

Wombatised Inc.

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Wombatised

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**Wombatised Newsletter
Vol.3 20200601**

Dear Everyone,

Wombatised membership now exceeds 110 and for this we thank you all. To have so many people, young and older, interested in our native animals, aware of what is going on in wildlife protection and fascinated by our animal stories is very encouraging and augers well for long term support. Thank you all so much!

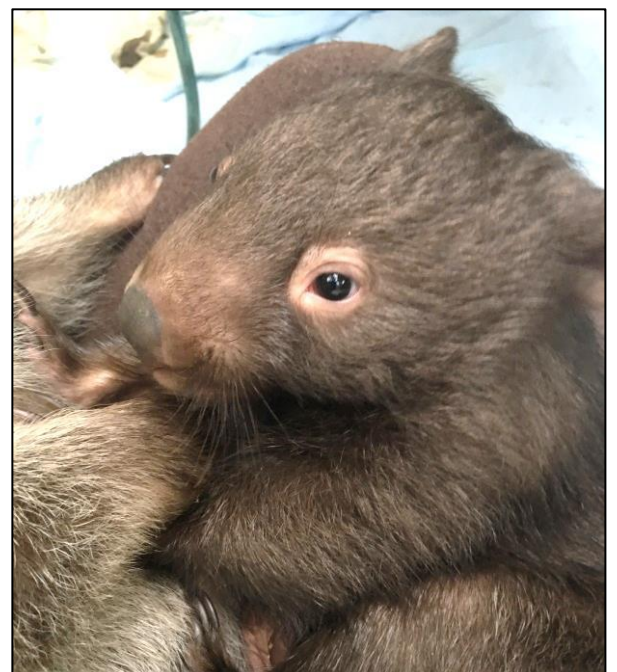
Charlie Chomp, Ruben and their Great Adventure



First let me introduce Charlie Chomp. He is our iconic wombat whose smiley face, drawn by artist Matt Donnici, is our Wombatised logo. Charlie was found wandering around drought ravaged Bullio in November last year and the cracked soles of his feet, as coarse as sandpaper, indicated he had been on his own for several weeks. How he survived is a mystery but there must have been a little bit of water somewhere.

When rescued, he was so thin and energy depleted his survival was touch and go. With no mother's milk for so long he had been forcibly weaned and no longer could accept marsupial milk. Instead he chomped and chomped on freshly cut grass, given to him in handfuls, thus earning himself the name of Charlie Chomp.

Almost six months have passed since his rescue and he's now a sturdy little wombat weighing about 10 kilos and has a shadow, wombat buddy Ruben, who never leaves his side. With his chocolate brown colourings, Ruben looks a bit like a Tasmanian devil.





A few weeks ago, Charlie and Ruben had a great adventure! Tucked into a leafy green hillside are two man-made nursery burrows and it was time for Charlie and Ruben to check them out! (Baby wombats are unable to construct burrows successfully on their own and need help adult help, either marsupial or placental!)

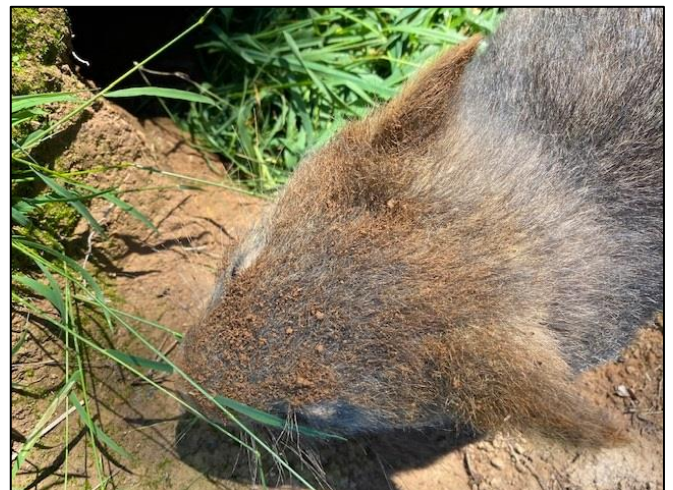
‘This looks interesting! You go first Ruben!’
‘Hey, don’t go down too deep.
That’s a lot of dirt you’ve dug up!’



