

Wombatised Inc.

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Wombatised

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Wombatised Newsletter
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Dear Everyone,

September is the month that always gets away! But what a spectacular one it has been! Never have the colours of spring seemed so vivid – perhaps because of that heavy rain which came hot on the heels of the drought.

Enclosures Update!

Work on the roller door enclosures – and there are two - received a spurt with September’s lovely warm spring days. Two wisdoms of teenage wombats spent several nights there but one or two decided they’d prefer to stay safely tucked up in bed back at the inn.

While roller doors are the safest fencing material for wombat sanctuaries, aesthetically they are not the most beautiful so eventually the enclosures will be painted to blend in with the surroundings.



Hand-dug nursery burrows with comfy beds alongside, are all ready for occupancy.

Two weeks later a merry sight met my eyes:

Sanctuary 1



Robbie Hoddle has Oxley and George to protect her.

Sanctuary 2



Charlie and chocolate-brown Ruben, the two inseparables, love their new home!



Meanwhile, the two nursery burrows dug into the clay of the Little Sanctuary are dry at last and a wisdom of orange-tinged young wombats have been very busy getting their home in order!

Digging through clay is extremely hard work and calls for long sessions of rest or preferably, deep sleep!



Guess who loves the burrow?



The Lower Holt

The two tiny sugar gliders, raised as pinkies and released in early August, were spotted paying a nocturnal visit to pinch sap from a beautiful old black wattle. Wattle is such an important regenerative plant providing a cool, rich micro-environment for sapling



eucalypts. Their home is a tree canopy in the Lower Holt, a remnant riparian forest beside the Nattai River which forms part of a wildlife corridor right in the middle of Mittagong. They share their home with ring-tailed and brush tail possums, a huge variety

of native birds including Satin Bower Birds, Tawny Frog Mouths, Whip birds and the Pink-breasted Robin, native mice, frogs and water rats, water dragons, lizards, snakes, two platypus, swamp wallabies and a wisdom of Bear-nosed wombats to mention just a few.

For many years Frensham Year 9 students have been actively involved in a program called Holting in which they spend one afternoon a week tending the Lower Holt, clearing away unwanted vegetation and helping care for resident wildlife. Mange control is a focus of the program and one in which the girls can play an important part. With a series of graphic photos (below), Tania explained the devastating effect of mange on wombat populations before the girls divided into small groups, clambering through the cornucopian bush, looking for scats and marking each burrow with a yellow tape.



The first 2 are early onset mange. The blue dye on No.3 indicates the animal is being treated. ***He later recovered!!!***



The following week burrow flaps, made from recycled ice cream lids and tuna cans (to hold cydectin, the medication for mange treatment), were attached to each burrow.

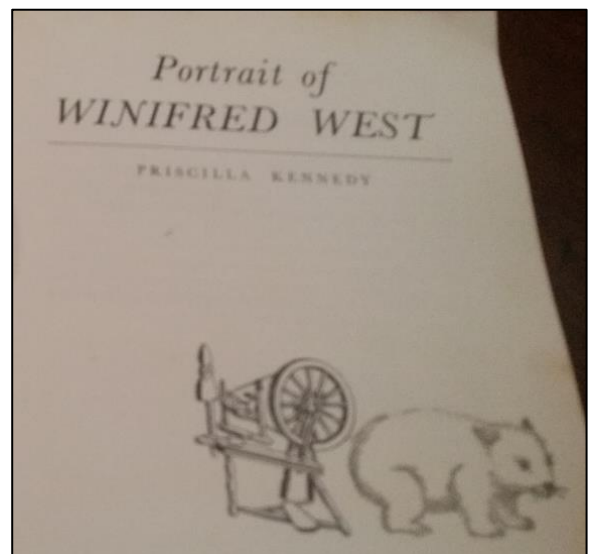
Left: Burrow flap at the entrance of a burrow is filled with cydectin which spills on to the wombat's back each time the animal enters or exits the burrow.

Several girls volunteered to check the burrows the following morning to see if the tins were empty. For the treatment to be effective,

several applications of cydectin are necessary over a short period and then repeated periodically for ever more.

The treatment of mange in this beautiful tract of bush, the Lower Holt, is not only a unique educational experience for students but is vital to the survival of wombats and a multitude of other wildlife species. Mange not only affects wombats, but makes tree climbing for koalas difficult if not impossible as it infests the palms of their hands and feet. Mange also affects kangaroos and other small animals, both wild and domestic, including of course, dogs and cats.

