

# This kangaroo returns to McIntyre Wildlife Shelter each week – for a bottle of milk

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By Sarah Lawrence

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For the past 17 years, McIntyre wildlife rescuer Denise Bridges has saved and released hundreds of Kangaroos but only one has become a regular returning visitor.

Kenda the eastern grey kangaroo drops in weekly for a bottle of milk that she holds in her own paws.



Kenda is a favourite with backpackers at the McIntyre Wildlife Shelter. (Supplied: Denise Bridges)

Kenda was rescued as a 3-kilogram joey from her dead mother's pouch in 2018 after they were struck by a car.

**"Most animals never return, but she's the exception," Ms Bridges said.**

"She did return a lot more at the start.

"I have backpackers stay all the time, and they got to know her too.

"They let the new ones know that if you see her, she can have a bottle."

## Hopping in for 'roo milk'

The "friendly and sweet" joey spent 14 months at the wildlife shelter north-west of Bendigo until she was given a "soft release".

"Because she was found locally, she can go back into that environment," Ms Bridges said.

**"That means I open the gates and they can come and go as they like until they don't want to come back anymore."**

Ms Bridges said wildlife was always released as a group.

"I have a yard area where they can have food, water and shelter if they're struggling out there," she said.

Since then, Kenda returns at least once a week for a bottle of a special "roo milk" which she feeds to herself.

"She's clever. It's not very often they can feed themselves, they usually drop bottles," Ms Bridges said.

The special milk costs \$400 for 20kg but Ms Bridges says it's worth every cent.

**"I just really think our native wildlife are given a bad deal," she said.**

"Now that kangaroos have got a price on their head for pet meat – it's disgusting."

## Kenda, is that you?

When asked how she could be so certain that the visiting 'roo was Kenda hopping back in each time, Ms Bridges was resolute.

"They're all individuals," she said.

**"When you see them daily you get used to who they are and know what they look like."**

The eastern grey kangaroo has also delighted her former carers by returning with her own little joey.

"It's nice to know that she's doing okay," Ms Bridges said.

"That's what they're raised in rehabilitation for – to go back into the wild and live a normal life."