

Wombat's Wish Newsletter

Spring 2025



Dear Families, Sponsors, and Friends of Wombat's Wish, welcome to our spring newsletter!

As the chill of winter lifts and the first signs of spring begin to bloom, we're excited to bring you the fresh energy of the season in this month's newsletter.

September marks a time of renewal, growth, and forward momentum — and we've packed this issue with our upcoming programs and fundraisers, our latest weekend grief programs and family days, insights into special celebrations, book recommendations and grief exercises, as well as any client feedback and donations received within the last quarter to match the mood.

Whether you're here for inspiration, information, or just a quick catch-up, we hope this edition brings a little extra warmth to your day.

Let's dive in.

What's in this issue:

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WHAT'S NEW?



**12 OCTOBER, 2025
10:00 AM TO 3PM**

Portarlinton
Cricket Club,
Sproat Street
Portarlinton

WOMBAT'S WALK FUNDRAISER

Make a difference – Join our Fundraiser this year!

Wombat's Wish supports children and young people who have had a parent die. Every year, we host a Wombat's Walk Fundraiser for our community to browse through some stalls, enjoy the live music, food, kid's fun rides, walk for their important person and more to help us raise funds to support families grieving the death of a parent.

This is how you can help:

- Join our fundraiser and walk your laps: Collect sponsors for each lap or km you complete.
- Form a team: Ask friends or colleagues to walk in memory of an important person.
- Crowdfund: Create a fundraiser for your laps using the QR code below and share on social media.
- Talk to your school or work about joining our Walk or holding an event in the weeks prior to raise funds for Wombat's Wish.

Can't attend?

Walk anywhere, anytime and text your laps to 0499 966 228 or make a donation at www.givenow.com.au/2025-walk or via direct debit.



WHAT'S NEW?



THIS IS HOW YOU CAN JOIN OUR WALK

- Download our sponsor sheet or create a crowd fundraiser
- Find sponsors to support each lap you make
- Join us on the 12th October to run/walk your laps
- Write down your laps/km's made and share this with us

Download your sponsor sheet here:

https://mcusercontent.com/6e24a28754133dd10ec69d345/files/23fd7baf-bf12-035d-6704-ea42ff7e222e/Sponsor_Sheet_for_Wombat_039_s_Walk_2025.pdf

To create a crowd fundraiser, click here:

<https://www.givenow.com.au/2025-walk>

WHAT'S NEW?

A REMINDER OF OUR UPCOMING EVENTS AND WEEKEND GRIEF PROGRAMS IN 2025!

CAMPS 2025

21st to 23rd November 2025

Camp Wyuna

Family Camp

FAMILY DAYS 2025

8th December 2025

Xmas – Serendip Sanctuary Lara

EVENTS

12th October 2025

Wombat's Walk – Portarlinton Cricket Club (@10am)

11th November 2025

AGM – Empire Grill (@7pm)



WHAT'S NEW?



Wombat's Wish 2026 Time Table

Weekend Grief Programs

- 13th to 15th February 2026 - Family WGP - Corop
- 27th to 29th March 2026 - Family WGP - Queenscliff
- June 2026 - Family WGP - Bass Coast
- 21st 23rd August 2026 - Family WGP - Queenscliff
- 27th to 29th November 2026 - Youth WGP - Queenscliff

Family Days and Events

- 18th April 2026 - Family Day
- 21st June 2026 - Family Day
- July 2026 - Wombat's Wish 21st Birthday
- 11th October 2026 - Wombat's Walk
- November 2026 - WW Annual General Meeting
- 13th December 2026 - Family Day



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.

SNAPSHOTS FROM THE QUEENSCLIFF WYUNA WEEKEND GRIEF PROGRAM IN AUGUST



UPCOMING FAMILY GRIEF PROGRAM:

- 21st to 23rd November 2025 at Queenscliff Wyuna

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 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.

SNAPSHOT OF OUR FAMILY DAY AT GEELONG MEMORIAL PARK IN JULY 2025



JOINS US FOR OUR UPCOMING FAMILY FUN DAYS:

- 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

- Rachel - Psychologist
- Frances - Mental Health Social Worker

The office is open Monday to Wednesday 9am to 2pm

BOARD

- Chair
- David - Vice Chair
- Simone - Treasurer
- Jo - Secretary
- Raghu - Board member
- Peter - Board member
- Hannah - Board member
- Amy - Board member
- Luke - Board member
- Tara - Board member



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

WHO ARE WE?



