

# Wombats Wish Newsletter

Winter 2024



## Message from the Board

Wombat's Wish has started off the new financial year strongly with weekend programs for children and youth running during July and August. Additionally, our referral list keeps growing and its great to hear more families appreciating what we offer. As a team we would like to warmly welcome, Greg Collier to the Wombat's Wish board. Greg has been involved with Wombat's Wish for a number of years and facilitated the current strategy that the organisation is working towards. Welcome Greg.

Wombat's Wish has recently moved and now the burrow resides at 3 Dumbarra Ave, Clifton Springs. This new location will provide all support services required from WW in a friendly and accessible space.

At the time of writing, the board is looking forward to meet for its upcoming strategy day in late-August and planning is well underway for the AGM in October.

With plenty of exciting events planned through to the end of the year, keep an eye out how you and your family can be involved. As Wombat's Wish is a non-for-profit children's charity, please think about how you, your school or your organisation can support financially so we can continue to support more children across the state of Victoria.

**David Trott,**  
Wombat's Wish Vice Chair

## What's in this issue:

### WHAT'S NEW

- New Office Location
- Booking Fee
- FY 23/24 Recap
- Programs

### WHO ARE WE?

- Staff Introduction
- Client Reviews

### FEATURE

#### COUNSELLING CORNER

- Message from Bella
- Books
- Grief Exercise

### SUPPORT

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# WHAT'S NEW?

## WELCOME TO OUR NEW OFFICE!

3 Dumbarra Avenue, Clifton Springs

On the 1st August we said goodbye to our office in Drysdale and moved to 3 Dumbarra Avenue in Clifton Springs.

The bigger office space allows us to continue our services to families in need.

A big thank you to Drysdale Removals for helping us get everything sorted.

We're excited to have started this new chapter for Wombat's Wish and our families. Come say hi if you're in the area!



# WHAT'S NEW?



*Rebuilding the lives of children & young people after the death of a parent*

## WEEKEND GRIEF PROGRAM

### *Booking Fee*

Due to the high demand for referrals for our Family Weekend Grief program and our large waiting lists for this program, Wombat's Wish has introduced a FULLY REFUNDABLE pre-camp booking fee.

Upon your acceptance to the weekend grief program, a \$50 fee is required to secure your family's place on the designated weekend. Upon completion of the weekend and receipt of the post-6-8 week evaluation form, this fee will be fully refunded to your family.

If, for any reason, you need to reschedule your weekend program within 4 weeks of the scheduled date, we offer the flexibility to secure your place in a future camp with an additional \$50. Please note, the original booking fee is non-refundable. This policy is designed to ensure that you can still participate in our program at a time that suits your family best.

If you choose not to pay the booking fee, your referral will be placed into our pending families folder, and a program date will only be offered if we have had a cancellation; this may take many months or years.

This payment can be made via credit/debit card over the phone or direct deposit to our bank account. Our friendly staff will discuss this with you.

**Are there weekend grief programs in my area?** As Wombat's Wish continues to grow to fulfil demand, we currently facilitate 7-8 weekend camps across the state annually, our camp locations are Queenscliff (Bellarine Peninsula), Grantville (Bass Coast/ Eastern Victoria) and Corop (Goulburn Valley/ Northern & Central Victoria).

I \_\_\_\_\_ agree and accept the terms of the pre-weekend grief program booking fee and understand that I will receive a full refund, or I have the option to choose to donate the \$50 to Wombat's Wish on returning the 3 month post program survey.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Office Use: Weekend Grief Program date booked \_\_\_\_\_

Booking Fee paid YES NO

Credit Card or Direct Debit

*If you under financial hardship and are unable to pay this fee, please speak to one of our team to discuss further options.*

# WHAT'S NEW?



## OUR SUPPORT TO FAMILIES LAST FINANCIAL YEAR, 23/24

With the help of our sponsors, Wombat's Wish was able to support parentally bereaved children with their grief...

