

Wombat's Wish Newsletter

Summer 2024



Message from the General Manager

Welcome families and friends to our final newsletter of 2024. It has been a massive year for Wombat's Wish. We have facilitated 7 family weekend grief programs, 4 family days, launched our 1:1 counselling and online support lounges, completed 1 youth weekend grief program, held our fundraising gala and our first Wombat's Walk, guest spoken at many community organisations and service clubs, presented at the International social work conference, completed a research project on our current programs and made relevant updates, met over 100 new families and inducted 20 new volunteers!

Our annual general meeting was held in October and I am excited to welcome 4 new board members. Tara our new Chairperson, Ragu our Clinical Lead, Amy in HR and Luke General Board Position. We will introduce them in our next newsletter.

We also said farewell to Marnie and Greg and thank them for their service and support to Wombat's Wish. Casey our outgoing Chairperson is taking maternity leave to welcome her second child and we wish her well and can't wait to have her back on board late 2025.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our amazing office team, Jill, Suzy, Annika, Fran and Steve that work over and above for Wombat's Wish - their passion and dedication shines through every day.

I wish all of you a safe and happy Xmas as I know this may be a difficult time for some so please reach out if we can help in anyway. I look forward to catching up or meeting new friends in 2025.

The office will be closed from the 18th December 2024 to the 28th January 2025. Emails and calls will be monitored during this time, however in an emergency please refer to agencies listed below.

Nicki Dunne
General Manager
Operations, Programs and Partnerships

What's in this issue:

WHAT'S NEW

- Wombat's Walk
- Programs

WHO ARE WE?

- Client Reviews

FEATURE

COUNSELLING CORNER

- Grief Exercise

SUPPORT

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

WHAT'S NEW?

WIND, RAIN AND SUNSHINE - WE'VE GONE THROUGH IT ALL AT OUR WOMBAT'S WALK FUNDRAISER!

Despite the weather, we managed to come together for some food, music, fun entertainment, raffle and laughter.

We would like to express our thanks to all market stalls, donors, sponsors, musicians Shane and Alex, Drysdale Osteo, Burke Britton Financial Partners, Lions Club, Jamie and Kim's zoo, Nicholas the Ridiculous, the Portarlington Cricket Club and the wider Wombat's Wish team for attending and supporting each other. And congratulations to Liam for running 50 laps on the day!

Together we raised over \$50,000! We can't express how grateful we are for the love and support shown to Wombat's Wish and our families. We can't wait to host the Wombat's Walk again next year – let's hope for some better weather next time though 🙌🍀



WHAT'S NEW?

1:1 COUNSELLING

1:1 Counselling online via telehealth and in person is now 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?

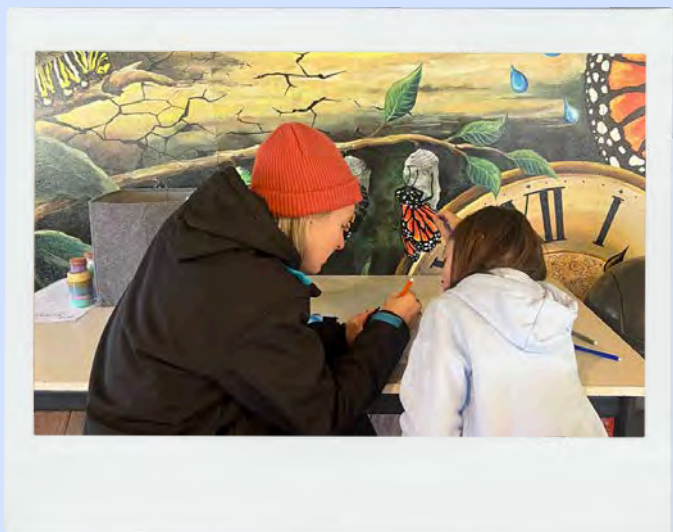
ONLINE LOUNGES

To further support families after having attended a Weekend Grief Program, Wombat's Wish will re-introduce separate Online Lounges for parents/carers, young people and children in 2025.