TREASURER - SIMONE

How long have you been volunteering at Wombat's Wish and what's your role?

This is my second-year volunteering as Treasurer on the Board of Wombat's Wish.

Why do you volunteer for Wombat's Wish and what do you enjoy the most about it?

It's nice to be part of a charity that gives back so unconditionally to the community. What I enjoy most is seeing the dedication and enthusiasm that board members, staff, and volunteers bring — it's truly inspiring. The passion shared by so many people involved with Wombat's Wish is incredible.

Best or funniest memory you can recall about one of Wombat's Wish's Weekend Grief Program?

The inaugural Wombat's Wish Walk! Just as the event was starting, the wind suddenly picked up — vendor stalls were flying, the jumping castle had to be taken down, and for a moment it looked like it could be a disaster. But instead, everyone banded together, quickly moved everything indoors, and it turned out to be an incredibly successful fundraiser. It really showed the resilience and teamwork that defines Wombat's Wish.



WHO ARE WE?



TREASURER - SIMONE

What would you say to someone thinking about volunteering for Wombat's Wish? Do it! You'll be joining a warm, passionate team that truly makes a difference in the lives of grieving children and families. Whether you're helping behind the scenes or on the ground, every role contributes to something powerful. It's a chance to give back in a meaningful way and be part of a supportive community doing incredible work. The team is supportive, the work is deeply rewarding, and every small act of kindness contributes to helping families heal. If you're compassionate, patient, and want to be part of something that truly matters, volunteering here can be life-changing — not just for those you help, but for you too.

What do you do outside of Volunteering? I'm an accountant by profession, but you'll usually find me running around after my two children! I enjoy being outdoors and love going camping whenever I can — it's a great way to unwind and spend quality time with family.

Any hidden talents that you can share with us? I do have a talent for chatting! I love meeting new people and can strike up a conversation with just about anyone. If talking were a sport, I'd definitely be in the running for a medal!



WHO ARE WE?

MEET OUR TEAM

GENERAL MANAGER - NICKI

How long have you been volunteering at Wombat's Wish and what's your role? I have been at Wombat's Wish for 5 years as the General Manager

Why do you volunteer for Wombat's Wish and what do you enjoy the most about it? I love everything about Wombat's Wish, most of all I love that we are able to support children and young people through their grief during their hardest days.

Best or funniest memory you can recall about one of Wombat's Wish's Weekend Grief Program? I have so many funny moments most of them are the ones that I create to entertain the team. Two come to mind – my first camp with Wombat's Wish we had a plague of giant bogong moths and Bec my offsider was terrified. One started to attack her and she was running through camp stripping off all of her clothes, waking up the whole camp with her screams. The second one was when Freeman was demonstrating how to do the minute to win it games and accidentally flew 12 plastic cups into a child standing near by (The child was not hurt).

What would you say to someone thinking about volunteering for Wombat's Wish? Join us! It is a supportive environment and everyone is welcomed as part of our team. You will make a difference in the lives of parentally bereaved children.

What do you do outside of Volunteering? I volunteer within a couple of local community organisations and sporting clubs, most of all I love to spend time with my family and friends and going to the Otways. I also love the road trips we have been on exploring Australia.

Any hidden talents that you can share with us? I think my hidden talent is the ability to make people laugh, often at me. I also have been told that I have a hidden talent of engaging with young people getting them to talk and enabling them a safe, non judgemental space to seek help.



WHO ARE WE?



COUNSELLOR - FRAN

How long have you been volunteering at Wombat's Wish and what's your role?

I volunteered for about 6 months in 2023 then I have been employed as the social worker to provide 1:1 counselling since February 2024.

Why do you volunteer for Wombat's Wish and what do you enjoy the most about it? I find it an incredible opportunity to be with parents and children as they talk about hard stuff but also have a lot of fun and connection, so I enjoy the chats, the food and the appearance of Freeman bringing laughs.

Best or funniest memory you can recall about one of Wombat's Wish's Weekend Grief Program? I can remember having to be shaken awake by another volunteer on Sunday morning as I slept in til 10 to 8 am! But the previous morning I had been up swimming in the beach at Wyuna at 7am.

