

Wombatised Inc.

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Wombatised

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**Wombatised Newsletter
Vol.6 20200901**

Dear Everyone,

*Spring has brought us lovely, sunny days, but the recent rain, so welcome in so many ways, has interrupted ongoing work on enclosures and many wombat burrows remain flooded. However, nothing can prevent the long awaited announcement of **Miss Wombat 2020** !*

*The **Three Little Maids** are*

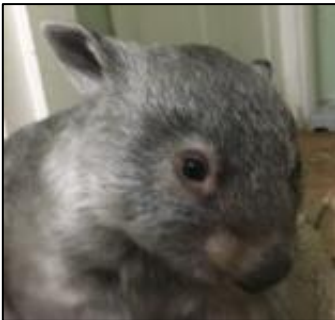
1) Little Miss Innocent:

Miss Yvonne (Eve)Attunga

Yvonne (Eve) is a gentle, affectionate little wombat who loves her milk and cuddles. She's friendly to her wisdom, respects and trusts her peers and likes to make cubbies where she can invite her friends. She always expresses faint surprise when Lily nips her for no good reason.



2) Little Miss Pertness:



Miss Sophie Elstead

Sophie is a fun loving little wombat who suddenly takes off in a frenzy of excitement. She's so happy to explore new places with her wombat friends. She's full of curiosity and always encourages the others to play. For Sophie, life can't wait so she drinks her milk so fast that it bubbles around her whiskers.

3) Little Miss Feisty:

Miss Lily Gundungara

Lily is her own boss. She loves digging her own burrows, annoying the older wombats and she spends her days swapping wisdoms. One moment she's biting and pulling out Oxley's fur. When he protests, she'll swap wisdoms and annoy Eve and Sophie. However, she is adorable and loves firm, squeezey cuddles just like mum's pouch. She even comes when she's called.



And the winner is



Lily, Sophie and Eve in Tania's arms!

Miss Yvonne (Eve) Attunga 4 votes: (Saskia, Lexie, Sharon & Amelie di F)

Miss Sophie Elstead 4 votes: (Amelie, Joshua, Levi & Sophia)

Miss Lily Gundungara 5 votes: (Heidi, Jack, Billie, Amy & Oliver)

*All Three Little Maids
are winners but*

*Little Miss Feisty,
Lily Gundungara*

*received the most
votes!!*

Here she is sitting in glory
amongst native lilac, but
looking a little sleepy and
not at all surprised she's
the winner!



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Baby wombat orphans are adorable, but...

Wombat orphans need to bond with their foster carer and with their fellow species for the love and attention vital to all animals and humans as well. They love to play, either with other wombats or with their foster carer, they love their marsupial milk and they love to sleep.

However, as they grow up, like all youngsters, wombats have an innate urge to be free - something foster carers need always to be aware of - and it is crucial then for human contact to be minimalised. Lily, Sophie and Eve are only 'on loan' until they can eventually be released into the protected bushland where they belong.

Release into Paradise

Two swamp wallabies, Coco and Tara (who had had a broken leg when rescued) were raised as pinkies by an amazing foster carer. It's now **time for release!** Catching and bagging them was quite a challenge but for the animals themselves it was just a temporary discomfort, as within 26 minutes they were..... on site ready to go!



Tiny Tania carried twenty kilos of swamp wallabies over her shoulders and carefully placed the bags on the ground.

They were off like a shot, straight into the heart of paradise, serenaded by the distant call of the bellbirds. Ringing in my ears were the words of a poem we all had to learn at school many decades ago, written by Henry Kendall (my fifth cousin) in 1867:

*By channels of coolness the echoes are calling,
And down the dim gorges I hear the creek falling:
It lives in the mountain where moss and the sedges
Touch with their beauty the banks and the ledges.
Through breaks of the cedar and sycamore bowers
Struggles the light that is love to the flowers;
And, softer than slumber, and sweeter than singing,
The notes of the bell-birds are running and ringing.*



Penny Possum has come of age ...whoops, weight!

Weighing a brush tail possum might seem an impossible feat but very necessary, as weight determines when an animal is ready for release. Penny Possum was safely tucked up in her little nest when suddenly she found herself, nest and all, in Tania's arms, as Tania balanced on some bathroom scales.

Two kilos! Penny Possum is now big enough for release. 'No, I want my milk shake first,' she said!