Facilitated by a qualified grief practitioners, the Online Lounges will provide parents/carers, young people and children with the opportunity to not only connect with our team and other families regardless of where they live in Victoria, but also offers a great chance to explore their grief journey further and discuss any issues or concerns.

The sessions will be informal and allow families to join whenever they feel the need to.

More information on how to register will be sent to you in the new year when we re-launch the online sessions - Keep an eye out!



WHAT'S NEW?

WEEKEND GRIEF PROGRAM FOR FAMILIES

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. Since Autumn we've held one in June in Grantville and one in August in Queenscliff, and the last one for the year November in Queenscliff

SNAPSHOTS FROM WYUNA QUEENSCLIFF (NOVEMBER 2024)



UPCOMING WEEKEND GRIEF PROGRAMS IN 2025:

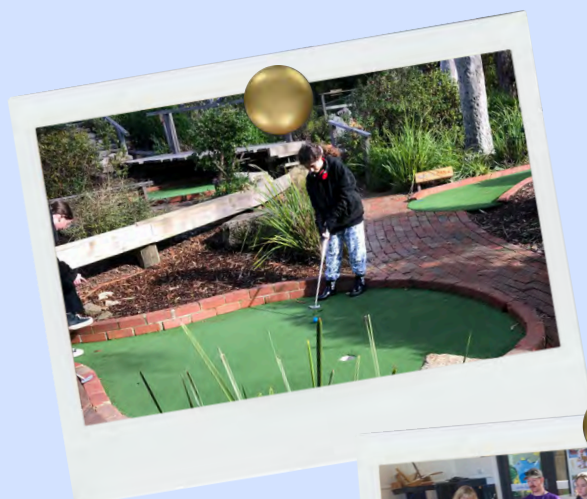
- Wyuna - Family Program - 21st to 23rd March 2025
- Corop - Family Program - 16th to 18th May 2025
- Grantville - Family Program - 20th to 22nd June 2025

WHAT'S NEW?

YOUTH WEEKEND GRIEF PROGRAM

Our Youth Weekend Grief Programs are held once a year in Queenscliff at Cottage by the Sea. Our latest one was held on the 19 - 21st July 2024 for young people aged 12 - 17 years old, where they worked through a mixture of evidence based and fun activities with our experienced team of youth workers and volunteers. The Youth Program is there to support young people with building rapport and to support their grief journey.

SNAPSHOTS FROM QUEENSCLIFF (JULY 2024)



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 OUR PREVIOUS FAMILY FUN DAY AT INFLATABLE WORLD DURING CHILDREN'S AWARENESS WEEK (OCTOBER 2024)



JOINS US FOR OUR UPCOMING FAMILY FUN DAYS:

- Christmas Family Day – 8th December 2024
- Christmas in Lara – 20th December 2024

WHO ARE WE?

SPECIAL MOMENTS & FEEDBACK FROM OUR CLIENTS

“

I'm just emailing to express my gratitude in regards to the support that Wombats Wish offered me when I was younger.

At the age of 5, back in 2005, my mother passed away. As a child it was an extremely confusing and confronting time of my life. Truthfully, I don't remember much surrounding the immediate time surrounding her death.

What I do remember however, was the support that Wombats Wish provided to myself, my brother, and my father, at the time. I don't doubt that I would be a completely different person than what I am now if it wasn't for the support that Wombats Wish offered. Wombats Wish provided a safe space for myself to process through the grieving period after my mothers death, it provided me with tactics and mechanisms that I used, and still do, to deal with situations like that. The camps themselves I still hold fond memories of, they were fun and healing as a child. Not only that, but I still do keep in contact with some people I met from those camps. I have fond memories of the support workers and volunteers at those camps, how understanding and kind they were at what can be the most vulnerable time in someones life.

Words can't really describe how thankful I am to Wombats Wish. I am thankful to all the volunteers and Jill, providing an invaluable service to the community.