Below: The resident platypus in the Nattai River in Frensham's Lower Holt



Frensham's love and close association with wombats goes back to its founder, Winifred West, whose biography features on its title page her two loves, a spinning wheel and a wombat.

Wombatised LETTER BOX

Questions from our JUNIOR READERS

Eight year old Akari Saitō writes from Kanazawa, Japan:

どうやって赤ちゃん産むのかなあ？
母親のお腹のポケットにも上手に入る
んでしょうか？？

***How does a wombat give a birth?
Can it get into the 'pocket' in mum's
tummy without any trouble?***



Akari-chan, that's such an interesting question! The wombat mum crouches over so that her tiny baby (called a foetus), can climb from the birth canal into the pouch. The baby is less than 3 centimetres tall - only a bit bigger than a jelly bean. It's quite a short climb for wombats as mum's pouch opens from behind. Baby kangaroos are also very tiny at birth, but they have a much longer distance to climb as their mum's pouch is much higher up.

明里ちゃん、おもしろい質問ありがとう！生まれたとき、ウオンバットの赤ちゃんはゼリービーンと同じぐらい、とっても小さいです！母親のポケット（ふくろ）が赤ちゃんの生まれたところに近いから、そんなに長い旅じゃないんです。でも、カンガルーの赤ちゃんだったら、母親のふくろまでかなり長い登りです。カンガルーのふくろはもっと遠いところにあるからです。

Three year old Saskia asks: ***Why do wombats have whiskers? Mummy doesn't.***

Lots of animals have whiskers to help them find their way around, particularly when it's getting dark. Some animals don't have very good eyesight so their whiskers prevent them from bumping into things. Whiskers also help an animal tell how cold it is outside.

Wombat whiskers are quite stiff and when they brush against the side of the burrow, the wombat knows that its head might get stuck if it goes any further.

*Your mum doesn't have whiskers because she's a girl and because she has good eyesight, although there **are** animals with whiskers who **also** have good eyesight. Your dad probably has whiskers when he doesn't shave but I don't think they would stop him from bumping into things! Maybe you could ask him?*





Five year old Maeve asks: ***Do wombats have tails?***
Yes, Maeve, they do but they are very small – you could almost say there's no tail at all! Have a look at this picture! The tail is that tiny bit sticking out like the end of a shoelace. It's just the continuation of the backbone.

Maeve also asks: ***How big are wombat burrows?***
That's a great question. Some burrows cover a wider area than others. The entrance is usually large enough to spot easily but there are lots of tunnels. Large burrows and chambers can cover an area as long as about 20 metres.



Seven year old Tilley asks: ***How can you tell if a wombat is a he or a she?***

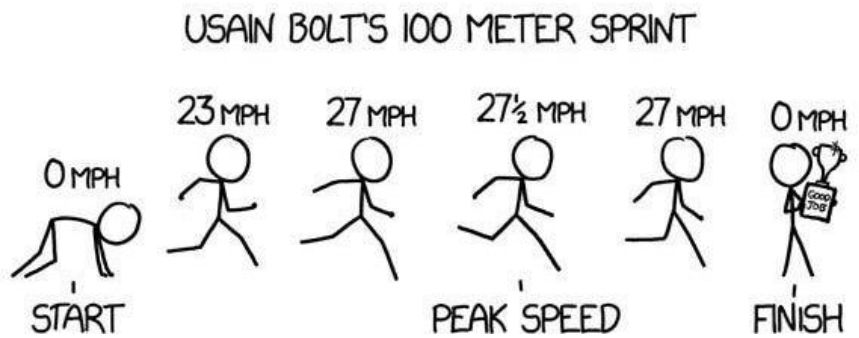
This is a very important question, Tilley! Fortunately it's usually an easy one to answer. If you look at a female wombat, even if she's quite tiny, you can see a little hole towards the back of her tummy. This is the pouch which becomes very important when the wombat has a baby. (Baby wombats are called joeys).

Boy wombats have a heart-shaped little white sack between their back legs. Occasionally this sack can contract inside the stomach when the animal is threatened. This happened fairly recently when a baby wombat was traumatised after losing its mum. The rescuer thought he was a girl and called her Ruby but later Ruby had to be re-christened Ruben!