**14**

children have registered for our 1:1 Counselling program with our accredited social worker and psychologist

**4**

adults have registered for our 1:1 Counselling program

**63**

1:1 Counselling sessions were conducted last financial year

**6**

Online Support Lounges for parents, young people and children have been introduced this year and will be continued on a monthly basis

**276**

Grief Community Information Packs have been delivered to schools around Victoria



**17**

young people aged 12 to 17 years old have attended our yearly Youth Weekend Grief Program

**3**

Family Days were set up in the last 12 months for all of our families throughout Victoria

**8**

Weekend Grief Programs were held in the last 12 months for 64 families throughout Victoria

**146**

families have been supported with grief support by Wombat's Wish overall over the last year

**11**

months - almost 600 hours - were dedicated to Wombat's Wish Research project to update our evidence base and grief program development



**YOUR SUPPORT MEANS A LOT.**

# 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](mailto:counselling@wombatswish.org.au)

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



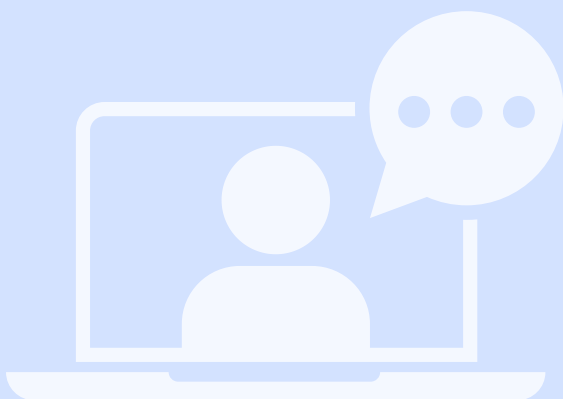
# WHAT'S NEW?

## ONLINE LOUNGES

To further support families after having attended a Weekend Grief Program, Wombat's Wish has introduced separate Online Lounges for parents/carers, young people and children.

Held monthly and facilitated by a qualified grief practitioner, 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 are informal and allow families to join whenever they feel the need to. Just send a message with your name, your children's names and their ages to [admin@wombatswish.org.au](mailto:admin@wombatswish.org.au), confirming that you'd like to register for our online lounges and we'll be in touch with a Zoom invitation link and our consent form that you will need to sign prior to attending the sessions.



# 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 one to be held in September in Corop.

### SNAPSHOTS FROM GRANTVILLE (JUNE 2024) & QUEENSCLIFF (AUGUST 2024)



### UPCOMING WEEKEND GRIEF PROGRAMS:

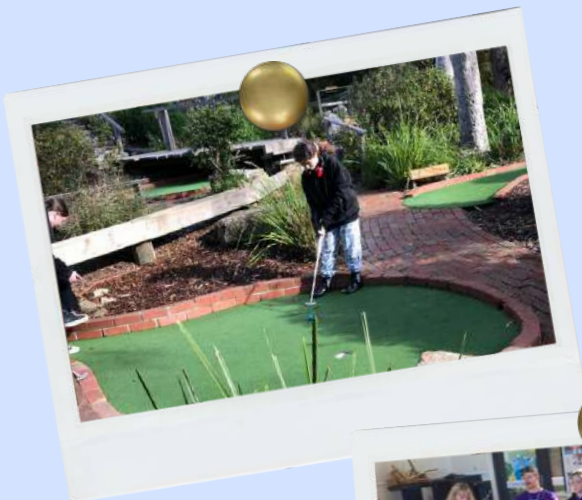
- Corop - Family Program - 13th to 15th September 2024
- Queenscliff - Family Program - 29th November to 1st December 2024

# 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 AIROWORLD (JUNE 2024)



### JOINS US FOR OUR UPCOMING FAMILY FUN DAYS:

- Children's Week: 20th October 2024
- December - 2024 (date to be confirmed)

# WHAT'S NEW?

## PLANTING SESSION WITH GEELONG CEMETERIES TRUST

Thank you to [Geelong Cemeteries Trust](#) for inviting Wombat's Wish families to join one of their planting sessions at Memorial Park.

At Wombat's Wish, we support families that have experienced a death of a parent or primary carer free of charge. The families often don't have a grave for the deceased that they can visit, so having the opportunity to work with Geelong Cemeteries Trust and allowing each family to plant a tree and plants to support the environment but also to remember their important person, is very special. We can't wait for the trees and plants to grow and for our families to have a dedicated area locally that they can go to whenever they would like to honour their important person's memory.

