

FREE THE BEARS NEWSLETTER

# BEARS' PRINT

**JUNE 2017**

**22 YEARS OF PROTECTING BEARS**

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

**SPOTLIGHT ON** our new campaign – 2 to 0 by 2020

**FOCUS ON** the Luang Prabang Wildlife Sanctuary

**FREE THE BEARS** aims to protect, preserve and enrich the lives of bears throughout the world.



# MESSAGE FROM MARY



*In April I was honoured to join the team at Wildlife HQ for Sun bear Maly's birthday party – and got to meet some of her many animal friends like this Binturong – often known as a bear-cat!*

## **Dear Members, Supporters and Friends,**

With our 21st birthday celebrations now completed I wanted to thank each and every person who contributed to making this milestone year so memorable. In searching for a theme for our year-long celebration we wanted to ensure that our message was always positive – focusing on the bears whose lives have already been saved whilst never losing sight of the fact that there are still so many more bears out there in need of our help. Bears Alive! was a celebration of the lives that have been saved already – over 900 at last count – and a reminder of the fact that our duty to these bears continues long after they have been rescued. Bears Alive! is also a reminder that so many bears across Asia are still in need of our help, and for as long as these bears require our assistance, we will continue to fight for them, and do whatever it takes to give them hope!

Free the Bears originally started to campaign against the barbaric practice of bear bile farming. Over the past two decades we've enjoyed some incredible success in ending the dancing bear trade in India, and fighting the rampant illegal wildlife trade that existed in Cambodia. We've prevented literally hundreds of bear cubs from being sold as pets or into bile farms, and we've broken new ground in the veterinary care of bears whose bodies have been broken for their bile. These victories have shown us that change is possible if enough people pull together and work towards a shared goal. Sadly, it is likely

that over 10,000 bears remain trapped in bile farms in just a handful of countries that continue to permit this practice, whilst others such as Laos and Vietnam have taken steps to end this industry once and for all. Working together with government partners and other groups, it is our firm belief that bear bile farming can be ended in Laos and Vietnam by 2020...

That's **2** countries, down to **0** bile bears, by **2020!**

We know that this is an ambitious goal. By current estimates there are up to 200 bears languishing in bile farms throughout Laos, and likely around 1,000 bears remaining on Vietnam's bile farms. Our focus over the next three years will be fixed on securing the release of as many of these bears as possible in order that they can be given a second chance at life. We will work with government officers to strengthen wildlife laws, and we will build as many bear houses and forest enclosures as possible to give the rescued bears the home that they deserve. We know that we cannot do this alone, and so we'll work with other groups through networks such as the Vietnam Bear Working Group to ensure that this industry is ended once and for all. And whilst all of this is happening, we'll work with Universities, protected area rangers and communities to ensure that the demand for bear bile is reduced and wild bears do not find themselves under increased pressure once the supply of farmed bile is cut off.

It has not escaped me that the total number of bears believed to be in need of our help in these two countries is 1,200. This is a huge number, and exactly the same as the number of dancing bears believed to be wandering the streets of India when we joined forces with Wildlife SOS and International Animal Rescue to end that particular threat to bears. Many people said we were crazy when we started that campaign, they said that we could never do it – but we did! And with your help, I know that we can do it again!

With much love and bear hugs,

**Mary**

P.S. None of our work is possible without your support, so please do consider making a tax-deductible donation this month – and let's see how many farms we can close together in 2017!



*I also received an Honorary Doctorate from the University of the Sunshine Coast, a most unexpected honour!*

# UPDATES FROM THE FIELD

# CAMBODIA



*Angel's cub is growing well and developing into a handsome little Moon bear*

The expected effects of climate change on species such as Polar bears are well known, but even in Cambodia recent weather patterns have served as an indicator of what may come – with the recent Khmer New Year celebrations seeing torrential rain in what is normally the driest month of the year. Temperatures have been much lower than normal, something that has been welcomed by our bears who have made the most of the warm breeze blowing and whipping up the scattered leaves that have fallen to the ground. There's no time for rest though. Work has begun on the renovation of our oldest bear house and enclosure, originally built in 1997 at the very start of Free the Bears' journey in Cambodia. We will be upgrading the night dens and replacing the roof that has suffered from years of abuse by free-roaming monkeys.