‘There’s no grass down here. Let’s just pop outside for a bite to eat!’



‘That’s a dirty face you’ve got there, Charlie!’



Frankie Woodlands and Frannie's Wombat Rescue



***Frannie:** Hello, I live in Sydney but early one morning my business took me to the Southern Highlands. I know that road kill animals are usually dragged off the road and then spray painted with a cross to show they had been checked, but this wombat was in the middle of the road and it was very early.*

My grandmother worked for the RSPCA for 25 years and I'm a vegan who just adores all animals, especially Australian native animals.

I pulled over, and as I was dragging the wombat off the road she turned onto her side and I saw she had a pouch. I waited and watched the pouch and then I saw movement and a tiny foot.

I called WIRES and they said they were very busy and that perhaps someone could come within three hours. I didn't want to leave the little wombat joey so I lifted his mum (she weighed a tonne!) into my van and took

her to vets Kevin Davis and Dirderik Gendeman at Highlands' Vet at Braemar. They alerted wombat specialist Tania Clancy.

I asked if we could call the little wombat joey Frankie because my name is Frannie. Woodlands is the area where he was found.

Wombats are my grandma's favourite animal and so I'm now the favourite grandchild for saving a precious baby wombat.

I shared the story on Instagram and everyone was surprised there was a baby to save. I guess everyone just drives past a dead animal without thinking but I always stop to see if they've been checked by a ranger.

I love little Frankie Woodlands and beautiful Tania keeps me in the loop with how he's growing up. Thank you Tania for all your inspiration, hard work and dedication.

Tania:

Frannie's amazing rescue of Frankie took place early December 2018. Frankie was a pinkie weighing just 560 grams when I collected him from the vet. He needed a dummy for a while as he was grinding his teeth.

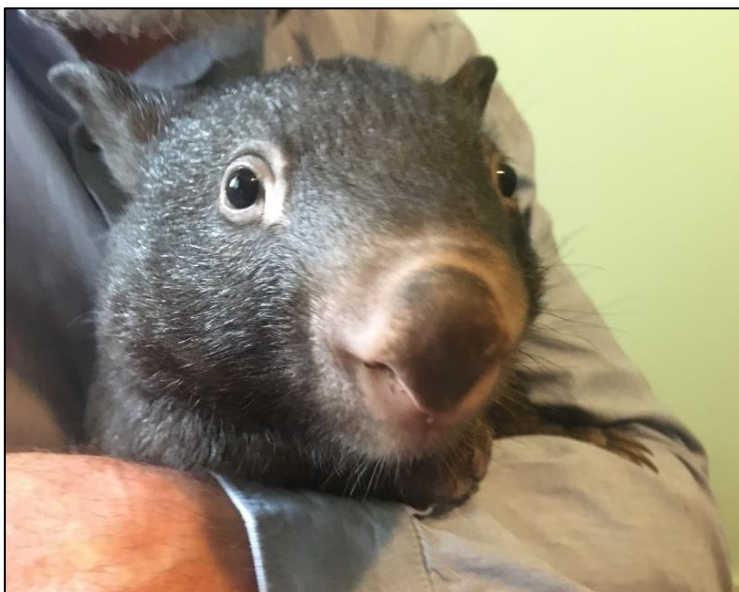


Frankie's Baby Photos!