– Shayden

”

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL WORK IN HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH

Our founder Jill and counsellor Frances were invited to attend the International Conference on Social Work in Health and Mental Health in November at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre.

It was a wonderful opportunity for Wombat's Wish to meet with other like-minded professionals and showcase our support services outside of the Bellarine, to families across all of Victoria.

Well done Fran and Jill, and thank you to the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) for having us!





HOW TO PREPARE FOR CHRISTMAS

Are you caring for a bereaved child this Christmas? It may help to:

- **Plan ahead for how to spend the day. What feels right for you now?**

This might change year by year. It's okay to want to celebrate, or to want to avoid the day altogether, or something in between.

- **Be mindful of social media use.**

Curated, filtered images of other family celebrations may not be helpful at this time. For some people, it may feel right to post an online tribute, but for others a digital detox might make the day more manageable.

- **You don't have to skip cards or gifts if you don't want to.**

You could also write a letter, update your memory box or create some art.

- **Link in with friends or family who knew your important person.**

Share a memory or story about your important person, listen to their favourite music or watch their favourite movie together.

- **Take time out for self-care.**

This may include having extra support services on call - it's what they're here for.

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wombatswish.org.au

Find support

Wombat's Wish: www.wombatswish.org.au or facebook.com/wombatswish
BeyondBlue: 1300 22 4636 or beyondblue.org.au/support-service/chat
Support After Suicide: 03 4215 3358 or bereavement.org.au/grief-support
Suiceline: 1300 651 251
Compassionate Friends: 1300 064 068 or compassionatefriendsvictoria.org.au
First Light Widowed Association: firstlight.org.au

Resources with online chat support

Grief Australia: 03 9265 2100 or griefline.org.au
Mensline: mensline.org.au - for boys/men aged 15 and above
Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800 - for kids and young people aged 5-25 years
Lifeline: 13 11 14 or SMS 0477 13 11 14 or www.lifeline.org.au
HeadSpace: headspace.org.au/online-and-phone-support/

WOMBAT'S WISH



NEW YEAR & OFFICE CLOSURE OVER THE HOLIDAYS

From changing office locations, welcoming new staff and board members, conducting 7 weekend grief programs to hosting our first Wombat's Walk Fundraiser, the year's been filled with many memories.

We enjoyed meeting new families and are always excited to see familiar faces. Thank you to our wonderful families, donors and sponsors for their contribution and support this year. We look forward to welcoming you back in the new year.

Wishing everyone a safe start to the new year!

Please note that our office will be closed from the 18th December 2024 to the 28th January 2025!



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!



BUNNINGS JANUARY 2025 SAUSAGE SIZZLE

Come say hi and grab a sausage at our Leopold Bunnings Sausage Sizzle on the 5th of January 2025.

Wombat's Wish will also have some resources, services, merchandise as well as sponsorship booklets available for you to take home on the day too.

Whether you're a family that has experienced a parental death and are looking for some grief support, or an individual looking to make a positive difference within our community – we look forward to seeing you then!

Feel free to spread the word and come by for a chat!



COUNSELLING CORNER

Write the name of someone in your life who has an illness or has died...

Then, write down words, sentences or phases that remind you of the person, using the letters of the name.

Examples:

