

Wombat's Wish Newsletter

Autumn 2025



Dear Families, Sponsors, and Friends of Wombat's Wish,

Welcome to our March 2025 newsletter! The year has started with great energy for the Wombat's Wish team. We recently held our first camp for 2025 from March 21st to 23rd at Camp Wyuna in Queenscliff, where we were privileged to support nine wonderful families. A special welcome to our newest volunteers, Jake and Shelby—we are so grateful to have you as part of our Wombat's Wish family! A heartfelt thank you also goes to our incredible team: Suzy, Fran, Rachal, Mel, Sean, Liam, Karla, Shannon, Charles, and Marnie. We sincerely appreciate the Camp Wyuna staff for their support and the beautiful dove release by Endless Doves, which provided a touching and meaningful close to the camp.

We are delighted to welcome Mel, who will be job-sharing with Annika in our administration role. Additionally, we have four fantastic new board members:

- ✻ Tara – Chairperson
- ✻ Amy – HR
- ✻ Raghu – Clinical
- ✻ Luke – General Board

We are also excited to introduce Rachel, a psychologist who will be offering one-on-one grief counselling appointments on Fridays.


At the same time, we bid a fond farewell to Steve, our dedicated psychologist, as he retires. Thankfully, Steve will still be part of the Wombat's Wish community, joining us for a Weekend Grief Program or two throughout the year. We also extend our deepest gratitude to Jill, our founder, who is retiring from her role in administration and clinical support. Jill's passion and commitment have touched the lives of many, and while she will be dearly missed in her day-to-day role, we look forward to seeing her at Wombat's Wish events.


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We have some exciting events planned, and we'd love for you to mark your calendars further details are available in the newsletter.

 Family Trivia Night – 24th May 2025 at Portarlington Golf Club (Tables of 8-10)

 Wombat's Wish Annual Walk – 19th October 2025 at Portarlington Reserve

There are many ways you can support Wombat's Wish and help ensure our services remain free for families. Whether through corporate sponsorships, individual donations, workplace giving, fundraising initiatives, or programs like cash-for-cans, every contribution makes a difference. If you'd like to get involved, please reach out to me at nicki@wombatswish.org.au—I would love to hear from you.

We are so grateful to the Drysdale Ladies RSL for bringing joy to our children with handmade Christmas stockings and Easter Chickens filled with treats. We also extend our appreciation to the Ladies of the Swamp quilters in Pakenham, who lovingly craft quilts for every child attending our camps. These thoughtful gifts bring so much comfort and warmth.

We look forward to connecting with you throughout the year. Please remember that you are never alone—if you or your family need support, Wombat's Wish is here for you.

With warmth and gratitude,

Nicki Dunne
General Manager
Operations, Programs and Partnerships

What's in this issue:

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- Schedule
- Upcoming Fundraisers
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- Meet the Team
- New Members

FEATURE

COUNSELLING CORNER

- Suggested Event
- Grief Exercise
- Recommended Books

SUPPORT

- Our Sponsors
- How to Support us
- Corporate Sponsorships
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- Contact us

"Grief is not a disorder, a disease or a sign of weakness. It is an emotional, physical and spiritual necessity, the price you pay for love. The only cure to grief is to grieve."

Earl Grollman

WHAT'S NEW?

UPCOMING EVENTS AND WEEKEND GRIEF PROGRAMS IN 2025!

WOMBAT'S WISH PROGRAM DATES

CAMPS 2025

21 st TO 23 rd March 2025	Camp Wyuna	Family Camp
16 th to 18 th May 2025	Camp Corop	Family Camp
20 th to 22 nd June 2025	Camp Grantville	Family Camp
18 th to 20 th July 2025	Camp CBTS	Youth Camp
15 th to 17 th August 2025	Camp Wyuna	Family Camp
12 th to 14 th September 2025	Camp Corop	Family Camp
21 st to 23 rd November 2025	Camp Wyuna	Family Camp

CAMPS 2026

13 th to 15 th March 2026	Camp Wyuna	Family Camp (Booked)
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FAMILY DAYS 2025 – Dates to be advised

6th April 2025 – Clip and Climb - Williamstown
July 2025 – Tree Planting Day
14th September 2025
8th December 2025 – Xmas – Serendip Sanctuary Lara

EVENTS

Family Trivia Night	24 th May 2025
Launch Wombat's Wisdom	1 st July 2025
Wombat's Walk	12th October 2025



WHAT'S NEW?