What would you say to someone thinking about volunteering for Wombat's Wish? I think it is a great chance to meet new people including amazing families and committed volunteer pals, while having fun and doing meaningful support.

What do you do outside of Volunteering? I volunteer with Coastcare planting trees and with refugee support; and spend my time hanging at the beach including winter dips sometimes, enjoy movies, books, and seeing friends and family in city, beach and bush locales. I also work in private practice counselling.

Any hidden talents that you can share with us?

I like to write and have had some articles published.



WHO ARE WE?

SPECIAL MOMENTS & FEEDBACK FROM OUR CLIENTS

Thank you to the incredible [@wombatswish](#) team for welcoming us with such warmth on our very first Grief Camp this weekend. You not only created a safe space for us to simply be in our grief, but you held us with such compassion, understanding and kindness through every moment.

Walking into a room full of grieving families was daunting. The thought of sitting among people who had also experienced such deep loss felt heavy and overwhelming. What then became something so powerful and unexpectedly beautiful.

To sit with others who just understand without needing to explain, without judgement, without comparison was such a gift. Grief is different for every single person, and yet there's a shared thread that binds us in ways words can't describe. It was both heartbreaking and deeply comforting to connect with others who get it.

One of the most powerful parts was seeing the kids spend time with other children who have gone through similar losses. To watch them laugh, connect, and realise they're not alone in this was truly special. It gave them a sense of belonging that's so hard to find outside of spaces like this.

Leaving camp and returning to the outside world was harder than I imagined. When you're surrounded by people who truly understand no matter how long it has been, no matter how your loss happened there's a sense of belonging in the unspoken. And stepping back into reality reminds you just how rare and precious that kind of understanding really is.

I would never have crossed paths with the incredible Wombat's Wish team, or the beautiful people we met this weekend, if it weren't for the heartbreaking cards we've been dealt. It's one of those bittersweet truths something so painful led us to something so meaningful.

If you know anyone who has experienced the death of a parent, carer, or guardian, I cannot recommend the Wombat's Wish team enough. They create a space of compassion and understanding that words can't fully capture.

•
- Chloe

WHO ARE WE?

SPECIAL MOMENTS & FEEDBACK FROM OUR CLIENTS



- Chloe

AGM - SAVE THE DATE

Wombat's Wish is holding its Annual General Meeting for the 2024/2025 Financial Year.

Presentation of financials, operations, and election of the Wombat's Wish Board, followed by a celebration of thanks.

Drinks and finger food provided

Date: 11th November 2025

Time: 7PM

Venue: Empire Grill

66 McKillop St, Geelong VIC 3220





THANK YOU - BEARFEET IMPRESSIONS!

We are deeply moved and immensely grateful to **Lucy from Bearfeet Impressions** for her extraordinary \$10,000 donation. Your generosity is not just a gift — it's a powerful statement of hope, compassion, and belief in the work we do. Because of you, we can continue making a difference in the lives of those who need it most. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you. ♥

For those interested to learn more about Bearfeet Impressions, Lucy is the owner and has been capturing memories for over 17 years. Bearfeet Impressions understands the importance of family and believe every moment spent with loved ones is precious - especially in those early years: <https://bearfeetimpressions.com.au/>



WOMBAT'S WISH'S 20TH BIRTHDAY

In July 2025 Wombat's Wish turned 20!!! 🎂🎉

Established in 2005 by our founder and local psychologist, Jill Crookes, Wombat's Wish has grown into an established charity supporting families and children across Victoria with their grief.

Over the last year, we've introduced a variety of new resources to continue to enhance our services and support to families. Here are some of our best highlights of the year:

- moved into our new office on 3 Dumburra Avenue in Clifton Springs
- updated our Community Information Pack for Schools to navigate and support children experiencing grief
- held our second Planting Session at Geelong Memorial Park
- introduced new activities and coping strategies into our Weekend Grief Program
- and so much more...

Thank you for all of the support we've received thus far, we hope to continue to grow our support to families in need of grief support. 🐨💙



BE PART OF OUR WISDOM!



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.

Through our GiveNow campaign, our goal is to grow our Wombat's Wisdom to 300 members in 2025 to fully fund an entire weekend grief program for parentally bereaved children and their families.