Two new arrivals have come into our care over the past few months – taking us closer to our milestone 200th rescue in Cambodia. Cambodia Rescue 198 is a young female Sun bear cub who was found abandoned in the forest by the Military Police patrolling in Koh Nhek, Mondulkiri province. After taking the cub back to their cantonment the cub was given to a local villager to look after whilst they contacted the Forestry Administration. A team

comprised of Phnom Tamao vets and Free the Bears' Nev and Vuthy set off to retrieve the cub on 16th March – arriving long after darkness had fallen. The cub was located but was in quite poor condition – dehydrated and malnourished after having only received one tin of sweet milk per day. The team loaded her gently onto the vehicle and began the slow journey back to the sanctuary. She has settled well under the care of Mr. Heng and the team, quickly putting past traumas behind her.

Cambodia Rescue 199, a male Sun bear cub that had been kept as a pet in the southern coastal town of Sihanoukville, was delivered to the sanctuary by the Wildlife Rapid Rescue Team on 7th April. Having been kept in such close proximity to humans for up to two years this new boy poses a high risk of having contracted tuberculosis and so he is currently being kept safely away from the rest of the bears pending his health checks.

In March we gratefully welcomed back Dr. Jon Cracknell from Conservation Medicine Services to our sanctuary to help conduct a Tuberculosis Disease Risk Assessment. Our supporters will recall a number of our bears having succumbed to this awful disease over recent years, the spread of which poses a very real threat to the

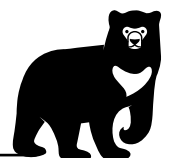
long-term health of our resident bears as well as our staff. Sadly, as part of the investigations several more infected bears were identified and we ultimately lost eight further friends – dealing a devastating blow to our team who have cared for many of these bears since they were tiny cubs. We are determined to bring this under control and have dedicated a number of staff and outside investigators to bring together a concise plan of attack. Kirsty Officer, our Veterinary Advisor and Jon are working hard alongside our veterinary team to undertake a comprehensive review to understand the source of this devastating disease and create a mitigation strategy that will benefit the bears in our care now and in the future.

Finally, Angel's cub is doing remarkably well in spite of his shock arrival to the world. He is a furry ball of fun right now and is enjoying spending time with mum who has been given all the space she needs to perform her duties. Angel is remarkably calm and both are doing well in the confines of her night den. Soon it will be time to embark on the construction of new enclosures at the sanctuary to house those bears who have completed quarantine and those who have joined us from unexpected circumstances!



*One of our Moon bears enjoys a drink from his pool, undisturbed by the drone flying overhead as part of ongoing investigations into the spread of tuberculosis amongst our bears*

**Our volunteer programme in Cambodia is open to anyone over the age of 21 - contact Jen by email ([volunteer@freethebears.org](mailto:volunteer@freethebears.org)) for more information. We currently have spaces available throughout the next few months which are often the nicest in Cambodia – with regular rains keeping the sanctuary green and lush whilst also providing an excuse for impromptu breaks in the activities! The days vary considerably but everything is geared towards enriching the lives of the bears and making sure you enjoy your time in this beautiful country.**



# UPDATES FROM THE FIELD

## LAOS

With four new rescues already in 2017 – plus an unexpected birth! – our sanctuary at Tat Kuang Si is beyond bursting point, keeping our team exceptionally busy as they struggle to ensure that optimal welfare is maintained for each and every bear in our care. In amongst all of the re-grouping of bears that took place last year, keepers noticed Kobe getting a little amorous with Nam. She was quickly separated from the group but her behaviour over recent months led us to fear that she might be pregnant. As a precautionary measure Nam was shifted to House 3 and given the seclusion and privacy that bears would seek out in the wild. Our suspicions proved to be well-founded when keepers entered the house on the morning of January 3rd and heard the squeaking of newborn cubs coming from Nam's dens. The other bears in the house were quickly and quietly moved outside into their forest enclosures, and the house locked down to allow Nam to bond with her cubs. After several weeks we were able to confirm that there were two cubs, although one was notably smaller than the other. Consideration was given to removing the smaller of the cubs and hand-rearing but everyone felt that it was better to allow Nam to continue doing her job without interfering. Sadly, despite being

active until the end, the smaller cub passed away at just over 3 months old. Nam is continuing to do an excellent job with the remaining cub who has been given the nickname Pi Mai, New Year in Lao, given the timing of its arrival.