JOIN OUR FAMILY TRIVIA NIGHT IN MAY!

Wombat's Wish will be holding a Trivia night on Saturday the 24th of May 2025 @6.30pm at the Portarlington Golf Club.

Prices are \$40 for Adults and \$20 for children under the age of 16 years.

Snacks are available at the venue (no BYO) and there will be a Raffle, Kids Mystery Bags and an Auction held on the same night for you to be a part of and try your luck!

If you would like to be a part of our Trivia night, please:

- Give us a call on 0969 0314 to book in your attendance & make payment
- Arrange your own table; every table can fit 8 people comfortably

If you have any questions, please email Suzy, our Community Engagement Officer on community@wombatswish.org.au



WHAT'S NEW?

SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR ANNUAL WOMBAT'S WALK!

Wind, rain and sunshine – we've gone through it all at our Wombat's Walk Fundraiser at the Portarlington Cricket Club last November.

This year, we'll be holding our annual Wombat's Walk on Sunday 12th October 2025!

With the support of Portarlington Cricket Club, we're looking to support children and families that have experienced a death of a parent or primary carer, by encouraging our community to join our fundraiser.

Whether you would like to take part and walk in memory of your important person, or if you just want to come by for the activities, there will be lots on offer for you and your family to enjoy! Have a look at last year's activities on our social media, and keep an eye out for more information to follow about the day and what you can expect this year.



WHAT'S NEW?

1:1 COUNSELLING

1:1 Counselling online via Telehealth and in person is available for those in immediate need. We can help families understand big feelings and concerning behaviours, as well as develop more tools to deal with grief. Our service is free and bulk billed through Medicare with a Mental Health Care Plan from your GP, providing 6 to 10 sessions per year.

Please note our counselling team members are registered psychologists and accredited mental health social workers.

To access this free service you must:

- Make an appointment with your GP
- Ask for an individual mental health plan for each family members who require the counselling service
- The children will need to chat with the doctor, too
- Then ask the GP to send the Mental Health Care Plan to counselling@wombatswish.org.au

Contact the office for more details, or fill out the [referral form](#) on our website.

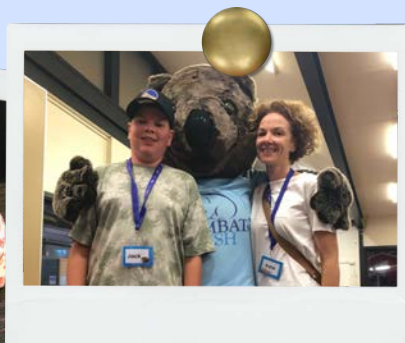


WHAT'S NEW?

WEEKEND GRIEF PROGRAMS

Weekend Grief Programs are held at different times throughout the year for the children and their parent/carer. Our supportive team work through a mixture of evidence based and fun activities that aim to support children and their families through their grief journey. This year we'll have 7 Weekend Grief Programs scheduled in; one in March, May, June, July (youth), August, September and November.

SNAPSHOTS FROM MARCH WYUNA QUEENSCLIFF WEEKEND GRIEF PROGRAM



GO TO THE NEXT PAGE FOR OUR UPCOMING WEEKEND GRIEF PROGRAMS IN 2025...

WHAT'S NEW?

UPCOMING WEEKEND GRIEF PROGRAM IN 2025

- Corop – Family Program – 16th to 18th May 2025
- Grantville – Family Program – 20th to 22nd June 2025
- Cottage By the Sea (Queenscliff) – Youth Program – 18th to 20th July 2025
- Wyuna (Queenscliff) – Family Program – 15th to 17th August 2025
- Corop – Family Program – 12th to 14th September 2025
- Wyuna (Queenscliff) – Family Program – 21st to 23rd November 2025



WHAT'S NEW?