So what are you waiting for? Get involved and be a part of our wisdom:

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

Our team and families thank you in advance for your contribution! 🍷💙💜

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:

<https://wombatswish.org.au/donate/donate-support> 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

COUNSELLING CORNER

Children are concrete in their thinking

Children generalize from the specific to the general

Children are repetitive in their grief

Children are physical in their grief

Children grieve cyclically

Children need choices

Children grieve as part of a family

Children's feelings are their allies

Children's grief is intertwined with normal developmental tasks

There are Key Tasks of Mourning in Children and Teens

1. Children are concrete in their thinking:

In order to lessen their confusion, use the words "death" and "dying." Describe death concretely. Answer their questions simply and honestly without using euphemisms such as "passed on," "went to sleep," etc. You don't have to add a large number of details. Children will ask if they want to know more. You can see if they are listening because they want to, or if it is for your benefit (they seem agitated, fidgety, and give you little or no eye contact).

2. Children generalize from the specific to the general:

If someone died in a hospital, children think that hospitals are for the dying. If someone died in their sleep, children are afraid to go to sleep. If one person died, "someone (or everyone) else will die," or "I will die." They will learn to accommodate new truths on their own if they are allowed to express themselves and try things out (e.g., going to sleep and waking up alive).

3. Children are repetitive in their grief:

Children may ask questions repetitively. The answers often do not resolve their searching. The searching itself is a part of their grief work. Their questions are indicative of their confusion and uncertainty. Listen and support their searching by answering repetitively and/or telling the story over and over again.

4. Children are physical in their grief:

The older children are, the more capable they are of expressing themselves in words. Younger children simply ARE their feelings. What they do with their bodies speaks their feelings. Grief is a physical experience for all ages, but most especially for younger children. Watch their bodies and understand their play as their language of grief. Reflect their play verbally and physically so that they will feel that they are "being heard." For example, "You are bouncing, bouncing, bouncing on those pillows. Your face is red and you are yelling loudly."

5. Children grieve cyclically:

Their grief work goes in cycles throughout their childhood and their lives. Each time they reach a new developmental level, they reintegrate the important events of their lives, using their newly acquired processes and skills. Example: a three year old, upon losing her mother, will become absorbed in the death again when her language skills develop and as she is able to use words for the expressions of her feelings. She may re-experience the grief again as an adolescent, using her newly acquired cognitive skills of abstract thinking.

6. Children need choices:

Death is a disruption in children's lives that is quite frightening. Their lives will probably seem undependable, unstable, confusing, and out of control. Helping them to have some say in what they do or don't do to memorialize and remember the person who has died, and to decide on ways to express their feelings about the death, can be reassuring and relieve some of the anxiety they may be feeling.



COUNSELLING CORNER

*Let
children
and
teens
teach
you
about
their
grief.*

7. Children grieve as part of a family:

When a family member dies, it will affect the way the family functions as a whole. All the relationships within the family may shift, adjusting to this change in the family structure. Children will grieve for the person who died, as well as the environment in the family that existed before the death. Children may grieve over the changed behavior of family and friends. It is helpful if each family member is encouraged to grieve in his/her own way, with support for individual differences.

8. Children's feelings are their allies:

Feelings help children pay attention to their loss. Through this attention comes their own understanding about the death that they grieve. It is important not to shield children from their emotions and to let them know it's okay to show their feelings, and may actually help them feel better over time. Seeing adults express their feelings and model healthy ways of coping can have a major impact on children.

9. Children's grief is intertwined with normal developmental tasks:

It can be impossible to determine which behaviors are part of developmental phases and which are grief-related (e.g., "Is it adolescence or is it grief?"). However, experiencing a death does add complicating factors to the developmental process, and can be particularly challenging during adolescence. For adults who are helping grieving children and teens through particularly challenging periods of development and change, the best support is providing a steady, caring and attentive presence. Take your cues from your child and try to listen, validate, and accept where they are in their own grief.

10. Key Tasks of Mourning in Children and Teens:

- a. Understand the death and try to make sense of what happened.
- b. Express emotional and other strong responses to the loss.
- c. Commemorate the person who has died.
- d. Learn how to go on living and loving.

Let children and teens
teach you about their grief.