*Our latest arrival "Egg" exploring his new home at Tat Kuang Si*

On March 3rd we rescued two of our smallest cubs ever, a couple of tiny Moon bear sisters that we have named Beryl and Brenda. These were the first rescues we have undertaken in Oudomxay province, with the local Forestry office calling for our assistance after visiting Tat Kuang Si during a training workshop. Beryl and Brenda weighed just 1900gr & 1800gr on arrival but both are rapidly packing on the pounds and are now topping the scales at over 5kg. Without a dedicated cub nursery area in Laos the cubs were initially cared for at our office, slowly moving up to the sanctuary as they grew stronger and required fewer overnight feeds. Both cubs

are now residing in a temporary nursery at Tat Kuang Si – eagerly awaiting the day that the first bears move to the new sanctuary so that they can be allocated a more permanent home! Our third rescue for 2017, an adult female Moon bear named Pak was surrendered to authorities after being kept for several years at a temple in Vientiane province. Across Asia people often "gift" wild animals to temples in the hope of gaining Buddhist merit – sadly this most often results in inappropriate release back to the wild or prolonged captivity in inadequate conditions. The temple monks had clearly tried to care for Pak – she is very friendly – but she is quite overweight and will benefit from a well-balanced diet and the opportunity to live with others of her own species now that she is in our care. Our latest new arrival, Laos Rescue 47, is a seven-year-old male we have nicknamed Egg. Egg was surrendered to the authorities after being kept as a pet by a wealthy businessman for seven years. Egg is a beautiful boy, however, tiny for his age and unlike Pak he could do with gaining a few pounds! Fortunately, he loves his food and has quickly integrated with Kobe's group, with all the boys getting along great.

Our sanctuary at Tat Kuang Si is now well beyond optimal levels, having originally been designed for up to 25 bears, and so we're relieved to finally have the room to expand that we need to continue offering a safe home for bears in need within Laos. See the Focus article for the latest news on our brand new Luang Prabang Wildlife Sanctuary development...



*Beryl exploring the forest surroundings at Tat Kuang Si Image copyright Erika Pineros*

# UPDATES FROM THE FIELD

## INDIA

more time in their ponds, and digging up cool mud pits to laze about in the afternoons.

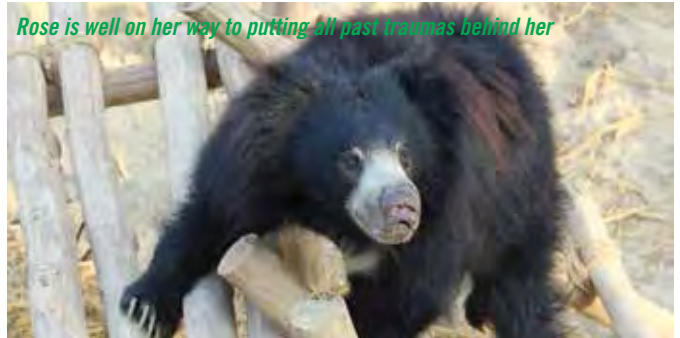
With the first rays of warmer weather came the rescue anniversary of our young female Sloth bear Rose, who was rescued in January last year after losing her left forepaw and her mother to a poaching snare. Since the dreadful incident, Rose has come a long way and we are extremely happy to report that she is a far cry from the timid, frightened and weak cub we discovered limping through the jungle crying out for her mother. Today, Rose's physical wounds have healed over completely, and she has a new enclosure full of enrichments that she has gradually learnt to use despite her missing paw. In fact, Rose chose to spend the day of her rescue anniversary amidst the branches of a tree that she had clambered up, and we couldn't be happier to see her living her life to the fullest, and taking full advantage of her natural instincts and skills – much like she would have in the wild.

Meanwhile, in a moment of déjà vu that reminded us all of Rose's fateful rescue, the Wildlife SOS team in Van Vihar rescued a two month old Sloth bear cub after his mother was electrocuted by poachers. The sight of this helpless, confused baby clinging desperately to his dying mother broke all of our hearts. He has since been transferred to the cub weaning centre at the Agra Bear Rescue Facility, and has been named Mowgli. Although still a little confused and scared, he is slowly building a bond with his keeper and gradually learning to trust people.