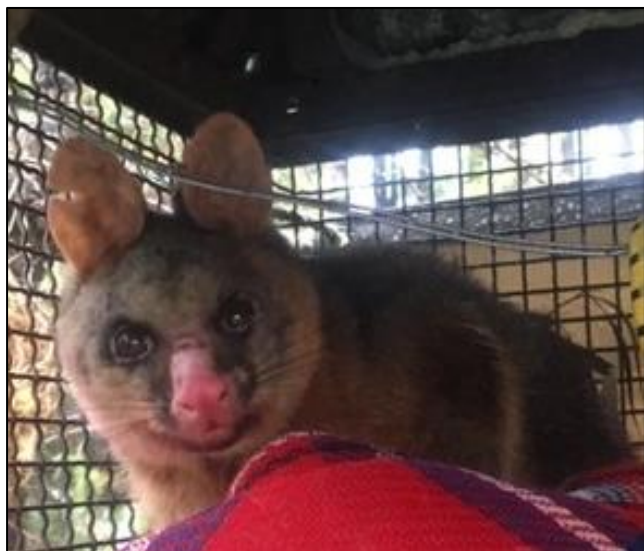
The food house is ready!



Her release house is safely tucked in the fork of a tree (thanks to Col and Mel), close to where she has spent the past six months!! The resident possums have come to know her well!

Time to go Little One and Good luck!





Now do possums have a penchant for learning I wonder? Little Penny Possum was found in a classroom at Bowral High and Terry, an adult brush tail possum (left) had been long-time resident in the trees at Oxley College, Burradoo. However when the school decided to develop the area, Terry was left homeless and sought shelter in a toolbox in the groundsman's shed.

The staff fed him and looked after him so well that he quickly recovered from the stress dermatitis caused by the trauma of loss of habitat. But Terry couldn't stay there forever and he is now safely housed in a beautiful aviary surrounded by the bush where he will eventually be released, once all the resident possums, including Penny Possum, get to know his scent and accept him. Amazingly, this process will take at least three months.

*Who are these wonderful around-the-clock wildlife carers who feed our animals in all sorts of places and at all sorts of times? One of these, of course, is our 24/7 Wildlife consultant, **Tania Clancy**. But there are other unsung heroes, two of whom are the indispensable husband and wife team, **Mel and Col**, who are not afraid of doing hard yard animal care.*

Mel and Col have been looking after the long beaked pink faced corellas, Penny Possum and Terry Brush Tail on a daily basis but for many consecutive mornings they helped Tania administer injections to the wombats suffering from upper respiratory infections due to a wild wombat transmitting a virus. It takes three people to inject just one wombat: one to hold the animal, one to concentrate on keeping the legs still and one to inject. Mel has had lots of experience with giving injections to both people and farm animals and she called the shots. So adept was she that the wombats recovered quickly.

Mel and Col also help with the enormous daily loads of washing when the washing machine fails and they supply bedding material and food and emergency shelter when the inn gets a bit crowded.

*Mel was born and bred on a farm and in her spare time does sculpture. Her chosen material is horse shoes. Mittagong people would have seen her fascinating sculptures at the markets and around town. Her pear sculpture, pictured here, will be first prize in our **Wombatised Raffle**, whenever we can stage our **BIG EVENT!!***



Enclosures Update!

*Work on the **roller door enclosure**, delayed because of rain, has now resumed and the trenches have been dug. This involved hiring a huge digger which arrived on the back of a truck a mile long!*

Four men worked over two days to complete this next stage. This enclosure, when finished, will be a godsend for our large wombat wisdoms.



On the other end of the spectrum, during the winter months, work began on a small enclosure for baby wombats, complete with two nursery burrows.



Many thanks to Michael for his hard work and to one of our supporters for donating the wonderful wombat-proof wire!

Lilly and Lochie gave thumbs up approval after the first burrow was dug and Rosie and Billy enjoyed a night together there, but cold nights and the heavy rain which has flooded so many burrows has postponed permanent residency for some time.



For a week or so this little sanctuary was home to Charlie Chomp and Ruben who were kept warm with heat pads, lots of straw and blankets in a lovely comfy shed.



What fun they will have when the weather improves and those two nursery burrows are dry again.



Quiz



Who eats more grass, cows or kangaroos?