## SNAPSHOTS FROM MEMORIAL PARK (JULY 2024)



# WHO ARE WE?



## STAFF MEMBER

### Steve McLachlan – Psychologist

Steve is currently registered as an Educational and Counselling Psychologist. With a Bachelor of Arts, Diploma in Education and Graduate Diploma in Applied Child Psychology, as well as a Master's in Educational Psychology, Steve was previously employed with the Department of Education as a secondary teacher and school psychologist.

Steve is highly valued at Wombat's Wish for his kind and caring manner, as well as his leadership and support in our Weekend Grief Programs and 1:1 Counselling to children and families grieving a death of a parent/carer.

## STUDENT MEMBER

### Isabella Tassi – Student Social Worker

Isabella is in the final year of her social work degree, and she brings a wealth of experience and dedication to her field. With a strong background in working alongside Indigenous Australians in Western Australia, Isabella has honed her skills in child protection and family violence intervention. Her professional journey also includes significant experience as a family violence practitioner in Victoria, where she has passionately supported individuals and families in need. Isabella's commitment to advocating for minority groups and vulnerable populations is at the heart of her work.



# WHO ARE WE?



## BOARD MEMBER

### Greg Collier- Board Member

Greg is an accomplished senior leader, facilitator, and executive coach who has experienced success on the frontline as a senior business leader and in support as an organizational development specialist, business partner, and consultant.

Greg has worked throughout Australia and internationally in sixteen countries. He is a member of the academic faculty at Ducere Business School and the International Organizational Development Association. He holds a Master's in Management from Monash University and has collaborated across a broad range of industries and organizations.

## SPECIAL MOMENTS & FEEDBACK FROM OUR CLIENTS

Wombat's Wish team,

Keep being amazing people and we thank you !!!! XO

- Ash, Noah & Ivy

To Wombat's Wish,

Thank you for the opportunity.

- Lis

## NAIDOC WEEK

Happy NAIDOC Week! Together, we keep the fire burning!

From the 7th – 14th July, we celebrated NAIDOC week and this year's topic: "Blak, Loud & Proud". A call to honour the enduring spirit of our cultures. Standing tall, embracing our heritage, and amplifying our voices with unapologetic pride.

Educational stories were released to celebrate First Nations people who have driven, and led change over generations, and events were available for everyone to attend and show their support.

We encouraged everyone to get involved – to celebrate and get to know the local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities through activities and events held across the country.



## WOMBAT'S WISH'S 19TH BIRTHDAY

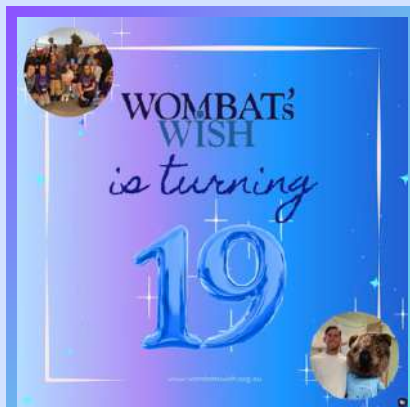
In July 2024 Wombat's Wish turned 19!!! 🎂🎉

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.

This 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:

- introduced 1:1 Counselling
- set up Online Support Lounges
- conducted 2x Family Fun Days and 8x Weekend Grief Programs
- updated our Safety and Community Policies
- raised over \$17,000 at our Fundraising Gala
- finalised our Community Information Pack for Schools to navigate and support children experiencing grief
- introduced new activities and coping strategies into our Weekend Grief Program

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. 🧡❤️



## FATHER'S DAY

Father's Day is not a day of joy for everyone. People who have had their dad die or haven't got a relationship with their father may experience feelings of sadness, anger or guilt.

It is important to remember that grief is unique and individual to you. On Father's Day you need to do what feels right to you. Here are some things that may make Father's day a little easier:

- ♥ Talk to a trusted adult about what you need
- ♥ Visit the cemetery or spend time in nature
- ♥ Read or get some grief education as it can help to normalise what you are experiencing
- ♥ Do an activity that your important person enjoyed
- ♥ Quiet reflection such as looking at photos, watching videos or journaling can be helpful

Overall, be kind to yourself and make sure you take care of yourself. Reach out for professional support if you need to. At [Wombat's Wish](#), we offer a variety of free grief support services for families that have experienced a death of a parent.

We'll also have a stand on Thursday 29th August at Leopold Bunnings to provide some resources and support to those families interested to learn more about us and how we might be able to help. Feel free to come by and say hi.