The keeper of fourteen year old Aleem bear noticed that he seemed to be eating less than usual. After much coaxing with

As the cold of the winter begins easing out of the northern reaches of India, the rescued sloth bears of the Agra Bear Rescue Facility have warmer weather to look forward to. The bears are spending

his favourite treats – dates – he allowed the vets to conduct a physical examination which revealed a hard swelling in his lower jaw which the vets were able to diagnose as a peri-apical abscess that was beginning to get infected. Dental issues like this can be troublesome and painful for the bear, and the constant discomfort causes them to eat less, play less and feel generally miserable – so our vets immediately swung into action to get poor Aleem feeling better. After a thorough radio-graphic examination, a team of four vets conducted a three hour long surgery to extract the problematic tooth. Aleem is now on antibiotics and painkillers, and was off solid food for a week, eating only porridge and fruit pulp. He made a full recovery soon enough, and is back to his general happy self, playing on his enrichments and eagerly gobbling up all the date treats his keeper brings him!



*Rose is well on her way to putting all past traumas behind her*

Recovery seems to be on the cards down south at the Bannerghatta Bear Rescue Facility as well, with the latest brain scans for our Sloth bear Kuber showing an almost 90% reduction in the lesions in his brain that had been diagnosed as the cause of his brain haemorrhaging in March last year. The lesions had resulted in lack of coordination, severe discomfort and pain, and dulling of the senses for this poor bear. Nearly a year of dedicated treatment including infrared lamp therapy and massages, and physiotherapy using dates and honey as encouragement have gotten Kuber to this hopeful stage of his recovery, and we expect to see him fully recuperated soon. As he slowly starts feeling better and regains his sense of smell, Kuber is enjoying hunting out hidden treats in his enclosure and bonding with his wonderful keeper who has been by his side through his entire ordeal.



*Mowgli the Sloth bear cub receiving some TLC from his carer*



## UPDATES FROM THE FIELD

# VIETNAM

In our last newsletter article we brought you up to speed on the start of our building project at the Cat Tien Bear Rescue Centre in Dong Nai Province. We are very pleased this quarter to be completing the first build – a 10-den bear house using our trial run of prefabricated steel structures. The build itself was extremely time-efficient, the loading of the gabion wall baskets was laborious but will lend itself to a cooler internal climate for the bears to cool off during hot days, and allow the forest to regrow over the house creating a unique experience for both bears and visitors alike.

Thanks to some generous funding, work has already begun on the outside enclosures. Again, prefabricating parts off site has been our greatest ally and in March all 150 posts were shipped across the river and up to the Elephant Hill, the local name for the hill where our rescued bears will be provided sanctuary. The delays that plagued the start of this project also allowed enough time for some good planning, a map of the first two enclosures was drawn up months ago and we were able to storm ahead with prepping the trenches for the foundation of the enclosure perimeter with little delay. This was always going to be a difficult build, the steep gradient, rocky terrain and

thick forest slow things down considerably. For this reason, the team decided to employ the help of our friendly excavator and he returned to the site to help with some of the more difficult stretches of the enclosure boundary.

Meanwhile back at the existing sanctuary, Dung and the team of bear keepers have been keeping on top of the enrichment and hosting school visits from all over Vietnam. All of our bears remain healthy and happy and it won't be long until the first group are making their way deeper in to the National Park to take up residence on Elephant Hill.

## NEW LOVES AND SAD LOSSES

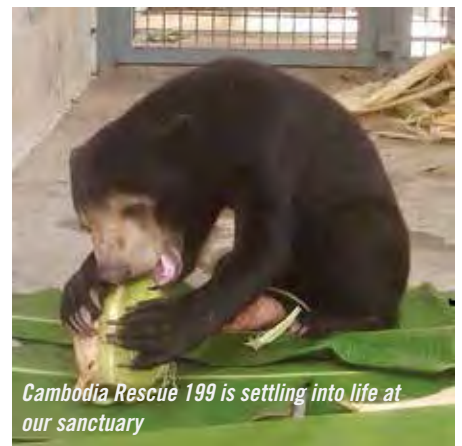
With over 500 bears reliant on our care in sanctuaries today we welcome new arrivals with open arms each month whilst shedding a tear for those who leave us. Here are just a few of our newest arrivals and some sad losses from the past few months;



