

We The People

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We the People The Volunteer From Hell



Good day to you. Part of my research for this program involves speaking with many people in our community. I like doing this as I always learn and it keeps me grounded and informed. For all the dreadful news we hear, there are some amazing unsung heroes out there who attend to community matters because they feel a moral obligation. I am humbled by these folk who do not seek recognition but well deserve it. These good Samaritans are priceless in our country and indeed wherever they are found around the world. As an animal lover I keep a watchful eye open for an opportunity to support the work of others as champions for wild life and the earth. One of these good folk lives close by at Boonooroo Park at Carrara and I met Robyn Cox recently at her home. Her place is full of memories and precious items hang everywhere while curios and pictures adorn the walls and shelves at every turn. It's an eclectic mix of life and history and reveals a fair bit about the very busy and diverse Robyn Cox.

Once a coordinator with Bluecare, Robyn has been a wild life warrior all her life and some 12 years ago joined Wildcare Australia on the Gold Coast, established about 20 years ago by Eleanor Hanger, Sharon White and Gail Gipp. Wildcare exists to rescue and care for sick, injured, orphaned and displaced native wildlife with the intention of returning them to the wild. They educate and act as voices for the many Australian species of birds and animals which are losing their habitat because of over development. Wildcare is licensed by the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection in Queensland and holds a Group Rehabilitation Permit.

Armed with the ubiquitous cup of tea and her 18 year old fox terrier rescue dog Scruffy, it wasn't long before Robyn took me out to her back yard and the many temporary lodgings her little patients call home. Completely at ease with her, three little possums with big bright eyes peered out from inside their possum box and melted my heart. These beautiful little creatures were lost or injured but without knowing it had been transported to Shangri-la and the care of Auntie Robyn. As she put her face against theirs and told them they were loved I thought just how far from the developers axe we were at that moment. I wondered if any politicians had ever done that and why was it that wild possums would be so at peace with this temporary affair. Robyn took me back to my childhood and Wind in the Willows and Toad of Toad Hall and the anthropomorphic characters that emulated all the good in people just as these little possums did in her arms. There was something special about the moment and the glorious hope that not all the world was angry.

Now, there is a complementary side to Robyn Cox and that's her absolute focus and resolve in all her work. I couldn't do what she does and she confided to me that she "*cries a lot*" because not everything finishes well. She also works for other organisations but one really caught my imagination in that she and others, have rehabilitated the Ernest Junction Tunnel. I had never heard of it and Robyn explained it's an old and quite long railway tunnel long abandoned at Molendinar from the days when the train sensibly ran from Brisbane to Southport and Coolangatta. I've been on the Gold Coast for 26 years and never knew it existed. The effort was put in by good folk to rejuvenate and make it available to all and especially cyclists and bush walkers and it's in keeping with Robyn's penchant for history. It seems rescuing is in her DNA. Such is her life she has learnt she can't say 'no' and yet expects the very best from the people she works alongside and with great pride and laughter tells me she is the "volunteer from hell". I know there are others like Robyn Cox but not nearly enough of them and how I wish we could have real compassionate dedicated leaders like her to run the Council and the various arms of government long lost in their own futile importance. Wildcare now holds a very special place for me and I'm putting my name down for a possum box to house the two brush tails which live above my dining room. They too are welcome and respected in their suburban penthouse.

Until next time this is Kent Bayley