Can you tell if the wombat in this photo is a girl or a boy?

Five year old Heidi asks: *Can a wombat run faster than Cathy Freeman?*

This is an amazing question, Heidi. We need to put our thinking caps on to answer this! Mr. Google says humans can run as fast as 45 kilometres an hour. That's how fast Usain Bolt (who holds the world record) can run.



Have a look at this fun Youtube video which I stumbled across by accident!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EQY5WAQAvuM>

Here's another video which shows a wombat running full speed:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xUFXRDI64Cs>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EQY5WAQAvuM>

At the Sydney Olympics, Cathy Freeman ran 400 metres in 49.11 seconds. Wombats are also fast runners when frightened or chased and can run about 40 kilometres an hour for about 400 metres.



Cathy Freeman was running on a smooth surface with no obstacles, wombats usually have trees and bushes to dodge.....

Heidi, I think you need to ask your Mum or Dad to do the maths here, but I would say if Cathy Freeman and a wombat were to have a race over 400 metres on level ground, they would probably end up in a tie – or maybe the wombat would

win?? Either way, it's GOLD for Australia!!

*And do have a look at this video **Every Wombat needs a Mum** which shows our very own wildlife carer, Tania with a baby wombat called Washington!*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZG66GM_LrIA

Heidi has drawn a wonderful picture of a wombat called Heidi:



*This is a great picture, Heidi. How clever of you to get the whiskers and tail right!
And what a **GOOD NAME** for a wombat!*

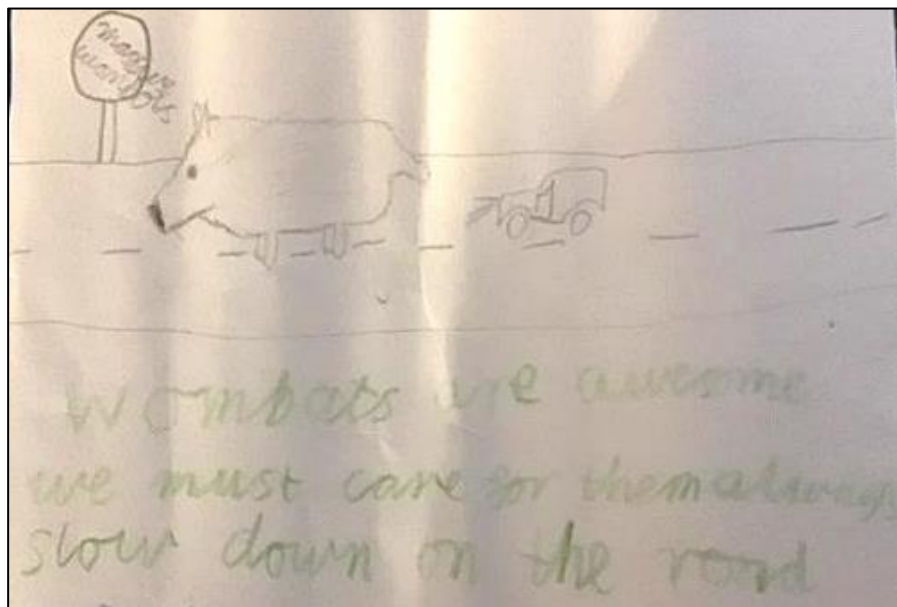
Here is a letter from Huon, a little boy who lives down the South Coast.

He's heard about wombats being killed on the roads so he writes:

Wombats are awesome.

We must care for them always.

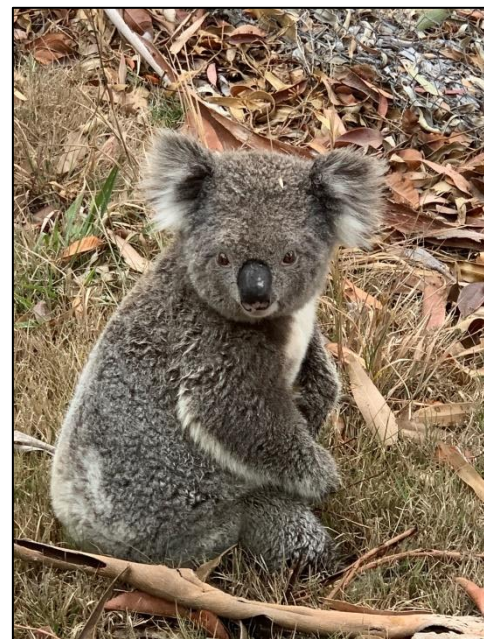
Slow down on the road.