*Cambodia Rescue 198 peers out from her transport cage during the journey to safety*



*Our 46th rescue in Laos – Pak – is eager to meet other bears at long last*



*Cambodia Rescue 199 is settling into life at our sanctuary*

The recent spike in deaths at our Cambodian sanctuary due to tuberculosis has meant a particularly bad start to 2017 and so with heavy hearts we said goodbye to the following bears in recent months; Apple, Phuong, Suah Sadei, Hahn, Po Sary, Santiago, Dewi and Cambodia Rescue 197.

### Leaving a Legacy for Our Bears:

**At the very core of Free the Bears is the belief that the actions of individuals can make a difference and help ensure the survival of bears in danger of extinction. What better way to demonstrate this than by leaving a legacy to help us provide a safe future filled with love for all the bears in our care as well as the ones who will need us in years to come?**

**For many animal-lovers, leaving a legacy is the greatest gift that you will ever bestow upon our four-legged friends. With each rescued bear arriving at our sanctuaries we accept responsibility for providing care for the rest of their natural lives if needed – a commitment that we take very seriously. Over the past 21 years many kind-hearted individuals have helped ensure that we are able to continue to provide world-class sanctuaries and the very best care to bears in need. We thank these people from the bottom of our hearts.**

# FUNDRAISING UPDATES

## NEW SOUTH WALES

By Jeanette Akkanen  
Tel: (02) 9584 1670  
Email: [jeanette@freethebears.org.au](mailto:jeanette@freethebears.org.au)

Our year has started off slowly however the group have lots of ideas and new projects lined up for the next 12 months. Approaches are being made to footy clubs and other businesses to see if they will help support our work, Entertainment books are once again available and regular volunteers Beth and Phil will be selling chocolate over in the cooler months. Meredith Warren will be launching her new Cruelty Free website and featuring a new charity once a month, with Free the Bears one of the first to be featured. Congratulations to Sue Fish, Alex Quintal and Carmel Mitchell who were all winners in our annual Mothers Day raffle.

Several of our group are busy planning for a trip to Laos in November to see the brand new Luang Prabang Wildlife Sanctuary and spend 4 nights in the beautiful heritage town of Luang Prabang. Contact Jeanette if you are interested in joining this trip?

Our meetings are held on 2nd Saturday of every second month. Please contact Jeanette for more information or if you want to join the next meeting?

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

By Krystine and Alan Evans  
Tel: 0417 237 259 (Alan)  
or 0403 944 978 (Krystine)  
Email: [sasupport@freethebears.org](mailto:sasupport@freethebears.org)

We had an extremely busy but successful second half to 2016, raising in excess of \$20,000 for Free the Bears! The opening night of our "Bears Alive 21" art exhibition at Adelaide Zoo's Santos Conservation Centre on 24th September was a huge

success and we were blessed with a visit from both Mary Hutton and Alex Cearns. Mary's wonderful interview by Alex inspired the entire audience, including our sponsors! Entertainment was provided by award-winning local female acapella group High Spirits Harmony as well as the acoustic charms of Damian Tohl – all of whom donated their time and talents. The event was a great success at 'friend-raising' as well as fundraising! We were thrilled that a number of our 'left-over' art works recently sold as part of the recent FeBEARary online auction, raising an extra \$2000! Soon afterwards, the wonderful Mary Pulford arranged another Bears and Blooms exhibition with her group of printmakers, with proceeds supporting our lovely bears. In November we ran our fourth Free the Bears Trivia Night – another fantastic night with over 80 people in attendance and raising over \$2700 for the beautiful bears! Everyone had a great time and once again, Sunny was the centre of attention!