FAMILY FUN DAYS

Wombat's Wish Family Days are a fun day out for our families both new and old. You can meet others and get to know our team, or catch up with friends you met or others from past Wombat's Wish Weekend Grief Programs. These Family Days are a great way for your children and young people to stay connected and feel supported further along their grief journey, while making some fun memories.

Remember, all of our Family Days are offered free of charge to your family.

SNAPSHOTS FROM LAST YEAR'S CHRISTMAS FAMILY FUN DAY



JOINS US FOR OUR UPCOMING FAMILY FUN DAYS:

- Clip n' Climb 6th April 2025 (fully booked)
- Tree Planting Day July 2025 (Date TBC)
- 14th September 2025 (Activity TBC)
- Christmas Family Day 8th December 2025 (Serendip Park Lara)

WHO ARE WE?

THIS IS THE WOMBAT'S WISH 2025 TEAM!

OFFICE

Operations

- Nicki - General Manager of Operations, Programs and Partnerships
- Suzy - Community Engagement Officer
- Mel & Annika - Administration

Clinical

- Frances - Counsellor
- Rachel - Psychologist

BOARD

- Tara - Chair
- David - Vice Chair
- Simone - Treasurer
- Jo - Secretary
- Raghu - Executive Team
- Peter - Executive Team
- Hannah - Executive Team
- Amy - Executive Team
- Luke - Executive Team



And a shoutout to all of our wonderful wombat's Wish volunteers
- new and current !

WHO ARE WE?

MEET OUR NEW TEAM MEMBERS



BOARD MEMBER

Tara – Chair

Tara Piazza is an experienced Non-Executive Director and transformation, digital, and strategy professional with over 12 years of board experience across the healthcare, not-for-profit, and public sectors.

Tara's board experience includes nine years with the Institute for Breathing and Sleep at Austin Health and six years with the Mercy Health Foundation, where she played a key role in governance, strategy, and operating model change. Professionally, Tara's career spans executive leadership roles in global financial services, aviation, management consulting, and the Australian public sector. With expertise in customer experience, digital transformation, and organisational change, she has held senior positions at Goldman Sachs, Qantas, Myer, Public Transport Victoria, and Victoria Police.

Tara holds a Graduate Diploma in Applied Information Systems, an MBIT (Masters of Business – IT), has completed the AICD Company Directors Course, and has undertaken executive leadership programs at Harvard Business School. She is also an experienced executive coach, specialising in transformation, change management, and customer experience.

WHO ARE WE?



BOARD MEMBER

Amy

Amy is currently a member of the Executive team at Yarra Valley Water accountable for People and Safety. She gravitates to for purpose industries which provide essential services to local communities. Her experience spans multiple industries including water, public transport, hospitality and entertainment FMCG, retail, manufacturing and pharmaceuticals.

Amy is passionate about leveraging the collective power of people working in organisations as a vehicle to enhance collective wellbeing of our people & planet. She is also a widow and single mum to 2 young boys and enjoys holidaying down in Phillip Island where she bought a holiday home during COVID 19.



BOARD MEMBER

Luke

Luke is the Manager of the Sport Rec and Health Team at Leisure Networks and has his own Master of Ceremonies business. He previously worked in the AFL system for 11 years. He is a family man with a lovely wife and 5 kids, with his passion lying in "Inclusion". Luke is very supportive of our Events and Fundraisers and has been our MC at various Wombat's Wish events over the last few years. His extensive experience, genuine passion for our cause, and innate talent for engaging audiences, truly elevate our events and create unforgettable experiences for all attendees.

WHO ARE WE?



BOARD MEMBER

Raghu

Dr Raghu Baburaj completed his primary medical education in India. He moved to the UK in 2002 and trained in Psychiatry. He qualified with MRCPsych and also completed a CCT (Certificate of Specialist training) in Intellectual Disability (ID) recognised by the Royal College of Psychiatrists (UK). He worked as an Inpatient Consultant and rehabilitation Consultant for people with ID in the UK from 2011-2019. He also managed epilepsy for people with ID in the UK as part of a joint working initiative with the Neurologist. He trained in diagnostic instruments such as ADI-R, Abbreviated DISCO and ADOS which are validated tools used in the diagnosis of ASD and used his experience to diagnose Adults with Autism and manage their co-morbidities as appropriate. He has a few publications on ID / Epilepsy.

