

**World Wildlife Day is marked by Wildlife Health Australia with innovative tool for wildlife**

World Wildlife Day (Sunday, 3 March) is upon us and the team at Wildlife Health Australia is keen to celebrate this year's theme; 'Connecting People and Planet: Exploring Digital Innovation in Wildlife Conservation'.

Wildlife Health Australia has helped to develop an invaluable tool to support and empower government agencies involved in responding to diseases incidents in wildlife. By extension, this helps to protect the wider health of all animals, humans and ecosystems.

The Wildlife Health Incident Decision Support Tool, known as WILDDeST, has been designed for use by Australian government agencies to enable structured, standardised, and transparent decision-making for investigations and management of incidents affecting wildlife health.



Dr Claire Harrison

Senior Project Officer Dr Claire Harrison said; “The early stages of an incident affecting wildlife health are the most critical to mounting an overall effective response.”

“There’s a need to act quickly, which may require decisions to be made based on incomplete information or information available from multiple agencies. WILDDeST helps to provide a rapid predictive framework and ensure a shared situational awareness throughout an incident. This then enables transparent and robust decision-making for identified hazards.

“Users of the WILDDeST tool respond to a series of questions through a specialised worksheet, and the tool produces a gap analysis information summary and an overall incident category.

“The resulting report aims to capture all the essential elements in a simplified form using standardised methodology to reach a proposed decision for incident management,” Dr Harrison said.

Wildlife Health Australia’s CEO Dr Rupert Woods said; “Management of wildlife health incidents often present a true One Health challenge, because many diseases that emerge in wildlife can also cross over into domestic animals and humans. WILDDeST will be invaluable in wildlife health incidents where multiple agencies may have legislated responsibilities, and inter-agency or inter-jurisdictional coordination is crucial.”



WILDDeST has been developed as part of the Australian Government's investment in preventing, detecting, and mitigating the impacts of emerging animal diseases, including those with pandemic potential.

This World Wildlife Day, WHA celebrates achievement in digital innovation to protect our precious wildlife.

**Background on World Wildlife Day:**

United Nations World Wildlife Day (WWD) is celebrated every year on 3 March to celebrate wild animals and plants. Every year, it recognizes the unique roles and contributions of wildlife to people and the planet.

**Note:** Wildlife Health Australia (WHA) is the coordinating body for wildlife health in Australia. We work to protect and enhance the natural environment. We link, inform and support people and organisations who work with or have an interest in wildlife health and provide leadership, coordination, technical advice, facilitation, communications, and professional support.

**Image:** Echidna by Eric Woehler