The new year has brought some changes to the FTB SA support group. In February, past and present committee members gathered for an afternoon tea to say a BEARY BIG THANK YOU to retiring members Ian and Margaret MacIntosh. These stalwarts of the group have been helping set up stands at Shows, taking care of cash and merchandise for innumerable events and even washing our tea cups at the end of each meeting – for over 10 years!! We hope to see you at our events from time to time Ian and Margaret – it won't be the same without you and your contributions have been very much appreciated over the years. At the same time we wished a BEARY BIG THANK YOU to our group coordinator of over 10 years, Pauline Cockrill!! Pauline has been pivotal to nurturing a cohesive team and creating many fundraising opportunities as well as developing procedures to enable the

efficient running of our local events. Despite stepping down as coordinator, Pauline will remain on the FTB Board and will continue to be part of our team. Meanwhile, she is busily passing the baton on to Alan & Krystine Evans who will share the coordinator role going forward – they certainly have very big shoes to fill!!

With a fresh start and a new year, please note that we also have a new time and venue for our meeting schedule. Meetings will now be held on the second Wednesday of each month, starting at 6pm. At present we are looking for a permanent home for our meetings, so stay tuned! With the fantastic team of people in our support group, we are looking forward to not only raising some serious funds but also being local advocates for the bears.

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

By Nicole Arielli  
Tel: 08 9244 1096  
Email: [office@freethebears.org](mailto:office@freethebears.org)

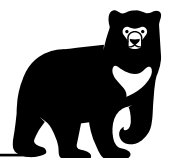
We've had a busy start to the year commencing with a beautiful dinner at Hainault Winery, watching the sunset over the grape vines. It was a wonderful night of great food, wine, and entertainment with just over \$6000 being raised on the night. A huge thank you to all those who donated, volunteered and attended the event. Your support is greatly valued.

A garage sale was held in February at our Perth Office. We received lots of generous donations of goods and sweet treats. A big thank you shout out to all everyone who donated and helped on the day. Much fun was had with \$600 being raised. Despite the heat over the March long weekend our stall at the annual Hyde Park Fair was well visited with \$800 of merchandise sold.

Thank you to Perth Zoo for inviting us back to participate in this years The Teddy Bears picnic. A wonderful day was had by all in spite of the rain and thunderstorms sending everyone running for cover later in the afternoon. \$1400 was raised on the day from merchandise sales, raffle and donations. A HUGE thank you to all the volunteers who braved the hot weather and wet weather for the bears.



**A BEARY big thank you to Pauline, Margaret and Ian for all their amazing support over the years!**



# GET INVOLVED

## JUNE/JULY - COMING EVENTS

### WA

#### QUIZ NIGHT

South Perth Community Hall, Crn. South Terrace & Sandgate St, WA 6151

**Saturday, 3 June, 6.30pm until 10pm**

Brain-chattering fun and frivolity, quiz, games, raffle auction and lots of prizes! BYO snacks, drinks available for purchase. Tickets \$20 each or book a table of ten [www.ticketabo.com.au/free-the-bears/free-the-bears-quiz-night-2017](http://www.ticketabo.com.au/free-the-bears/free-the-bears-quiz-night-2017)

### SA

#### WORLD ENVIRONMENT FAIR

Wayville Showgrounds

**Sunday 25th June, 10am**

Come join us for a fun walk with your loved ones or pampered pooches along the dog-friendly beach. Wear your Free the Bears t-shirt and help spread awareness along the way. Meet in the car park area for Wanda reserve, contact Caryn on 0400 040 092 or email [steinerpilates@bigpond.com](mailto:steinerpilates@bigpond.com)

### NSW

#### WALK FOR BEARS

Wanda Beach, Cronulla

**Sunday, 18th December, 1-4pm**

Raffles, door prizes and an auction plus of course a great range of vegetarian and vegan delights! Tickets \$50 per person. Contact Jeanette for bookings 0421 109 166

## JULY - COMING EVENTS

### VIC

#### HIGH TEA

Mary Eats Cake, 558 Sydney Road, Brunswick

**Sunday, 9th July, 2:30pm-16:30pm**

Join us for a deliciously indulgent afternoon in a beautiful space – enjoying artisanal teas, seasonal sweets and savouries, and unlimited scones! Tickets are \$70 each with numbers strictly limited and available online at [www.trybooking.com/book/event?eid=280924](http://www.trybooking.com/book/event?eid=280924)

### NSW

#### BEAR FACTS TRIVIA NIGHT

Vina Vegetarian, 395 King St, Newtown, NSW 2042

**Sunday 23rd July, 12-3pm**

Games, raffle, merchandise and beautiful vegetarian food plus BYO. Tickets \$50 each, limited spaces so get in quick to book. \$15 a head deposit essential. Get a table together. Contact Jeanette for more details.