# COUNSELLING CORNER



I'm thrilled to share my excitement about my placement with Wombat's Wish and the incredible opportunities it presents. From the moment I learned about Wombat's Wish, I was captivated by its mission to support and uplift children and families facing the challenges of grief and loss. This organization's dedication to providing tailored support and fostering a compassionate community truly resonated with me, and I knew I wanted to contribute to its meaningful work.

In my role here, I am actively involved in developing new support resources for children and parents and organising fundraising events. I am particularly excited about working closely with families to develop personalised coping strategies. This hands-on experience is both challenging and rewarding, and it allows me to directly contribute to the positive impact Wombat's Wish has on the lives of those it serves.

I look forward to supporting the organization's mission and contributing to the compassionate environment that helps so many navigate their grief with hope and understanding.



**Isabella Tassi**

Student Social Worker at Wombat's Wish



# COUNSELLING CORNER

## My Big, Dumb, Invisible Dragon

**ANGIE LUCAS (BIRGITTA SIF, ILLUSTRATOR)**

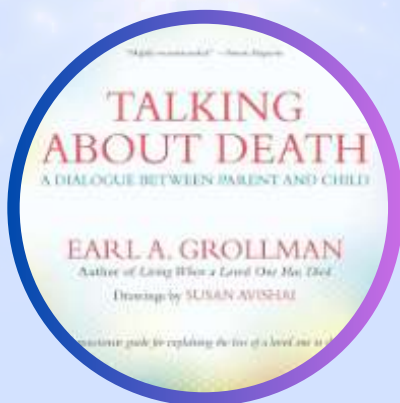
When a young boy loses his mother, an invisible dragon swoops in and perches on top of his head. A most unwelcome guest, the dragon follows him to school, sleeps on his chest at night (making it hard for him to breathe), and even crashes his birthday party. As the boy comes to terms with his mother's death, however, his relationship with the dragon changes in surprising ways.

My Big, Dumb, Invisible Dragon is a story for children dealing with loss, particularly the death of a parent. Although grief is a heavy topic, Angie Lucas and Birgitta Sif handle it deftly for children, using the metaphor of the dragon, a light tone, and touches of humor. The book shows that healing takes time and that it's OK to experience a wide range of emotions as you process a really big loss.

## FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE



## FOR ADULTS



## Talking about Death: A Dialogue between Parent and Child

**EARL A. GROLLMAN**

Why do people die? How do you explain the loss of a loved one to a child? This book is a compassionate guide for adults and children to read together, featuring a read-along story and answers to questions children ask about death.