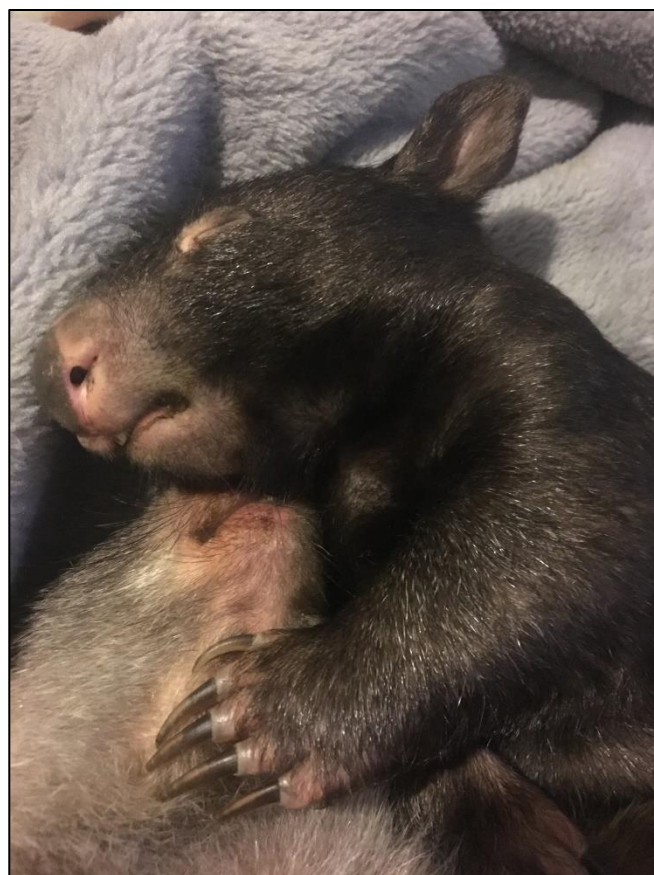


Frankie was a very loving, intelligent little wombat and he grew up with two other wombats, Taringa May and Nova Castelle and together they became a wisdom.

He also had a very special nanny called Scarlet.



Nova Castelle



Frankie sound asleep in Nova's arms

Frankie, Nova and Taringa May now live in a sanctuary of 350 acres of native forest with beautiful ancestral burrows undisturbed for many years.

Frankie Woodlands (left) Nova Castelle (middle) and little Taringa May enjoying a nap together

The February rains this year were life threatening for wombats, flooding burrows and endangering the lives of the young ones.

Frankie was a drought baby and not used to wet weather. Little wonder he sought the safety and shelter of his old nursery burrow when his own burrow flooded. He brought Taringa May with him for company and they spent a couple of nights in the shelter of their nursery burrow.

Frankie (left) with Taringa May, both drenched and muddy after February rains.

However, one night Frankie found Oxley's wisdom tucked up in the nursery burrow. Little Oxley, just 8 kilos, was perhaps a little too protective of his wisdom, particularly of tiny Gwen Throsby whom he'd known since she was a pinkie so Frankie thought it was time to teach Oxley some wombat etiquette. He gently but firmly covered Oxley's back with bites till little fur remained.

Gwen Throsby, Lochie Tuggerlong and Robbie Hoddle, three of the five members of Oxley's wisdom

Fortunately Oxley soon recovered, and Frankie is now very kind to Oxley and his wisdom. When Ruben decided to spend the night in the burrow a few nights later and he never touched him and he now periodically visits to check on everyone.

Frankie is a wonderful example of an orphan wombat successfully raised



and released back into the wild but who remains trusting enough of his carer to return home when needing help. His recent visits have enabled me to treat successfully the beginnings of mange around his eyes (see photos).

He has developed a balance between being wild and needing a human whom he could trust, and his occasional visits are a wistful reminder of his baby years.



Sadly not all wombat rescue stories have a happy ending. When their mothers are shot or run over, the little orphans have a perilous existence outside their mother's

pouch. Despite around the clock love and attention, Baby Lola, just 420 grams, has now joined her mother in Wombat Heaven. For three and a half weeks, tiny little embryo that she was, Lola touched our hearts with her sweetness and resilience.



WOMBAT RESCUE

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

0429 042 721 (24 hours)

0439 706 916

0407 273 283

0455 040 809

0490 659 245

0474 954 965

The story of Frannie's rescue of Frankie Woodlands is inspirational. If you drive a lot at night through wombat terrain and accidentally kill or come across a dead wombat, it would be wonderful if you were brave enough to check the pouch, **but never put your own safety at risk.**

Wombatised has some **rescue kits** ready to give to people but why not make your own!

YOU WILL NEED

1. Breathable fabric pouches of various sizes. Test the breathability by pressing the fabric against your nose. If you can breathe through the fabric, then the baby can too.
2. Scissors. If the baby is resisting being removed from the pouch, then you have to cut the mother's pouch. See instructions below.
3. Ties and rubber bands to keep baby safely enclosed in pouch.