Query Corner

Question: *Are there any koalas in the Southern Highlands?*

Answer: *Yes, there are a few small populations in our area although koalas are difficult to see in the wild. A koala was recently spotted in Frensham's Upper Holt (left) and another in a far corner of East Bowral in November last year (right). Interestingly, koalas have even been spotted in radiata pines.*



Question: *Are wombat wisdoms patriarchal or matriarchal societies?*

Answer: *The wombat wisdom is a matriarchal society. Females have the right of passage and therefore demonstrate more confidence as they grow older.*

Male wombats are sometimes very insecure and agitated because of hierarchical challenges. They sometimes butt heads like bulls but they can be very sooky and hide behind their mum or female friends when threatened (right).

If teenage males are well-behaved and respect the alpha male, all will be well in the wisdom. If they are foolish enough to challenge the alpha male, they could well lose their life or at least lose lots of flesh from strong nipping teeth! The Golden

Rule for a happy young wombat orphan is not to be aggressive but respectful to his/her elders.





Question: *How well can wombats see, and how can you tell if a wombat is blind?*

Answer: *Wombats have poor vision which is compensated for by a keen sense of hearing and smell, which are much stronger than those of a dog. Their eyesight is often compromised if they were victims of road kill through nerve damage. Mange is another cause of blindness as scabs form over the eyes.*

Left: This free-living wombat is one of several blind animals surviving well.

Question: *Is there an easy way to tell whether a wombat is blind?*

Answer: *Blind baby wombats knock into things so that is a giveaway. In the wild, blind wombats lift their head up higher than sighted animals. If you see a wild wombat during the day, it could well be blind as the animal can no longer distinguish light from day.*

Question: *How easy is it for a blind wombat to survive in the wild?*

Answer: *Females fare better than males and Tallygang Mountain Mamma, a resident wild wombat in our area, is testimony to this. We often see blind wombats coping very well in the wild. Young females have their own nursery burrow and the alpha male accepts them, but teenage boys often get pushed around.*

Question: *Do kangaroos and wombats get along well together?*

Answer: *In the wild, yes. Herbivorous animals usually have no problems co-existing and in really hot weather kangaroos sometimes seek respite in a nice cool wombat burrow. Wombats are quite hospitable and allow not only other wombats but other animals into their*



burrows. There are stories of wombats sharing their burrows with kangaroos during the recent bushfires.

However, orphan baby wombats and kangaroo joeys are best kept apart as kangaroos in particular are very susceptible to pathogens carried by other animals (dogs, cats and foxes etc.) and wombats can nip. Young wombats could also accidentally break a baby kangaroo's finely boned leg just by knocking it with its chunky behind.

Amazing Amalgamation!

Because our interests largely overlap, Wombatised is now working in close collaboration with Clive West from The Greens and Gaye White from Winzero (Wingecarribee Zero Carbon Emissions). When saving wildlife habitat is on the agenda, United We Stand!



Wombatised Inc.



Here is the link to Winzero newsletters: <https://mailchi.mp/83b670c4575d/2n2vdqf0gc-2125949>

The Team!



Wombatised Networks

Wombatised has a network of friends, foster carers and 'nannies' whom we would like to acknowledge. Last month we mentioned that tireless couple, Mel and Col who feed and care for some of the animals and birds in our sanctuaries.



Grace Oliver has always loved animals and has a certificate in animal study. She is a member of WIRES and will be participating in more workshops once

Covid is out of the way. Under Tania's guidance Grace has become a wonderful kangaroo nanny, not only with feeding and every day care, but in learning the medications required for joey welfare.

When animals come in compromised, needing lots of medical attention, it's always great to have a constant, loving nanny to comfort them. Grace's mother, Barbara, is an environmental activist and a stalwart member of the team, always ready to lend a hand, particularly with administration and financial support.

Phil's Corner

Wombatised often works closely with local vets, for example Ironmines, Highlands Vet, Bong Bong Vet, Alcorn Street Vet and Southern Highlands Vets who have contributed in so many ways towards wildlife welfare, and of course there is Lorenzo at the Camden campus of Sydney University who helped our wombats overcome upper respiratory problems due to a virus transmitted from a wild wombat.