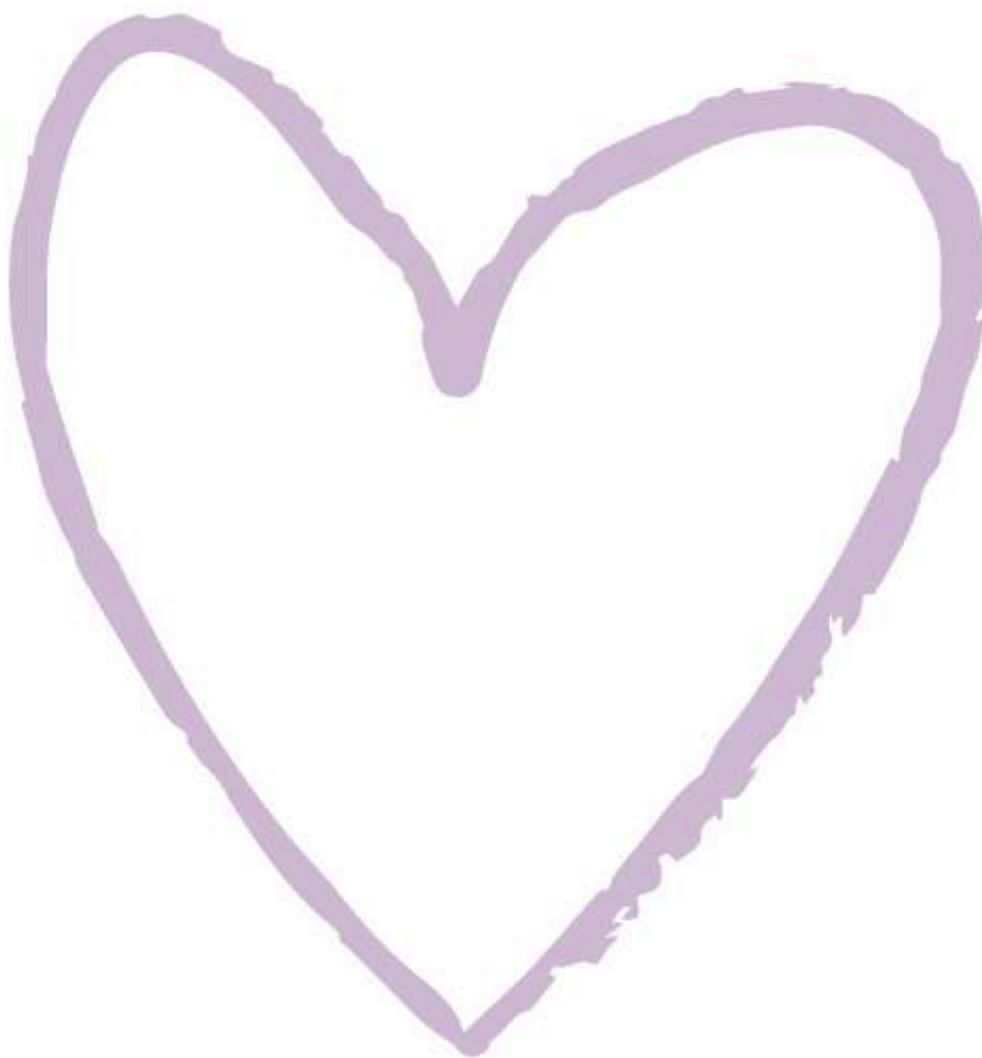
Talking about Death is a classic guide for parents helping their children through the death of a loved one. With a helpful list of dos and don'ts, an illustrated read-along dialogue, and a guide to explaining death, Grollman provides sensitive and timely advice for families coping with loss. This redesigned and updated edition explains what children at different developmental stages can and can't understand about death; reveals why it's crucial to be honest about death; helps you understand the way children express emotions like denial, grief, crying, anger, and guilt; and discusses children's reactions to different kinds of death, from the death of a parent to the death of a pet.

# COUNSELLING CORNER

## Memory heart

Please write your name here: .....

Use this heart to write down any key memories you have of your special person.



# OUR AMAZING DONORS

## Platinum



EnergyAustralia  
LIGHT THE WAY



burke britton  
FINANCIAL PARTNERS



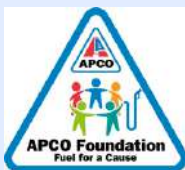
## Bronze



## Donor



## Successful Grants



The Rosemary Norman Foundation

# 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](http://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](mailto:nicki@wombatswish.org.au) for a corporate sponsorship prospectus.



*Thank  
you!*

# SUPPORT

Visit our website [www.wombatswish.org.au](http://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](http://www.kidshelpline.com)

[www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)

[www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)

[www.headspace.org.au](http://www.headspace.org.au)

[www.bereavement.org.au](http://www.bereavement.org.au)

[www.compassionatefriendsvictoria.org.au](http://www.compassionatefriendsvictoria.org.au)

[www.grief.org.au](http://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](http://www.winstonswish.org)

[www.good-grief.com.au](http://www.good-grief.com.au)

[www.grieflink.org.au](http://www.grieflink.org.au)

[www.childhoofgrief.org.au](http://www.childhoofgrief.org.au)

[www.supportaftersuicide.org.au](http://www.supportaftersuicide.org.au)

[www.salvationarmy.org.au/need-help/professional-counselling-and-bereavement/](http://www.salvationarmy.org.au/need-help/professional-counselling-and-bereavement/)

# SUPPORT



## CALL

03 9069 0314

0499 966 228



## EMAIL

[info@wombatswish.org.au](mailto:info@wombatswish.org.au)



## WEBSITE

[www.wombatswish.org.au](http://www.wombatswish.org.au)



## SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook: [@WombatsWish](#)

Instagram: [@wombatswish](#)

LinkedIn: [Wombat's Wish](#)



## OFFICE HOURS

Monday, 9am - 5pm

Tuesday, 9am - 5pm

Wednesday, 9am - 2pm