### SA

#### TRIVIA NIGHT

Unley Community Centre, 18 Arthur Street, Unley

**Saturday 22nd July**

Check our FTB-SA Facebook page for more details

## AUGUST/SEPTEMBER - COMING EVENTS

### SA

#### ROYAL ADELAIDE SHOW

Adelaide Showground, Wayville, SA 5034

**1st-10th September**

Our biggest annual event for South Australia is always a hit so be sure to come see us again this year!

### NSW

#### COMEDY FOR A CAUSE

Penrith Gaels, Glebe Pl & Phillip St, Kingswood, NSW

**Saturday 16th September, 8pm onwards**

Featuring comedians from Sydney and Melbourne International comedy festival, this adults-only show sure is bound to raise some laughs whilst also raising much-needed support for rescued bears across Asia. Tickets \$35 per person [comedyforacause.net/tc-events/ftb/](http://comedyforacause.net/tc-events/ftb/)

### WA

#### IGA PERTH ROYAL SHOW

1 Graylands Road, Claremont, WA 6010

**23rd-30th September**

Our stall at the Perth Royal Show will be jam-packed with information and merchandise plus the ever-popular showbags!

## HOLD THE DATE

**Annual General Meeting and Volunteers Party will be held at Perth Zoo on Friday 27th October. More details to follow in the next Bears Print newsletter!**

**Vegan Expo – Adelaide, October 28-29th**

## DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO INSPIRE OTHERS?

Our State Support Groups are absolutely vital to the continued welfare of our rescued bears – building the groundswell of support that we need to continue our vital work. We are currently seeking new State Support Group Coordinators for Queensland and Tasmania. The coordinator role involves building and coordinating a team of volunteers to deliver fundraising events and activities within your area. This might include quiz nights, movie nights, dinners, luncheons or raffles, as well as stalls at festivals, shopping centres or local markets. Support Group Coordinators need to have effective communication skills together with excellent organisational skills – you will help to inspire existing and new volunteers to join us on our mission to Free the Bears!

State Support Group Coordinators are supported by Free the Bears office in Perth – primarily through our Volunteer Coordinator Nicole. If you would like to be a part of an enthusiastic and dedicated team of like-minded people contributing to the long-term protection of the bears we'd love to hear from you. Please submit your expression of interest to Nicole Arielli at [office@freethebears.org.au](mailto:office@freethebears.org.au) outlining why you would like this position and what your skills are. You are welcome to share this advert with anyone you know who may be interested.

Photographic credits for this newsletter are due to Erika Pineros, Alex Cearns, Wildlife SOS and FTB staff and volunteers.

Cover Photo: Louey – a 2-year old female Moon bear cub rescued in late 2015 – enjoys a cooling shower at the Tat Kuang Si Bear Rescue Centre in Laos. Image by Erika Pineros [www.erikapineros.com](http://www.erikapineros.com)

### MAKING A MONTHLY DONATION TO SUPPORT OUR BEARS

With more bears arriving at our sanctuaries each month, many of them suffering from terrible injuries sustained at the hands of their captors, monthly donations are a great way to help provide for their care. Each tin of milk formula (essential for orphaned cubs) costs \$15 while \$30 helps provide honey and other tasty treats for a rescued Moon bear for a week. Monthly donations help you to plan your finances more easily, and help us to budget for the ongoing care of bears that require life-long support. Just contact Jeannie in our Perth office on [accounts@freethebears.org.au](mailto:accounts@freethebears.org.au) if you'd like to know how to set up monthly donations.



