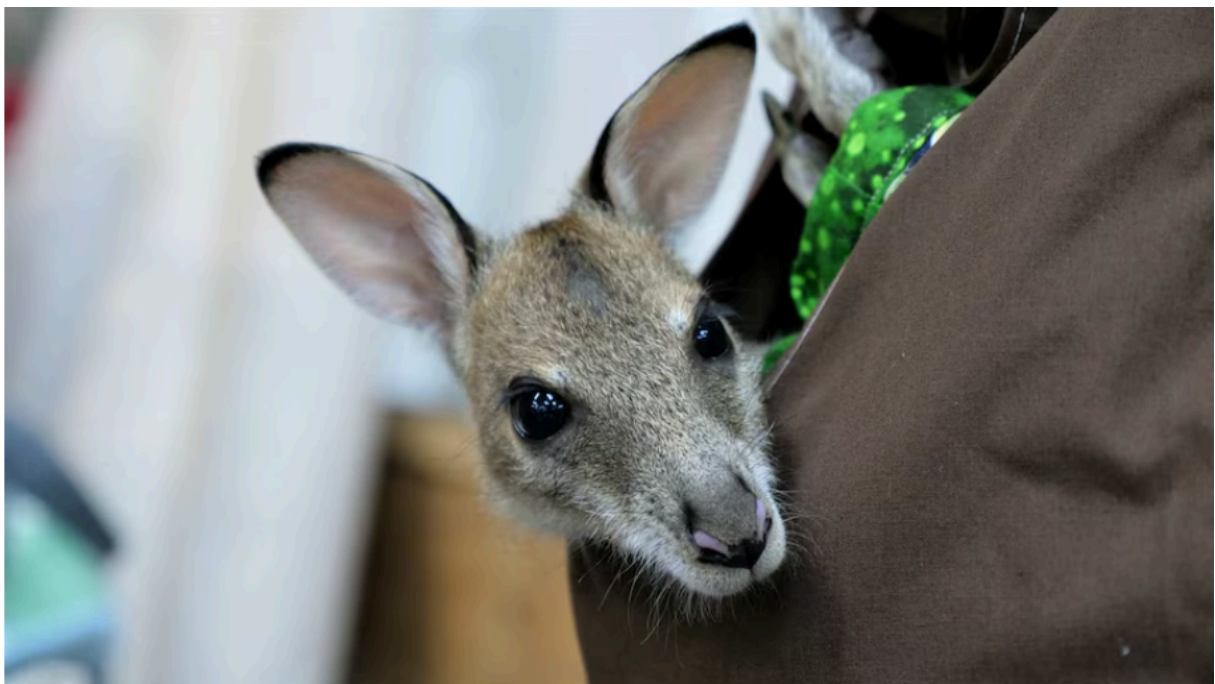


Source: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-01-02/wallaby-death-leads-to-animal-cruelty-complaints/106185200>

Mother wallaby death sparks animal cruelty investigation in far north Queensland



Agile wallabies, such as this one pictured in 2020, are found in far north Queensland. (ABC Far North: Sharnie Kim)

In short:

Wildlife carers say a wallaby joey had to be euthanased after they found its deceased mother tied to a signpost with a drink can stuffed in its pouch.

Volunteers say the joey initially survived the "horrific" ordeal but sustained head injuries.

What's next?

The incident has been reported to police and Queensland's environment department, which are investigating.

A baby wallaby had to be euthanased(原文ママ) after wildlife carers found its dead mother tied to post with a cigarette in its mouth and a can jammed in its pouch.

Warning: This story contains descriptions and an image of animal abuse.

The female joey was found alive but with head injuries in the pouch after the grim discovery at Tinaroo, south-west of Cairns in far north Queensland.

Atherton-based wildlife carer Julia Howard, from the Agile Wallaby Project, was on her regular rounds of Tablelands roadsides to check deceased mothers for live offspring when she found the disturbing scene on New Year's Day.

The retired nurse said a rope she found around the mother's neck was tied "very tight".

However, it was not possible to determine whether the wallaby was already dead when it was tied to the post.



Julia Howard has been a wildlife carer for about four years. (Supplied: Julia Howard)

"It's horrific. Even if she was [already] deceased, it's not a nice thing to do," Mrs Howard said. "That someone could even think this was a joke, and that they didn't even check to see whether she might have had a baby in the pouch.

"She's obviously had trauma from what they were doing to the mother."

'Pretty traumatic'

The ABC has seen a photograph of the wallaby, with a rope around its neck attached to a roadside signpost, a cigarette in its mouth, and a yellow drink can visible in its pouch. While Mrs Howard is used to finding dead wallabies, the carer of four years said it was a very distressing morning.



Shai Ager says more education on rescuing joeys from the pouches of stricken agile wallabies is needed. (Supplied: Inntroni Imagery (Instagram))

"When a wallaby has been injured by a car, it's pretty traumatic, whether it's a head injury or broken legs," she said.

"There were no other visible injuries, which makes me wonder if she actually died of fright.

"Usually, I can tell whether animals have been hit by a car or bitten by a dog or something.

"There was absolutely no sign of that at all."

Authorities investigating

Agile Wallaby Project founder Shai Ager said she had reported the incident to police and the Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI).

"Police are aware of a social media post and a report has been made in relation to this incident and are making further enquiries with the community," Queensland Police Service said in a statement.

"Investigations are ongoing."

A DETSI spokeswoman encouraged people with information on the incident to report it for investigation.

"Interfering with native wildlife including wallabies is an offence and significant penalties can apply," the DETSI spokeswoman said.

Wallabies are protected under Queensland's Nature Conservation Act.

Taking a protected animal has a potential maximum penalty of \$16,690.



A pixelated image of the wallaby that was found dead near Tinaroo with a rope around its neck and a can in its pouch. (Supplied)

Ms Ager said she had previously reported a similar incident involving a wallaby tied to a signpost near Mareeba, about 40km away, in October 2023.

"This region needs to do better for our native wildlife," she said.

"It definitely frustrates us, and it has traumatised one of our key rescuers."

Carer vows to continue

Mrs Howard said without being rescued, joeys of deceased wallabies would otherwise die of dehydration or heat stress.

The disturbing find has galvanised her to ramp up her wildlife caring, and she said she now wanted check roadsides each day, and earlier in the morning.

"It just inspires me to continue my work," she said.

Agile wallabies are common in coastal Queensland and one of 51 species of macropods in Australia.

There have been other animal cruelty complaints made to authorities from far north Queensland in the past year, including a [crocodile spotted with an arrow in its head](#).