Following his move to Australia in 2019, he successfully completed his FRANZCP in 2021 and had a public appointment with Barwon Health Baburaj started a public ASD clinic within Barwon health and engaged in complex Neurodevelopment diagnosis for adult clients known to Community Mental Health Teams. This team was recognised by Barwon Health and won an award for innovative practice. He is currently working as a Psychiatrist with Mildura Mental Health and Well-being services and Private work in Rural Victoria . He is married with a 11 year old Son . He is passionate about care for people with Mental Illness and Neurodivergence. He enjoys Jogging , Cricket and Badminton in his spare time.

WHO ARE WE?



STAFF MEMBER

Mel – Administration

Mel has been a support worker for over 4 years. Passionate about empowering individuals, she is involved in helping clients achieve their goals and live fulfilling lives. As a patient and empathetic listener, Mel is known for her ability to build strong, trusting relationships with clients and their families. Mel started working at Wombat's Wish in February 2025 to job-share the Administration position. Her interpersonal skills and contribution to the team are highly valued. Outside of work, Mel enjoys spending time outdoors, camping, netball, learning new things and spending time with her family and friends. Married with 2 Children (13 & 11), Mel loves living in a small community and being a part of most sports in the area.



REGISTERED PSYCHOLOGIST

Rachel

Rachel is a registered Psychologist, currently completing the Clinical Registrar program, she has completed a Masters in Clinical Psychology. Rachel has been volunteering with Wombats Wish since 2018 at our weekend grief camps.

Rachel has experience in public and private mental health settings as well as drug and alcohol support, she currently works 4 days a week in a private practice and sees clients with a range of presenting concerns including but not limited to mood and anxiety disorders, adjustment disorders, behavioral difficulties, neurodevelopmental disorders, eating disorders, trauma presentations and grief and loss.

Rachel has a passion for working with children, adolescents and their families and places a large emphasis on building connection, rapport and trust with her clients. She attends our weekend grief programs and provides 1:1 counselling to children and families grieving a death of a parent/carers on Fridays.

RE-CONNECT IN THE NEW YEAR!

The new year can be an exciting one but also confusing for children to navigate after having experienced a death a parent. Here are some tips on how to reconnect in the new year:

1. Acknowledge your grief

Allow yourself to feel the emotions that may arise and remember your loved one by honouring their memory. You can do so in different ways, some examples might be to plant a tree, create a memory box, listen to your important person's favourite song.

2. Practice Self-compassion and Self-care

Prioritise your well-being through activities or hobbies that bring you joy. Be kind to yourself.

3. Reconnect with others and seek support

Spend time with friends and family who understand your grief and provide support. Connect with people that have experienced a death of a parent and can provide comfort and validation to you.

4. Remember that grief is a process

Always be kind to yourself and listen to you feelings and emotions. Seek out help from family, friends or organisations when needed.



CASH FOR CANS

Choose Wombat's Wish as your dedicated charity.

We've signed up to be a part of Victoria's container deposit scheme (CDS) to support recycling and the reduction of litter within our community.

CDS Vic will reward participants with a 10 cent refund for every eligible beverage container returned through the scheme.

If you'd like to, you can donate your container refunds to Wombat's Wish:
<https://cdsvic.org.au/donating>

Thank you!



COUNSELLING CORNER



BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUPS 2025

Walking Group and Coffee Group

You are invited to get together with others to enjoy a walk or cuppa and have access to some friendly support.

These groups are an opportunity for bereaved carers to get together with other people who have been through a similar experience within the past 12 months. These groups run all year round and you are welcome to join at any time!

The groups are a welcoming space where people are treated with kindness, respect and dignity.

There are two monthly groups available:

Coffee group at 10am on the 1st Tuesday of every month. Meet at Le Fleur Cafe, 58 Hesse Street, Queenscliff.

