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*Wombatised*

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**Wombatised Newsletter**  
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*Dear Everyone,*

*Frosty mornings and cold winds produce sniffles not only in humans but also in orphan wombats who would normally spend winter months tucked up snugly beside their mums in the burrow. I hope all our readers are healthy and happy and in good spirits now that some of the Covid 19 restrictions have been eased slightly.*

***Sugar Gliders Released back into the Wild***



*Our two exquisite little sugar gliders are now adult and strong enough to be returned to the wild. First step was to make their wooden house waterproof as a temporary shelter until they find a hollow tree to be their permanent home with their wild friends.*

*Next was to find a suitable tree, unfriendly for cats, in a canopy with a forked branch not too high as to be inaccessible by ladder.*

*Attaching the little house securely and providing the food mixture they love so much was a bit challenging but soon they will discover an abundance of insects, nectar, sap and berries in the forest canopy which is their staple food. Good bye little sugar gliders and good luck!*



*Success!! No sign of habitation in the little wooden house the next day and lots of tiny sugar gliders spotted in the trees at night!*

### *A Wombat-Loving Café*



The Glass Café and owner Leanne Ferreira with daughter, Ali holding first rescue Joey Richards.

Below: Joey Richards with Cindy Natai.



*With its delicious menu and friendly atmosphere located at the gateway to downtown Mittagong, the Glass Café is a magnet for locals and tourists to the Southern Highlands alike. But it also has something very special which few people know about. Its owner, Leanne Ferreira, is a wombat lover and has already three rescues to her name!*

*Living in the wombat terrain area of Joadja, Leanne was sickened by the amount of wombat road kill, ever more present during the drought. After having met Tania at the café one day and becoming firm friends, Leanne was brave enough to rescue a baby wombat one night from its mother's pouch. She rang Tania who immediately hopped into her truck, in her pyjamas, to collect little **Joey Richards** as he was soon to be called: '**Joey**' because he was from Joadja, and '**Richards**' because he was found in Richards Lane.*

*Joey quickly adopted **Cindy Nattai**, the baby wombat who suffered so severely from frost bite after being catapulted from her mother's pouch last winter, and both wombats were lovingly raised by Tania but now live in a soft release site close to where they will eventually be returned to the wild.*



Armed with a *Wombatised Wombat Rescue Kit* in the glove box of her car, Leanne has subsequently rescued two pinkies and successfully transferred them to carers. At first she was a little tentative cutting the pouch and teat but no blood was involved as the mother was dead and it became a challenging and life-saving mission to rescue the babies.

Her second rescue, a little boy called **Shadow**, paid her a recent visit with his carer. Several weeks have passed since his rescue and Shadow is still very much a pinkie, but he can now open his eyes and has the makings of a very fine looking baby wombat.

Leanne's third rescue is still too tiny to have a day out!

Leanne's advice to people encountering a wombat on the road at night: the wombat will always run in the direction of its burrow when alarmed which is usually the opposite direction in which he is walking so it's best to **drive slowly at night**.

**Shadow** with his wonderful rescuer, Leanne Ferriri from The Glass Café.

Below left: Joey Richards on arrival at his new home

Below right: entrance to Joey and Cindy's soft release site



For Tania, saying good bye to **Joey Richards** and **Cindy Nattai**, wombats she has raised since they were pinkies was both rewarding (because the animals were now so strong and healthy) and emotionally draining (because they were like her own children). No wonder her heart was in her mouth the day she





Above: Joey Richards with his new carer.

Right: Tania calling Joey and Cindy at the mouth of the burrow.

*took to them to their soft release site, a beautiful, wombat-friendly property in the Southern Highlands.*

*But Tania needn't have worried as Joey and Cindy had arrived in Wombat Heaven, a sanctuary set amidst rolling hills and bush, where mobs of kangaroos graze at dusk and wild wombats roam at night. Joey and Cindy's burrow is in a secure enclosure, safe from any adult wombat who might fancy teaching these youngsters a lesson or two! That will come later when they are big enough to be released into the wild.*



'Pssshht! Pssshht! Come out and say hello!'



'Thank you but no thank you! It's just a bit too cold tonight.'

*This beautiful property is a heart-warming example of pastoralists and wombats co-existing in perfect harmony!*

## *Isaac and Isabella have a new home!*

*Remember Isaac and Isabella, the two galahs with PTSD after having been tormented and abused by their first owner? Isabella, despite having no feathers on her upper torso, appears to be weathering the cold winter weather remarkably well. However, they both suddenly decided recently that they would like to chew up the rather flimsy door of their aviary.*



Caught in the act! Isabella gnawing away at the door!

