture with the University of Queensland for the next 30 years.

"The centre is a part of a conservation initiative for the whole of the 5000ha property and the greater [Scenic Rim](#) region," said Professor Andrew Tribe, the centre's wildlife manager and UQ Adjunct.

The area is home to several rare and threatened species including the glossy black cockatoo, square tailed kite, brush tailed rock wallaby, spotted tail quoll, and koala. Andrew said he hopes that "over time we will be able to build up a picture of what's happening to the native species here, and whether we are able to impact on their numbers."

"Everything we do will support research and be supported by scientific findings," said Andrew. "We want to make sure all of our research is applied, and that it is relevant to other parts of south-east Queensland and beyond."

Wildlife science students from the nearby University of Queensland Gatton campus now have the opportunity to complete their practical work at the site through hands-on learning of trapping and survey techniques, and building on the centres growing species database for the region.

Situated near the Turner family's luxury Hidden Vale Retreat, it's hoped the facility will also offer opportunities for ecotourism, with one of the centre's PhD students investigating whether ecotourism can benefit conservation efforts.