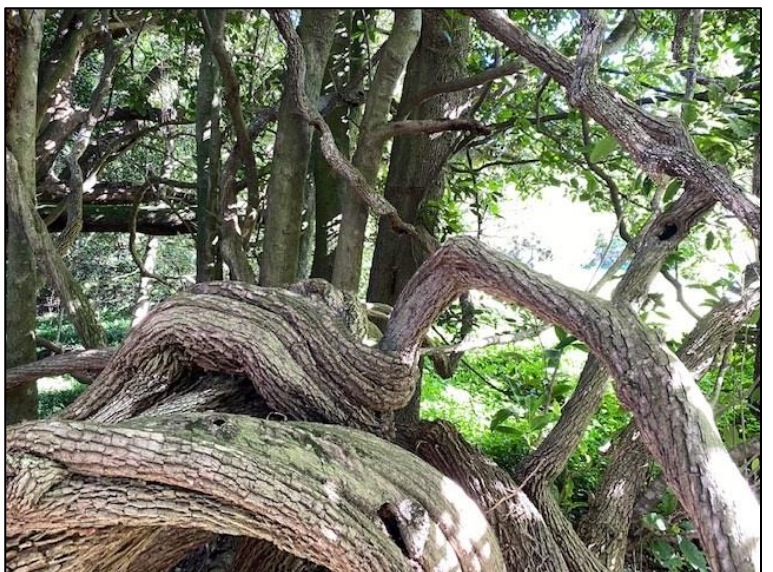
*One cow eats as much grass as 60 kangaroos!!
Wouldn't kangaroos be a much more sustainable
food source (if treated humanely)
than cattle?*

Loving living with Wildlife

Nestled amongst rolling green hills high up on the Robertson escarpment, with stunning views stretching down to Lake Illawarra and across to the Pacific ocean is a small sheep and cattle property which is a haven for wombats, and birds such as the thrush, king parrots and tiny, exquisite blue wrens to name just a few.

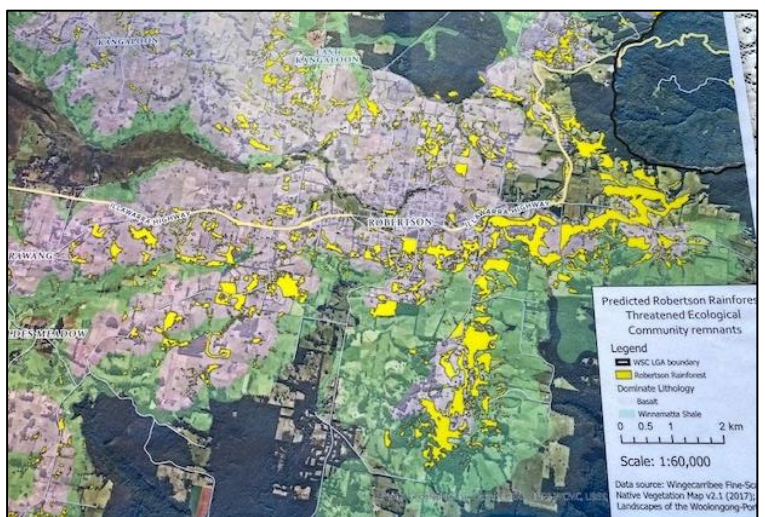


Robertson's rich russet brown soil is justly famous for the world's most delicious potatoes but this soil is basalt, left over from the days of volcanoes, which has produced a warm temperate rain forest. Sadly not much remains now but still luxuriating in this lush soil is the Yarrawa Brush (above right), a beautiful, symmetrical tree and, according to the Commonwealth Scientific Committee, now critically endangered and this property is dotted with large pockets of Yarrawa Brush.



Intertwined amongst the branches is a native vine, the Wonga vine, which is incredibly strong, thickly gnarled at ground level but which grows high up into the canopy without strangling the host. It was these tough, intertwining vines which saved the Yarrawa Brush as they made tree felling extremely difficult.

The map (right) shows remnants of Robertson's rain forest marked in yellow. The challenge is to create a wildlife corridor linking these pockets to provide suitable habitats for native animals, wombats in particular.



The area is dotted with wombat burrows, and sadly wombat road kill is an all too common sight on the busier roads.



A beautiful old ancestral burrow on a lower section of the property was still flooded after recent rain but smaller burrows on steeper slopes appeared dry.



The owners love and respect their resident wombats and have devised ways of preventing them from digging under their veggie garden and so letting in the rabbits. A simple wire netting fence surrounds the garden and around the outside is a strip of latticed wire less than a metre wide. Rocks have been placed around the edge to discourage any wombat from having a dig! No more rabbits in the veggie garden! This ingenious but very inexpensive approach allows wombats and people alike to co-habit and wombats surely have a right to survive.