Walking group at 10am on the 3rd Tuesday of every month. Meet near the coffee van in the carpark at Lorne Lake Reserve Drysdale.

Coffee Group	Walking Group
January No group	January No group
Feb 4	Feb 18
March 4	March 18
April 1	April 15
May 6	May 20
June 3	June 17
July 1	July 15
August 5	August 16
Sept 2	Sept 16
October 7	October 21
Nov 4	Nov 18
Dec No group	Dec No group

For those interested in walking group:

The group is facilitated by our Compassionate Hearts on the Bellarine volunteers. The group typically meets at 10am and takes a varying route from there, we always stop for a coffee at some point along the way.

For those interested in coffee:

The group meets with the Compassionate Hearts on the Bellarine volunteers at a nearby café instead of walking. This provides a chance for carers to chat over a coffee at some of Bellarine Peninsula local cafés.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN ATTENDING EITHER GROUP,

PLEASE RING:

Marita or Barbara, Volunteer Coordinator:
Compassionate Hearts
0499 775 275
adm.chob@gmail.com

When booking in please ensure we have your contact details in case of any updates

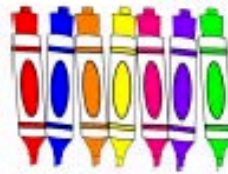
COUNSELLING CORNER

Teen Corner

- ✕ *Listen to music*, create a playlist that brings you comfort.
- ✕ *Check in with friends*, phone, chat or maybe schedule a virtual party.
- ✕ *Cook or bake* something new, maybe something the person who died enjoyed.
- ✕ *Write a letter* to the person who died, telling them about what is going on right now and how it is affecting you. If comfortable share with your family or friends.

Creative Expression

Comfort Posters



Create a poster with things that bring you comfort.

Include words, symbols, images, and memories of things that give you comfort, and add to it over time. Materials: Large piece of paper or poster board, pens, markers, magazines, glue/

Memorial idea

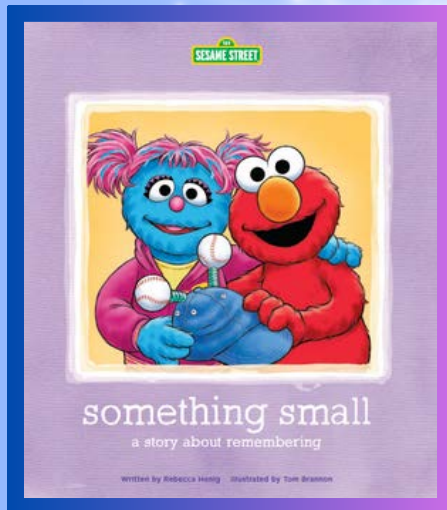
Memory Charades

Each family member will act out a memory they had with the person who died. Family members try to guess the memory.

Talk about why the person chose that memory, what are the thoughts and feelings they have about it. What are some thoughts and feelings other family members have?



COUNSELLING CORNER



**Show children that even
a small memory can
help us remember loved
ones.**

1. Cuddle up together and read *Something Small*, in which Elmo's cousin Jesse has recently lost her daddy.
2. After you read, talk about the small things children remember about their loved one. It might be his hair, her smile, his favorite shirt, or a favorite game they played together.
3. Invite children to draw on small slips of paper. They can use crayons or markers to draw pictures of the "small things" they remember about their loved one (such as her eyes, his favorite sandwich, his hands, her favorite flower). They can also dictate to you what to write on their drawing.
4. Together, place the slips of paper in different places, such as in children's backpacks, on top of a dresser, or next to their bed. Throughout the day, the tiny drawings will remind children of their loved one, and may offer some small comfort.

OUR AMAZING DONORS

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Bronze



Geelong Street Rodders



Donor



Rosemary
Norman
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DRYSDALE

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Geelong
Community
Foundation

Giving. Forever.

Community
Bank



TOBIN BROTHERS FOUNDATION



GEELONG
CEMETERIES TRUST
Caring for our Communities

Clifton Springs Golf Club



OUR AMAZING DONORS

HAYDEN

A big thank you to Hayden for his donations to Wombat's Wish. Each year Hayden decides to support a charity he is passionate about and collects funds to help fund the charity. We are extremely humbled that Hayden chose to support Wombat's wish as his chosen charity in 2024!



