



PHOTO: ABC

SAVING SKITTLED SKIPPY

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU HIT A ROO

Bill Waterhouse wants us to care about native animals

THE ANIMAL GOT HIT by the first person who just left it there. Another driver came along and found it writhing in agony and was quite distressed by the sight.

A call came through to us, but we've got so many animals in our care that we had to call on a licensed shooter. He came to our place to pick up a rifle but by the time he got to the accident site, someone had already knocked it on the head.

So, to the person who put it out of its misery, thankyou. But did they check it for babies and drag it clear of the road?

Unfortunately we're daily seeing animals, usually a kanga or a wombat, killed or injured on or near the road.

It all starts with the person who hits the animal, who may then abrogate their moral responsibility by driving on thinking, "I can't handle this, it's too difficult for me because I'm so precious," or "I don't care about this animal". Then leave it for someone else to deal with.

If you strike an animal, it's officially a motor vehicle accident. You are legally obliged to stop and render assistance. If you're unsure of what to do, then rendering assistance can mean ringing the local wildlife people or the police.

If you're tough and thick-skinned you might be able euthanase a critically injured animal, however most people don't know whether something can be saved or not. If, say, it's a small kanga-

roo with a broken limb it probably can be saved, fixed and released when it's recovered.

As a general rule, if it's a large animal with compound fractures of both legs, perhaps bones sticking out, lots of blood; it cannot be saved. Even a small animal injured this seriously cannot be saved. But a small animal with less serious injuries might be able to be saved. Small animals can be put in the boot of the car and taken to the vet for evaluation.

Having a licence for a firearm is not the same as having a licence to euthanase a wild native animal. The shooter has to have animal welfare on their licence and the person must be a member of a wildlife group. It's against the law to kill native animals without a permit.

But no-one will get into trouble for killing an animal that's smashed to pieces by bopping it on the head. If you need to kill an animal in this way it will require a really hard strike to the back of the skull. You have to crush its brain.

If you're unsure about its injuries — and the animal is not too big or too aggressive — wrap it in a blanket and call us, bring it to us, or take it to the vet. If the animal has a baby, even if the mother is dead or dying, taking the animal with the baby inside gives it the best chance of survival.

Kangaroos are not in plague proportions — it's important to remember that. And anyway, when we're discussing road injuries, it's not about numbers of a species, it's about animal welfare. Why should that animal suffer? There's no moral reason why it should — absolutely none.

I find it really disturbing how little care people have for injured native animals. The other day I came across a wombat near Majors Creek that had been skittled early in the morning. Hundreds of people must have driven around it during the day.

I found it that evening in a large pool of blood indicating a slow painful death. When I flipped her over, there was a baby inside still alive, a 200 grammer, and we saved it. We could have had that animal in care if just one person had rung us — just one.

To call a local wildlife group around here it's 4846 1900, that's the Native Animal Rescue Group covering the Braidwood area.

We will drive to any place at any time to save an animal, and failing that, to see to it that the animal does not suffer a slow painful death.



Are rural letterboxes the ultimate expression of postmodernism? David Anthony thinks few functional objects lend themselves to such unfettered creative interpretation. Here is his evidence.