Other remarkable rainforest trees on the property include an old Lilli Pilli with a trunk as thick as a wishing well, a huge Dorrigo waratah (left) and a

tree unique to the area, called *Helicia Glabraflora*, which is usually found in rainforests much further north.

Loving living with wildlife is not limited to property owners living with wombats. When Southern Highlands Toyota had a problem with possums in the roof, they hired **Possums Busters**, an organisation which inserts one-way doors in the roof enabling a possum to exit



but not return. This is a more humane way than trapping possums but nevertheless leaves the animal homeless.

So Southern Highlands Toyota went one step further and asked Tania to provide three nesting hollows for the displaced possums. Tash from Southern Highlands Toyota is seen here on the left holding a possum nesting box which will be placed snugly on a suitable tree within the possum's established territory.

Query Corner



Question: How often do wombats have babies?

Answer: Wombats have often been accused of multiplying like rabbits but this is so untrue. Females produce one baby every two to three years and baby wombats remain in the pouch until they are about three to five kilos and even then remain with their mother at heel and in the burrow up to or longer than eighteen months. At this stage they could be sixteen kilos and still depending on mum.



Question: Are wombats solitary animals?

Answer: This is another misconception which probably arises from the fact that wombats tend to graze on their own, orbiting a burrow in case of danger. This makes sense because if they were in a herd and danger arose, they couldn't all fit into the nearest burrow.



Wombats are obsessed with who is in what burrow and are constantly smelling traces of their wisdom and if any intruders have been by. They are highly social animals and have a complex array of behaviour and interaction, including at least ten vocal calls used for social intercourse. They have burrow buddies and often stay in close contact with their wisdom for many years.

Left: Charlie Chomp and his inseparable buddy, Ruben.

Question: *How clean are wombats?*

Answer: *Very clean. Unlike many animals, wombats have their own toilet areas and are fussy about cleanliness. They never poo in the burrow. Babies pop their bottoms out of the pouch as soon as they are old enough but prior to that, they clean their own pouch by consuming their own waste, dust and debris, thus acquiring essential gut flora. They also clean their own fingernails and those of their wisdom!*



Above: Charlie and Ruben using the toilet in the stable sanctuary

Question: *Why are there lots of burrows on one property but not many on another?*

Answer: *If left alone and are not harassed by shooters, wombats will use their ancestral burrows and only occasionally dig new ones. Properties such as Frensham's Lower Holt which haven't had shooters for at least 100 years demonstrate this. Adult wombats dig burrows and youngsters are often keen to help.*

Right: a burrow (unflooded) on the Lower Holt showing scratch marks



When people shoot wombats, very often it's the females which suffer. Their 'at heel' youngsters become so scared they make shallow bolt holes for protection which can become a nuisance for farmers, but that's hardly wombats' fault. Adults sometimes need to graze away from their burrows, particularly in time of drought but they never lose sight of where to run when danger arises.

Therefore, it can really be said that a property with numerous shallow 'bolt-hole' burrows is a property which has had shooters decimating wombat populations, even if it was many decades ago.

Question: *Are wombat burrows a threat to horses and cattle?*

Answer: *In Victoria in 1906 wombats were classified as vermin and from 1925 until as late as 1966 there was a bounty system in place whereby wombats were trapped, poisoned or shot. Between 1950 and 1966 alone, 64,000 animals were killed. It was not until 1984 when wombats eventually achieved 'Protected Wildlife' status.*

Original hand-coloured lithograph from a drawing by John Gould, for *Mammals of Australia* published in London between 1845 and 1863 by John Gould (1804-1881).



People believed that wombats, like badgers and other burrowing animals, were a threat to their cattle and horses.

This belief is a myth as horses have an innate ability to sense holes in the ground. Imagine a wild stallion and his herd galloping through the mountains! You won't see these horses fall and break their legs. A good horse will always sense the hole in the ground and snort to let you know.

Often, however, horses which have been stabled all their lives may have lost this innate sense. A good way to rectify this is to mark burrows with a ribbon or flag attached to a stick or polyethylene pipe arched over the burrow. I counted at least ten burrow hoops in this wombat-loving property in the Southern Highlands.



*Meet our Wombatised Treasurer and Sewing Whizz,
Jacqui Bayley*



Jacqui, husband Roger and daughters Trina and Kim left England for Australia in 1982 but long before leaving home, in fact as soon as she left school, Jacqui completed five year's apprenticeship as a tailoress, work at which she excelled. Her wonderful sewing skills are still in great demand today!