4. Gloves to use if necessary.
5. If possible, a hot water bottle (use **warm** water only). Sometimes the pinkie babies are so cold they take up to four hours to warm up. They must be warmed very slowly and cannot be fed or medicated until they have reached their body temperature.



WHAT TO DO

- Drag the animal by the foot to the side of the road.
- Wear gloves if the animal is decomposing or has mange.
- If the corpse isn't rotten, bring the mother with baby in pouch to a wildlife carer or vet if possible. This will insure a longer period of safety for the baby. If this is impossible the next best thing is to remove the joey from the pouch.
- Make a note or mark the area on a map where you found the wombat in case there are babies waiting for mum in the burrow. Also wildlife groups need to give statistics of addresses with road fatalities.

REMOVING THE BABY FROM THE POUCH

If the baby is very small there is less resistance so may it be easier to remove without cutting the pouch.

If the baby is larger there will be great resistance and you can risk breaking the limbs. Baby wombats are very very strong.

There are **three stages of development** with baby wombats, each requiring slightly different rescue treatment:

- 1. Pinkies (unfurred)**
- 2. Furred joeys in pouch**
- 3. At heel ... larger baby wombats running by mum's side.**

1. Pinkies

- Pinkies are usually easy to remove without scissors.
- Turn the mum upside down with gloves if possible and gently remove the baby from the pouch.
- If the baby's eyes are not open, cut the teat from the base of the pouch so the teat remains in the baby's mouth and you don't damage the orphan's mouth.
- Keep the animal cupped in your hands next to your bare chest until you can wrap the baby in a breathable pouch. Tie the pouch up firmly.

*It's crucial to keep the baby warm and enclosed in a dark pouch. Even **the oxygen will be hard on the baby's throat** as the closed pouch has very low oxygen levels and is clammy and warm.*

The maximum temperature should be 32° so the ambient temperature of your car is probably warm enough.

- Time is of the essence. Call the emergency numbers as there could be injuries and the baby may need x-rays etc.

What NOT to do

Do not leave the baby exposed but wrap it immediately to retain body warmth and to limit amount of oxygen intake.

Do not try to feed the baby.

Please resist the temptation to take photos of such an embryonic vulnerable creature.

Photos can always be taken later if the baby survives.

Time is of the essence at this vulnerable stage.

2. Furred joeys in pouch (velvety, short fur to fully furred)

Orphans this size can last up to 4 days in the pouch if conditions are suitable so please check roadside fatalities and ring emergency numbers.

- These babies may resist being removed from the pouch and it is easy to break their limbs. This is when you have to cut the pouch.
- Turn deceased mum upside down with her back legs facing you.
- Put your hand in the pouch and raise the outer skin of the pouch pressing upward with your hand. Make sure you lift the skin high enough to avoid cutting the baby.
- Baby wombats are often catapulted from the pouch with the car impact. If you see a long teat, indicating a suckling baby, look for a baby which could be on the side of the road hiding or frightened in the scrub.
- The baby may be traumatised and know his mum is dead. To avoid being nipped by a frightened animal, firmly grab the baby around his belly, under his arms.

3. Larger babies at heel

If you see a long teat in the pouch and no baby you'll know there's a baby somewhere close by or waiting in the burrow. Please alert a wildlife agency because the baby will die without mum's protection, milk and nutrients.

When transporting larger babies, place them in a breathable pillowcase and tie them in. This will relax the terrified baby as this is as close as possible to mum's comfort.

DO NOT FEED

***Feeding must be done by a licensed carer to avoid lung damage and inevitable pneumonia.
Baby wombats need specialised food, medication and treatment as they are emergency patients***

*Thank you so much
for helping a very marginalised and at risk species
which desperately needs our support.*

Working Bees

Volunteer Colin McNeill with handyman Michael Parrett have been working tirelessly on an enclosure for wombat nursery burrows, using recycled corrugated iron which is dug into deep trenches. Tania and Roma have lent a hand and Adrienne has been chief wombat sitter (a lovely job) and lunch provider.



