

# environmental bulletin



**climate change is the most  
critical threat we face as a  
human species**

**help us fight it.**



**#SOSAustralia**



**Bushfire Relief Appeal**

Rescue and salvage volunteer foundation, GEOS Bolivia, helped aid the Australian bushfire disaster by knitting nests for animals and sent them to Australia from halfway across the world!

Bolivia, home to extensive areas of the Amazon and Gran Chaco forests, declared a state of emergency because of widespread fires. They are in desperate need of our help.



Dear Reader,

We wish to share the endeavours of Bolivia's firefighters who are encountering difficulties with wildfires in the Amazon.

Over the past year, we have witnessed the monumental work that Australia has done to control the wildfires that have hit the country earlier this year. It is within that framework that we are happy to share this story of camaraderie from Bolivian firefighters who learned how to weave nests for Australian animals affected by the fires. These nests were delivered to the Fauna Rescue in South Australia.

Sadly, firefighters in Bolivia have faced devastation with 5 million hectares of unique Amazon forest (Chiquita) lost during the 2019 fires. The International Tribunal for the Rights of Nature deemed this an ecocide, where both native animals and firefighters lost their lives. State government-funded firefighters are a small group, and therefore many volunteer firefighters have to help with little to no equipment and run small fundraisers all year round to be able to save enough resources.

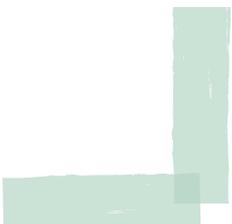
Unfortunately, this year the fires struck the same region and spread to national parks and animal shelters. The Australian Bolivian Association hopes to provide aid to Bolivian firefighters, as they do not receive government support and fund themselves with donations from the general population. We respectfully request help of any kind, such as second-hand PPE or any other equipment that may allow these firefighters to perform their job. Any donations are greatly appreciated, and we are happy to assist with the logistics and delivery to Bolivia as required.

Please visit our website: [www.australianbolivian.org](http://www.australianbolivian.org) and our social media pages: [www.facebook.com/australianbolivian](https://www.facebook.com/australianbolivian) for more information.

Sincerely,

*The Australian Bolivian Association Inc.*

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# SOLIDARITY WITHOUT BORDERS



**Mission:**

## **Nests SOS Australia**

**CARLOS ANDRES AZCARRAGA ESQUIVEL**  
National Firefighters Coordinador GEOS

TRANSLATED BY: VANESSA LEHMAN

Rescue operations task force, GEOS Bolivia firefighters, are a rescue and salvage volunteer foundation, legally constituted and founded on 7 July 2012. GEOS has the sole objective of serving the society of which it is a part of, by providing rescue volunteers capable of dealing with bushfires, medical attention, evacuation, search and rescue. As a volunteer organisation, GEOS does not receive financial support from any government sector in Bolivia.

In January 2020, around 55 volunteers from our organisation, including firefighters, rescuers, paramedics, individuals who know how to fight flames and attend several large fires at regional, national and international levels, felt powerless while witnessing the natural disaster unfolding abroad in Australia, in which approximately 17 million hectares of forest were lost, 33 people died, 1 billion animals perished in the flames and 2000 houses were destroyed. Despite the distance,



the volunteers searched for a way to help and show their solidarity without borders. This is how the project, that we proudly share today with the Bolivian community in Australia, came about.

The GEOS volunteer firefighters know how to save lives in danger, human as well as animal and vegetal life, however, they did not know how to knit, an essential skill to undertake this project. Their hands, utilised to lift heavy tools and wear safety gloves took a pair of wool balls and crochet tools to learn this skill. The volunteer firefighters resourced on tutorial videos and help from some comrades, and got down to work. They knitted day and night, between work shifts and emergencies, and would use their breaks to make wool nests that could serve as a shelter for the young and a substitute for the mothers who perished in such a voracious fire. They did not give up and perfected this craft. Witnessing this act of solidarity, the civil society began to support this initiative, sending several wool balls to the volunteers.

Together, Bolivians managed to contribute a grain of sand to the kind hearts that were working so hard in Australia to save the surviving animals. The result, 100 wool nests were made.

Every life counts!

The 100 little nests knitted in Bolivia by the GEOS volunteers were delivered to the 'Adelaide Koala & Wildlife Hospital' through Bolivian writer, Ilani Ribero with the help of 'Fauna Rescue SA'.





If you are interested in learning more about GEOS Bolivia, visit [www.geosbolivia.com](http://www.geosbolivia.com) and the social media page [www.facebook.com/geosbolivia](http://www.facebook.com/geosbolivia). Here you can see that we are currently entering the fire season in Bolivia. Due to the increasing intensity of the fires in recent years, we are carrying out a campaign that aims to obtain better equipment, such as a fire truck. Visit us, give us a hand and see our work!



# a special delivery from Bolivia to Australia

ILANI RIBERO  
Bolivian Writer

In January this year, a Bolivian group of volunteer firefighters, GEOS Bolivia, had the initiative to knit wool nests to help the young kangaroos and koalas that had lost their mothers during the fires in Australia. With the help of different people from various regions of the country, they managed to knit around 100 units.

When I read this news, I was filled with emotion. The article indicated that they had not yet obtained the means for these nests to reach their destination and I was just about to travel to Australia in a few weeks. I immediately contacted them and after several messages, meetings and calls, we managed to coordinate everything.

A short time later I headed to Australia, not only with dreams





**"When we really want to help others, there are no limits, borders or kilometres of distance that can interfere."**



of fulfilment and a lot of hope, but also with those beautiful bags made in Bolivia with lots of love. These would be of great help to a country that had suffered so much as a consequence of the bushfires.

I must confess that at the beginning it was a little difficult to find the right place to deliver the nests. But life has a way of placing little angels on the road, those people who appear when we need them most and are in charge of filling everything with light. In this case, it was Nuria, a Spanish woman who has been living in Australia for many years and has dedicated the last 10 years to being part of the 400 volunteers that make up "Fauna Rescue SA", the largest rescue group in South Australia. After making many calls, I finally reached her, and soon after, the delivery of the nests took shape. Nuria was in charge of coordinating everything with great kindness and patience. Together we went to "Adelaide Koala & Wildlife Hospital". There we could see, among other animals, baby koalas and possums that had been orphaned during the fires. Now they would be able to have a better recovery in these nests.

Like them, many other species received this same gift, in fact, a few days later Nuria sent me images of baby kangaroos and birds using the nests.

Living moments like this fills me with gratitude and reconfirms that, when we really want to help others, there are no limits, borders or kilometres of distance that can interfere.



# australian bolivian



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Established in 2020 by Australian-Bolivians with a diverse range of experience and professional skills, the Australian Bolivian Association Inc. is a not-for-profit organisation committed to strengthening ties between Australia and Bolivia through professional, educational, philanthropic and cultural endeavours. It is registered as an incorporated association in New South Wales under the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 and operates at a national level within Australia.

The Australian Bolivian Association aims to foster community spirit and support the Bolivian-Australian local community with relevant information and assistance. It also aims to support leadership and cooperation in the community's development through workshops and discussion of ideas and issues vital to both countries and their peoples.



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