*Sticks were frantically poked into the ever widening hole at the top of the door to prevent them from escaping but no sooner had one lots of sticks been inserted, another bit of hole appeared.*



*The time had come to move them into a stronger enclosure. But how? These two birds, quaint as they are, can be quite vicious when startled.*

*Jacqui came to the rescue with a magnificent bird net she made from a coat hanger and some shade cloth and all that remained was for Tania to catch them and transport them a few metres away to their new home.*



*Easier said than done!!*



*Isabella's featherless torso is clearly apparent in the above photo, taken at night, just after they were rehoused.*

*It had to be done at night when the birds were sleepy if our eyes and ears were to remain intact. Once again, Tania was amazing, this time with her bird catching skills.*

*There were no hands free to take photos during that very tricky operation, but after a few hair-raising incidents, the two birds were eventually safely housed in their new home and they both seem very happy!!*



*Jacqui even made a little coat for Isabella to keep her warm but there was no way we could put it on her and it could have been dangerous if it caught on a branch or a bit of wire or similar.*

*Galahs are often mistakenly regarded as stupid, as the word*

*galah in Australian slang means a fool, as in 'You silly galah!'*



*A 50c coin shows the size of the little coat*

*However, they are highly intelligent, delightful birds who are best observed in the wild.*

*No sooner were Isaac and Isabella re-housed in their new aviary than another bird rescue was at hand, this time two pink-faced long-billed corellas, also members of the cockatoo family. Timber felling west of the divide has brought these birds nearer the coast and they are regarded by some people as pests, but they are beautiful birds, monogamous and affectionate, and are Australian icons. Henry was a pet bird whose owner no longer could keep him and Minnie is his 'Goon' buddy.*

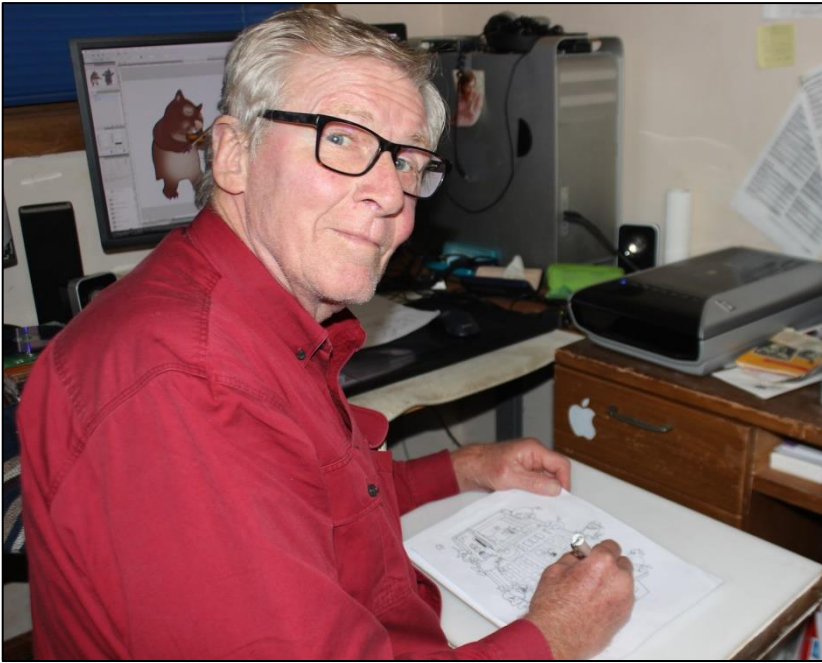


### ***Penny Possum Update***



*Little Penny Possum, the brush tailed baby possum who was found in a sink in Bowral High School, continues to thrive and it won't be too long before she's old enough to be released.*

## *Meet our Vice-president, Brendan Akhurst*



*Writing a biography of Brendan Akhurst would be like writing about James Bond or someone similar who has led an exciting life, full of adventure! Brendan began his working life as a police diver and has many gory tales to tell of his 10.5 years working from the Water Police Station at Dawes Point.*



*When not on diving jobs he was on guard duty in Darlinghurst District Courts. All the misfits were there; grade rugby league players, grade cricketers, professional sprinters, police band members and some police on punishment; a constantly changing and entertaining crew.*

*While sitting in court, guarding prisoners, he habitually sketched judges, prisoners including the infamous Darcy Dugan, workmates and others. This led him to an association with Joseph Morris Snr, crime reporter for the Daily Mirror, who introduced Brendan to various editors and publishers and so began his career of over forty years, cartooning, illustrating, writing scripts and meeting deadlines. His cartoons have adorned almost every newspaper and magazine including The Australian, the Sunday Telegraph, the Sunday Mirror (while it lasted) the Bulletin and The Women's Weekly to mention just a few.*

*Brendan has known and loved wombats since he was a child, when they would dig into the chook yard on his parents' dairy farm at Fitzroy Falls. He, along with other readers of a similar vintage (!), fondly remembers Ruth Park's **The Muddle Headed Wombat** on ABC radio Children's Hour. (Muddle headed was a term of endearment and not meant as an insult to our most intelligent marsupials.)*

*Meeting Tania Clancy and seeing her knowledge and dedication to the welfare of wombats showed Brendan that, as an average Australian, he wasn't aware of the perilous threat to their existence as a species. Nowadays he is working on the treatment of mange, introduced by European settlers, spread largely by foxes and for which wombats have no defense. His primary aim is to have effective medications labelled officially by the APVMA for use on wombats. Once this is done work can begin with the National Parks and Wildlife, Sydney Waterboard and State Forests to manage effectively the treatment of mange infested wombats in the areas under their control.*



Last year, when it looked as if our local council was going to divert funds from the Environmental Levy to help subsidise a new art gallery, there was a huge community outcry.