In Australia Jacqui and Roger, a professional cook, worked in the catering industry, running pubs,

*restaurants and guest houses mostly down in the Moruya area until about seven years ago when daughter **Trina**, who just happens to be **Wombatised's technological whizz**, put her foot down and urged Jacqui and Roger to retire to an area closer to Sydney – and they ended up in Blomsfield Crescent, Mittagong, where they share their home with Rocky, a Cuban Havanese.*



In a life of such incredible industry and amazing achievement how could there be time for hobbies but in her non-existent leisure hours Jacqui made dolls. She not only dressed them but made them from scratch, moulding and then painting their faces, arms and legs before dressing them. She has even won prizes at the Royal

Easter show for her doll making and embroidery.

Now Jacqui makes state-of-the-art pouches for kangaroo joeys, bird nets to catch miscreant



galahs and, in accordance with our brave new Covid world, beautifully crafted masks (for humans) which sell for just \$10 each – all profits going to Wombatised!!



Jacqui Bayley
with husband Roger
in their garden with
Rocky,
a Cuban Havanese



Masks by Jacqui!

*Beautifully crafted,
washable masks
(compliant with health regulations)
in all colours and patterns,
or in sombre black
if preferred!*

*All profits go to
Wombatised*

Just \$10

Wombat Whiskers!!



*We have now sold over **one hundred and thirty copies** of our first run and are now on our **first reprint!** **Wombat Whiskers** is produced entirely on home soil unlike most children's books which are printed off shore.*

The book is educational, alerting children and adults alike to how precious and unique these animals are.

8 year old Akari Saitō in Kanazawa, Japan, enjoying *Wombat Whiskers!*

All proceeds go to Wombatised Inc., which means directly to the protection of our wildlife.

Copies are \$25 each plus postage.

Please order your copy by either sending an email to

wombatisedinc@gmail.com or adriennebradneysmith@gmail.com

NEW and **UNIQUE !!!!!**

WOMBAT PLANTERS

MADE TO ORDER

from

TREATED PINE

ONLY

\$65

Every wombat-friendly home needs one of these!

Drainage holes allow for direct planting.



Place your order before the Christmas rush!!

Hopefully in early October we may be able to hold our

Wombatised Event

*when all our beautiful and unique merchandise would be on display
for purchase.*



***Adorable
hand crafted
kangaroos
\$20***

***Unique hand crafted
little wombats
and cockatoos
\$15***



Wombatised fridge magnets and key rings \$5



Uniquely Australian! Uniquely Wombatised!

UNIQUE GIFTS!!



Vision and Mission Statement

Who are we ?

Wombatised covers an ever expanding network of people dedicated to the welfare of our native animals with a strong focus on education, conservation and community inclusion. We work for all wildlife with an emphasis on wombats.

Our vision is

- to continue raising healthy wombat orphans, guiding them to appropriate release sites to ensure their prosperous future.
- to improve hospital facilities and medical provisions for native animals.
- to maintain treatment in the field of diseases such as mange and other parasitic afflictions introduced by early settlers.
- to provide financial support for veterinarians, willing to explore the often untravelled path of wombat health.
- to cultivate effective means to relocate wombats, saving them from all too common atrocities such as road accidents, being buried alive at development sites, being shot and poisoned etc.
- to educate people on the very real need to help our wildlife.

How can you help?

We would welcome any donations to Wombatised Inc. However, we are still awaiting our tax deductibility status. Our bank account details are:

BSB 802 101
Account No. 100075892
Account Name Wombatised
Reference: Please use your full name

Please advise us of your donation by sending this form

The Secretary, Wombatised Inc.
22 Payten Street, Mittagong NSW 2575.

or by emailing adriennebradneysmith@gmail.com . We will then send your receipt / membership e-certificate.

Hands-on Assistance

Hands-on skills would be also greatly appreciated such as **construction skills** (e.g. building pens), **technology** (e.g. making cards, sharing information), **the arts** (e.g. photography, film making), **tailoring** (e.g. sewing animal bags, making burrow flaps, making items for sale), **domestic duties** (manning stalls), **animal husbandry** (cleaning enclosures), **conservation work**, **marketing**, as well as work on the field.

Because of licensing regulations and duty of care, we need interested persons to have working with children accreditation, character references and to demonstrate a willingness to acquire new skills.

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Thank you so much for your interest in Wombatised Inc.