*From now onwards we're going to include a segment called **Phil's Corner** where Phil Hazzard, the famous Cat Doctor from Ironmines Vets, will discuss a particular topic each month.*



The other day Southern Highlands Vets worked miraculously on a little wombat with a broken femur as a result of a car accident. This raises the question of whether to euthanase, a topic which people tend to avoid but which is something to be valued when it means an animal suffering from irreversible pain can be humanely relieved of its agony.

Vets are continually called upon to euthanase and have access to painless and non-violent means to carry out this necessary task. We can all be reassured that our beautiful pets can be put to sleep without any pain. However, wildlife personnel don't have this luxury and they are often called out to be 'paramedics' on the side of the road – nurses and doctors and then carers without sophisticated medical facilities and assistance. Contacting shooters and police is often the only option but most times it's difficult to get hold of people to perform such a task, particularly in the middle of the night.

When an animal has been hit by a car, is in great pain and there is no possibility of getting help from a vet, a sharp blow to the head is the most humane way to euthanase, as there is only a bit of bone between the brain and the back of the head. Wombat manuals indicate

a shot to the head above the eyes is the best target for a quick, humane death. We suggest that the most effective spot is between or behind the ears. Unlike the human brain which fills the skull cavity, a wombat's brain along with those of many other animals is positioned at the rear of the skull. This bolt method of euthanasia is often used in the meat industry. Meat eaters are paying someone to kill animals and vets are euthanasing all the time.

But to return to that little wombat with the broken femur, that could well have a happy ending as professional attention was immediately sought. The bones of young animals proliferate and lock together fast, irrespective of treatment. They are pliable and very responsive to surgery but nevertheless, if too much time had elapsed before treatment, the femur of that little wombat would have had to have been re-broken and re-set. Thank you Southern Highlands Vets!

The same happy outcome may not have applied to the bones of an older animal as older, sharp bones are less responsive. Performing such an operation on a young wombat in which a pin was inserted into the femur is without doubt a new frontier. Even with the young wombat joey moving and knocking and scratching the pin against hard surfaces, the bone will heal.

After a check up and stitches are removed, the young wombat has a promising outcome, thanks to Charlie and Chris at Southern Highlands Vets.

Uniquely Australian! Uniquely Wombatised!

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*Every wombat-friendly home needs one of these!
Drainage holes allow for direct planting*

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Wombat Whiskers!!

by

Adrienne Bradney-Smith

Wombat Whiskers is produced entirely on home soil. It is an educational book for young children and adults of all ages, which asks questions about what wombats really look like. This little book creates an awareness of how precious and unique our wombats are.

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





*Adorable
hand crafted
kangaroos
\$20*

*Unique hand crafted
little wombats
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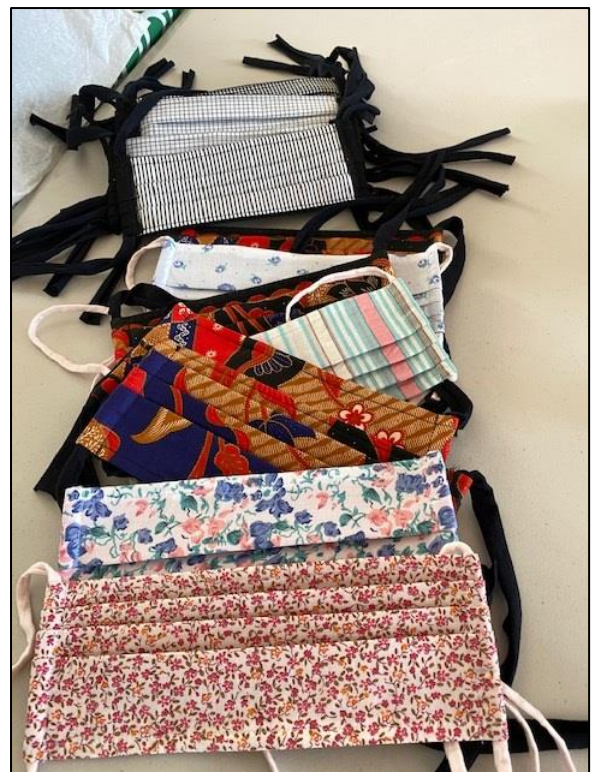


Masks by Jacqui!

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





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 wombatisedinc@gmail.com or 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.