A protest meeting attracted hundreds of people and the result was highly successful, at least in the short term, but served as a constant reminder that we have to be eternally vigilant to protect our environment.

Brendan's cartoon here sums up the general feeling of the crowd at the time!



Brendan now has another mission which is to urge people to drive carefully in wombat terrain. As mentioned in our last newsletter, now is the peak season for wombat road kill, particularly as people head for the snow.

Wombatised has been working on a leaflet with instructions about what to do if a driver accidentally hits a wombat but its main purpose is to remind people to be on the lookout for wildlife if driving at dusk or dawn. This leaflet with Brendan's jovial little ski-clad wombat on the front page, will draw attention to the plight of wombats and will be distributed at ski outlets and at MacDonal'd's, Sutton Forest, the traditional stopping off spot for people driving from Sydney to their favourite ski destination.

## Query Corner

**Question:** *What is the difference between a weed and a plant?*

**Answer:** *A weed is a plant you don't want.*

**Question:** *Are so called 'weeds' such as radiata pine harmful to wildlife?*

*In other words, does our native wildlife always need to eat native plants?*

**Answer:** *Our wildlife has adapted to introduced plants and trees and in many cases depends on them. For example, the 'dreaded' radiata pine is home to a multitude of insects including ants and beetles, a variety of birds, possums and other wildlife. Cut down an old growth radiata pine and you destroy a whole eco-system.*

*Any plant life functions as fodder, shelter or nesting and we need to be careful before we cause soil erosion or destroy habitat.*

### ***How about a Day Excursion where you can visit beautiful places, meet some native wildlife and not have to drive?***

*It's not the purpose of our newsletter to advertise, but there are some unsung heroes out there, quietly doing what they can for our wildlife, and Wombatis would like to acknowledge them. We've already read about Leanne Ferreira at the Glass Café.*

*Another such person is Dave, who runs mini-bus tours for overseas visitors. His Sydney to Sydney day tour includes a stop off at the Kiama blowhole, the Minnamurra Rain Forest, Carrington and Fitzroy Falls and kangaroos and wombats in the Kangaroo valley area. Tours are limited to between four and eleven people, affording splendid opportunities to get to know overseas visitors!*

*In his spare time, Dave and his partner contribute hundreds of dollars towards the treatment of wombats infested with mange. It is wonderful to see a young couple concerned about wombats, devoting their time and precious resources to wombat welfare.*

*Even though his tours are advertised on Trip Advisor, Dave said he never has Australians join his tours. International visitors, he said, are fascinated with our wildlife and want to observe native animals in their natural environment but Australians show virtually no interest.*

*Maybe we Australians don't know about these tours?? Here is a quote from Dave's website:*

#### **KANGAROO AND WOMBAT DAY TOUR**

**\$149 AUD (approx. \$100 USD)**

**FROM SYDNEY TO KANGAROO VALLEY**

- *Blowholes and vistas*
- **World famous Blowhole Pie for Lunch**
- *Award-winning Rain Forest Boardwalk*
- *Sydney's biggest Waterfalls in Kangaroo Valley*
- **Twilight Ozzie BBQ**
- *Get up close to Wild Wombats and Kangaroos*
- *Bus transport from and to Sydney included*

***[perfectdaysydney.com.au](http://perfectdaysydney.com.au)***

*Once Covid 19 is out of the way and you feel like a day trip in which you don't have to drive, or even cook, or when you have overseas visitors to entertain, how about a Perfect Day from Sydney to Sydney with Dave?*

## Heart Melting Moments

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=UUyc3N0ZiMgnjWouUELtfqFO>

Noel Plunkett has made seven superb videos about wombats and we would like to draw your attention to two in this newsletter.

**Every Wombat needs a Mum**, features wombat orphan Washington. Baby wombats need to be loved and cuddled just like human babies. They are full of fun and mischief and love playing games with other wombats or with their carers.

Washington, with his delightful, quirky personality just melts your heart and shows how baby wombats are truly wonderful ambassadors for our wildlife.

**The Frensham School for Wildlife Program** demonstrates the importance of education. Our young people need to be involved in wildlife in order to protect our native animals and safeguard their habitat. This authentic learning experience will surely stay with those lucky Frensham girls for the rest of their lives!

### A delightful dashboard friend



Hand crafted unique soft toys \$15

Wombatised fridge magnets and key rings \$5