Colin (left) and Michael (right)

*Surely the best job!
Looking after the wombats!*



Wombat Rehabilitation pens

Work continues on completing the kangaroo shelter mentioned in our last newsletter. A week or two ago a huge truck from Gundagai delivered forty second-hand roller doors to be recycled to make wombat pens.



Thanks to Wombat Bill, Tania and Andy's vision and enterprise, these doors should make pen construction a relatively quick undertaking and Wombatised would like to thank Andy and Nikki in particular for their wonderful guidance and help, and for their ongoing support.

A purchase such as this has plunged Wombatised funds well over three thousand dollars into the red, but hopefully we will be able to recover a little once Covid 19 restrictions are relaxed and when we can hold a stall in Corbett Plaza, selling Wombatised fridge magnets, key rings

and adorable soft toys. The building of soft release sanctuaries is vital to the survival of orphaned joeys and an essential part of the Wombatised agenda.

Hidden away in another little bit of heaven is an Italianate aviary housing two ring tail possums. As this newsletter goes to air, these possums are due for release. A rope will be attached to the trees and the door left open so they can come and go as they please. More nesting boxes will be available for them high up in the trees.

Ring tail possums



Nearby, our brush tail friend, Penny Possum resides in luxury accommodation in a state-of-the-art enclosure surrounded by gum trees (left).



Penny (Brush tail) Possum

An adjacent pen is almost ready for the tiny sugar gliders (right and below) who need a small mesh soft release pen to practise their gliding skills before returning to the wild. Meanwhile, they are enjoying temporary lodgings in a comfy shed, fitted with gum leaves, bits of resin and fruit, not to mention a nightly feed of a special marsupial milk cocktail. You will



only ever see them, however, if you venture out late at night.

Sugar gliders

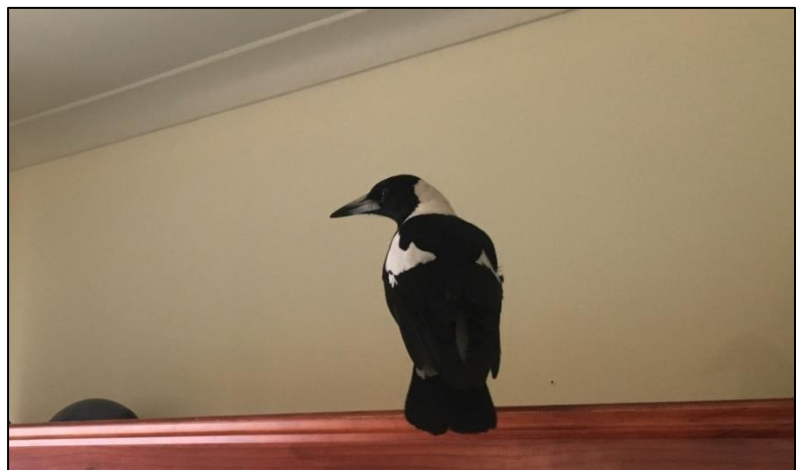


Fortunately not all wildlife enclosures involve so many resources and such concerted effort as wombat sanctuaries. Winter dreys for ringtailed possums are made from two lined hanging baskets joined together, with one end hollowed out. Vines are woven in and out around the drey to make a superb home in cold weather. Making a drey for ringtail possums is a relaxing way to experience basketry at its finest!



Wobbles the magpie still wobbles but is doing well!

A family in Moss Vale has a close affinity with the local magpie population. They have always had a special affection for Wobbles, ever since he was born two years ago, because of his congenital limp. They noticed Wobbles had become very weak after the recent rains and needed antibiotics and some Tender Loving Magpie



Care. Now Wobbles is able to preen himself again and practise his flight in the warmth of indoors. Did you know that birds preen themselves not just to make themselves look handsome, but to keep their feathers waterproof? No bird can survive in the wild if unable to keep his feathers properly aligned.



Stop press! ***A new kid on the block!***

Eve was found on Canyonleigh Road on Christmas Eve, hence her name Eve, and she has now come to Tania for care! Her miraculous survival is the result of another brave wombat rescuer, Kylie, who found Eve's mother dead on the side of Canyonleigh Road as she was driving to Sydney to visit her family for Christmas.