Outrageous

Loving

Kind

Silly

Mighty

And

Intelligent

And

Attentive

Never

Neat

Rowdy

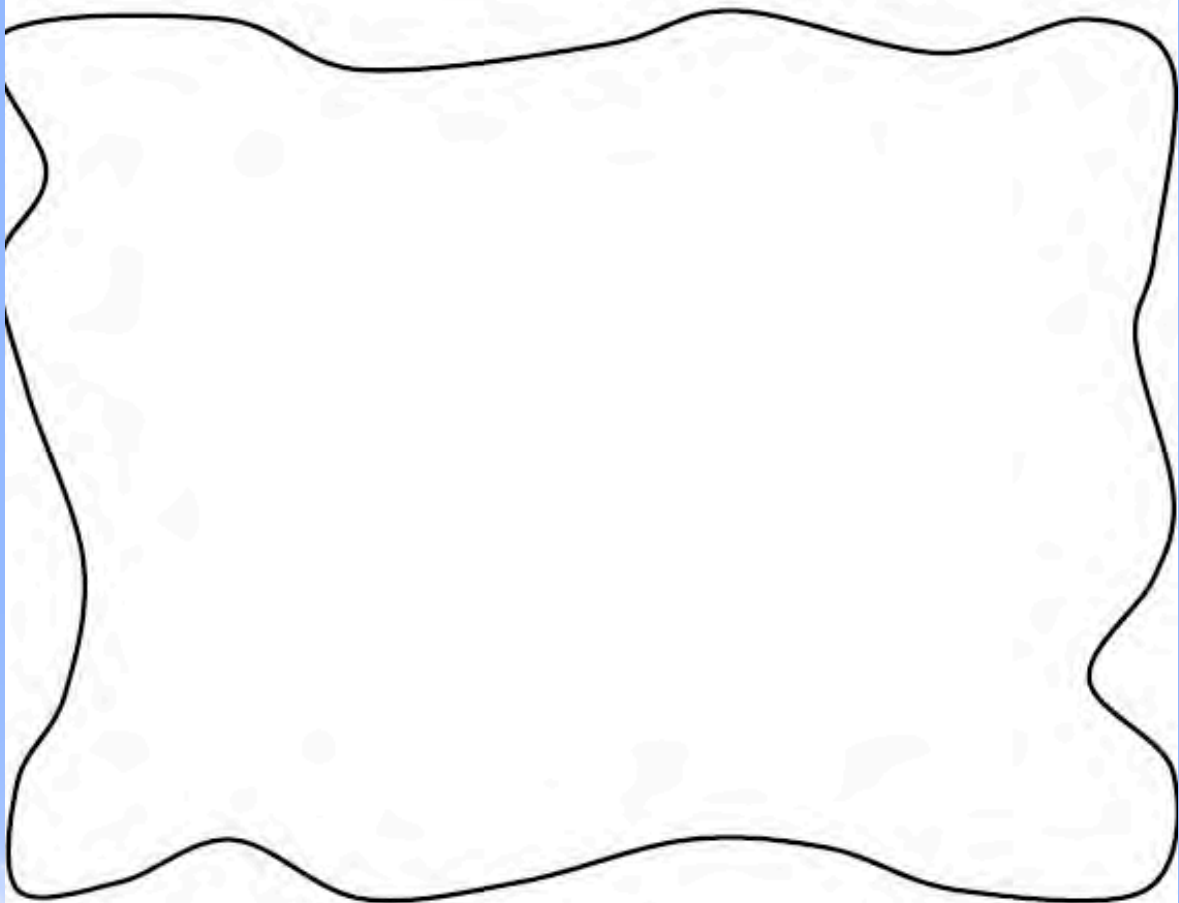
Runner

Angry

Griller

Always

Happy



OUR AMAZING DONORS

Platinum



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Bronze



Drysdale Clinic



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BIKE CLUB
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DRYSDALE
REMOVALS
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BELMONT
TIMBER Trade Centre



Rosemary
Norman
Foundation

Rotary



RSL
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BELLARINE FLOORING
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William
Sheahan
Funerals 5251 3477



The Uniting Church in Australia
DRYSDALE

Successful Grants



APCO
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Fuel for a Cause



Anthony Costa
Foundation



Geelong
Community
Foundation
Giving. Forever.



Community
Bank



CITY OF GREATER
GEELONG



GEELONG
CEMETERIES TRUST
Caring for our Communities



Sisters of Charity
of Australia



TOBIN BROTHERS FOUNDATION

Clifton Springs Golf Club

OUR AMAZING DONORS

SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS YEAR'S DONATIONS AND SPONSORSHIPS...



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