"I donate money to a different charity each year. I have a system where I split my money into 'saving, spending and giving'. Hayden says that he first heard about Wombat's Wish only very recently; "When I looked it up online, I saw that it was a local charity that aims to make a difference in the community. I really liked that, and decided to donate to Wombat's Wish."

Kindness
=MATTERS=

SUPPORT



A group of wombats together is called a wisdom. And the important work and services that we provide for bereaved children and families, is made possible by our very own 'wisdom' of Wombat's Wish donors and supporters.

We'd love to invite you, and your friends and family, to become a part of Wombat's Wisdom. A donation of \$100 per year – less than \$2 a week – goes a long way to helping Wombat's Wish provide support to more than a hundred families across Victoria waiting to join our weekend grief programs. Currently, Wombat's Wish is one of the only specialist services in Victoria for children who have had a parent or carer die, and our weekend programs are an essential part of making sure that they don't go through that experience feeling alone.

Through our GiveNow campaign, our goal is to grow our Wombat's Wisdom to 300 members in 2024. This number fully funds an entire weekend grief camp for parentally bereaved children and their families, helping them move forward and take the next steps on their bereavement journey.

Join our Wisdom!

You can click the link to go to our GiveNow page:

<https://www.givenow.com.au/wombats-wisdom>

Or you can donate directly through our webpage, at:

www.wombatswish.org.au/donate – make sure you put 'Wombat's Wisdom' as your reference! You can also:

- Use the 'Share Cause' button on the Wombat's Wisdom GiveNow page
- Share our Wombat's Wisdom social media posts on your Facebook, Instagram, or LinkedIn pages

Every bit helps to grow our Wisdom! At the end of this newsletter you'll find more information about donating to Wombat's Wish as part of a group or workplace

SUPPORT



Wombat's Wish only survives with financial support from people just like you, and your kind donations.

We do not receive any Government funding and we do not charge for the services we provide to children, young people, and their families.

Wombat's Wish was established as a charity in 2005 and is predominantly operated by community volunteers. We are a registered Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR), this means every donation over \$2 is tax deductible for the donor.

Every dollar donated goes towards providing direct services and support to a child in grief.

Can your workplace or organisation help support Wombat's Wish through corporate sponsorship? We'd love to hear from you.

Email nicki@wombatswish.org.au for a corporate sponsorship prospectus.

*Thank
you!*



SUPPORT

Visit our website www.wombatswish.org.au to find useful tools and resources to support your grief journey:

- Weekend Grief Program Brochure
- Youth Program Brochure
- 1:1 Counselling Flyer
- Community Information Pack
- Quarterly Newsletters



USEFUL ORGANISATIONS

- Kids help line
- Life line
- Beyond Blue
- Headspace Geelong
- Hope Bereavement Care
- Compassionate Friends
- Grief Australia

www.kidshelpline.com

www.lifeline.org.au

www.beyondblue.org.au

www.headspace.org.au

www.bereavement.org.au

www.compassionatefriendsvictoria.org.au

www.grief.org.au

USEFUL WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Winston's Wish
- Good Grief
- Grieflink
- The National Centre for Childhood Grief
- Support after Suicide
- Hope for Life Suicide Prevention and Bereavement Support

www.winstonswish.org

www.good-grief.com.au

www.grieflink.org.au

www.childhoofgrief.org.au

www.supportaftersuicide.org.au

www.salvationarmy.org.au/need-help/professional-counselling-and-bereavement/

SUPPORT



CALL

03 9069 0314

0499 966 228



EMAIL

info@wombatswish.org.au



WEBSITE

www.wombatswish.org.au



SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook: [@WombatsWish](https://www.facebook.com/WombatsWish)

Instagram: [@wombatswish](https://www.instagram.com/wombatswish)

LinkedIn: Wombat's Wish



OFFICE HOURS

Monday, 9am - 2pm

Tuesday, 9am - 2pm

Wednesday, 9am - 2pm