Baby Eve weighed less than 260 grams when found and was raised in a humidicrib.

Always a good eater, or rather, drinker, she did well from the start and now weighs 3.6 kilos.

*The Aboriginal name for Canyonleigh, that beautiful area perched on the escarpment between the Wingegarabee and Wollondilly Rivers where Eve was found, is Attunga, so we would now like to introduce you all to **Eve Attunga**.*

She is a little bigger than Lily but is fully furred but still very shy. When Lily met Eve she tried to give her a good nip, but thanks to the vegetable strainer, no harm was done! Hopefully they will eventually become a wisdom, but with Lily the way she is, there is no guarantee this will happen.



Eve and Lily say hello – or something!

Meet the vegetable strainer!

This is a brilliant way to avoid nips and it works for all wombats any size. All you do is target those two front teeth with the veggie strainer, and bites are instantly but gently averted!

Each edition of our newsletter from now on will focus on one of our Wombatised members and who better to begin with than our president!



Roma Dix OAM, president of Wombatised, is a member of Wild Life Rescue South Coast.

She has had several years of experience working with dingoes and for twelve months was President of the Merigal Dingo Sanctuary Committee in Bargo.

Her special love now is kangaroos. Although a relative new comer to raising joeys, she has attended courses on macropods run by W.I.R.E.S. (Albury 2019) and four W.R.S.C. courses in 2019. She has created a beautiful native bush garden in her home in Mittagong which is a haven for birds and native animals alike.



Roma is well known as part of the team which ultimately and successfully saved the Mittagong Playhouse. Hiding under the name 'the Phantom Painter', she ingeniously raised community awareness of the fact that unless action was immediately taken, Mittagong would lose a valuable community asset.

However, her most cherished achievement was the establishment of the National Braille Music Camp at Frensham thirty-four years ago. Until this year the Braille Music Concert has been a highly anticipated annual event but Covid 19 has necessitated a one year suspension. She was awarded an OAM (Order of Australia medal) in

2011) for her outstanding service to the community.

Roma plays the flute in the Highlands Sinfonia, the Concert Band and the Southern Highlands Symphony Orchestra where she is also active behind the scenes as Orchestrational Manager, organising players and attending committee meetings. She was instrumental along with Allan Beavis and others in establishing the annual Bowral Autumn Music Festival. She is also a peripatetic music teacher at Frensham.

With so many strings to her bow, or rather, notes to her flute, Roma continues to be a powerful advocate for wildlife rights and is the guiding light in her role as President of Wombatised. Through her efforts, Wombatised is now Wombatised Inc. and our DGR (Donation Gift Recipient) application is now in the process of being lodged with the ATO.

What is a newsletter?

With Volume 3 now in print, it is an opportune time to outline the objectives of our Wombatised newsletter. Through real life stories of animal rescue, protection and the building of soft-release sanctuaries, we aim to educate the general public, both young and old, on the preciousness and uniqueness of our native wildlife and the precarious state of their existence.

Our focus is on conservation, community inclusion and engendering a reverence for our wildlife's fragile environment. Our hope is that enough people, particularly the younger generation, will rally to the cause of wildlife habitat protection for its very survival.

Our Wombatised newsletter does not purport to be a scientific journal, for that would automatically reduce our readership by half at least, but we need to emphasise we are a research based organisation with several members with over forty years of hands-on experience with wildlife rescue, rehabilitation and expertise battling that most insidious threat to wombat welfare, mange.

Want to know MORE about Wombats?

Here are links to Noel Plunkett seven wonderful videos

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=UUyc3N0ZiMgnjWouUELtfqFQ>

- *Every Wombat needs a Mum*
- *Frensham School for Wildlife program*
- *Cedar Creek – a hospital for Wombats*
- *Wombats are not pets*
- *What's it like to meet a wombat?*
- *Wombats matter with Dr. Howard Ralph*
- *Wild Lives matter with Dr. Howard Ralph*

Hand crafted unique soft toys \$15



**Wombatised fridge magnets
and key rings \$5**