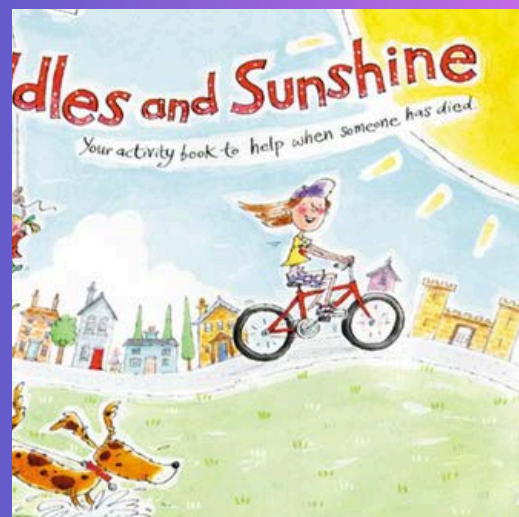
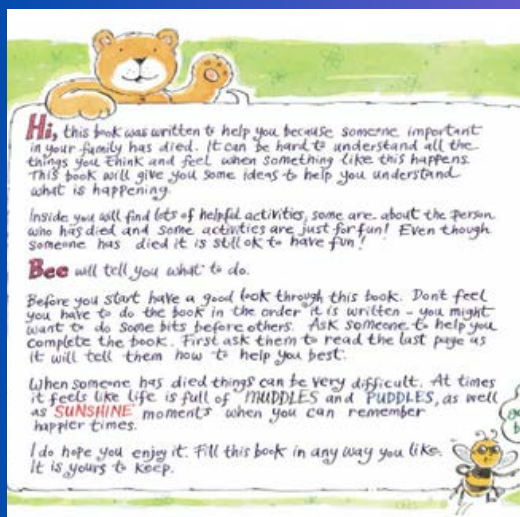
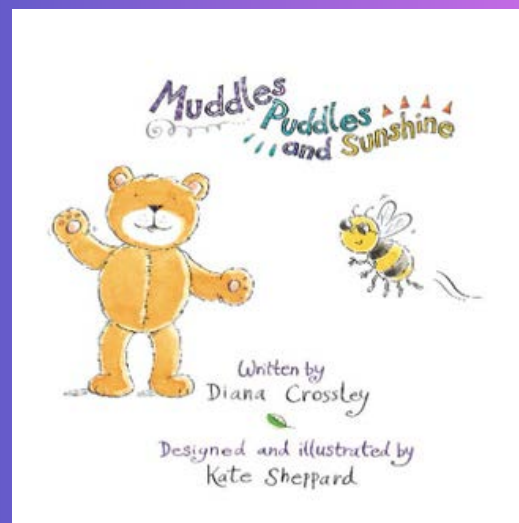
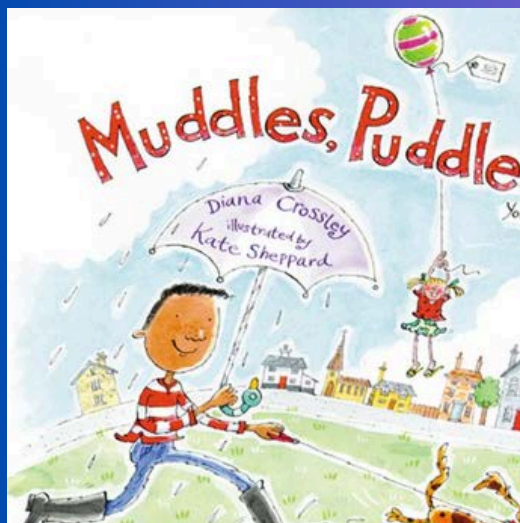


COUNSELLING CORNER

MUDDLES, PUDDLES AND SUNSHINE

Your Activity Book to help when someone has died.

This book offers a structure and an outlet for the many difficult feelings which inevitably follow when someone dies. It aims to help children make sense of their experience by reflecting on the different aspects of their grief, whilst finding a balance between remembering and having fun. This book is a useful companion in the present, and will become an invaluable keepsake in the years to come.



OUR AMAZING DONORS

Platinum



Gold



Silver



Bronze



Donor



Rosemary
Norman
Foundation



BRM
Environments



Successful Grants



Clifton Springs Golf Club

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