**PLEASE HELP US SAVE ON POSTAGE AND PAPER by receiving the FTB newsletter and receipts via your email. If your current email has changed or if you have a new email address, please send it our way. You'll be helping us and the environment at the same time. Email your details to [accounts@freethebears.org.au](mailto:accounts@freethebears.org.au).**

### FREE THE BEARS FUND INC.

PO Box 1393, Osborne Park DC, WA 6916, Australia

**Tel:** +61 (08) 9244 1096

**Fax:** +61 (08) 9244 4649

**Email:** [info@freethebears.org.au](mailto:info@freethebears.org.au)

**Charity Number:** A1004507U

**ABN:** 23 763 253 031

This newsletter is printed on recycled paper chlorine free. Re-life 50%

**Patrons:** Dr Harry Cooper BVSc MRCVS C.M. and Maneka Gandhi.

### FREE THE BEARS UK

PO Box 6395, Basildon, Essex, SS14 0NY

**Tel:** +44 (0) 7785 552856

**Email:** [freethebearsuk@googlemail.com](mailto:freethebearsuk@googlemail.com)

**Charity Number:** 1135682

### FREE THE BEARS SE ASIA REGIONAL OFFICE

PO Box 723, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

**Founder & Chairperson:** Mary Hutton

**CEO:** Matt Hunt





# FREETHEBEARS Merchandise Order Form

Please enter your contact details

CONTACT DETAILS		
First Name	Surname	
Address		
City	State	Postcode
Email		
Phone		

## Gifts & Garments (prices inc GST)



**MARYS BIOGRAPHY**  
On Special - Mary Hutton's biography of her journey with Free the Bears  
Cost: \$20 each  
Post: \$10 Aus, \$10 o/s



**CUTEST BEAR CUB EVER!**  
assorted all-purpose greetings cards, pack of six  
Cost: \$12 each  
Post: \$3 Aus, \$5 o/s



**BABY GEORGE & TOM TOM**  
Baby George is named after George the sun bear at our Cambodian Sanctuary and Tom Tom at our Cambodian Sanctuary and the only known sun and moon bear Hybrid  
Cost: \$9 each  
Post: \$4 Aus, \$6 o/s



**BRANDY**  
Named after our unique golden bear, Brandy is a limited edition celebrating 21 years caring for bears.  
Cost: \$50 each  
Post: \$7 Aus, \$10 o/s



**LOGO MUG**  
Cost: \$10 each  
Post: \$3 Aus, \$5 o/s



**NEW ITEM! - THONGS**  
Limited edition Free the bears thongs by Etiko  
Made from recycled rubber, employing fair trade principles to help Sri Lankan communities. These funky thongs are designed to last and make unique gifts  
Cost: \$27.50 per pair  
Post: \$7.50 Aus, \$15 o/s



**MOLLY BEAR**  
Gorgeous little sun bear, which is a great gift idea for all occasions.  
Cost: \$9 each  
Post: \$4 Aus, \$6 o/s



**BELVADERE**  
Back by popular demand, these little sun bears are the perfect gift size idea.  
Cost: \$7.50 each  
Post: \$3 Aus, \$6 o/s



**CALICO BAG**  
Cost: \$9 each  
Post: \$3 Aus, \$5 o/s

### THONG SIZE CHART

UK	2/3	4/5	6/7	7/8	8/9	8/9	11/12
EU	35/36	37/38	39/40	41/42	42/43	43/44	45/46
AU M	2/3	4/5	6/7	7/8	8/9	9/10	11/12
F	4/5	6/7	7/8	8/9	9/10	11/12	

### BEANIES

One size  
Colour: Dark or Light Grey  
Cost: \$15 each  
Post: \$6 Aus, \$8 o/s



### LOGO SHIRT

Sizes S, M, L, XL, 2XL  
Colour: White or Grey  
Cost: \$25 each  
Post: \$5 Aus, \$12 o/s



### CAPS

One size  
Colour: White, Green, Blk  
Cost: \$12.50 each  
Post: \$4 Aus, \$6 o/s



### FOIL PRINT SHIRT

Sizes S, M, L, XL  
Colour: Black or Navy  
Cost: \$25 each  
Post: \$5 Aus, \$12 o/s



### ORDER DETAILS

Item	Colour	Size	Qty	Cost	Post	Total

### Payment Method

- Cheque or money orders payable to: Free The Bears Fund Inc
- Credit Card
- No Receipt Required

Cardholder Name	
Card No.	
Expiration Date	Security Code
Signature	Date

Visit our online store: [www.freethebears.org](http://www.freethebears.org)

# SPOTLIGHT: 2 to 0 by 2020

In order to end the practise of bear bile farming a number of stars need to be aligned – we need a commitment from our partners in government to enforce national wildlife protection laws, and loopholes that allow for criminals to exploit these laws must be closed. We also need to reduce demand for bear bile products, and ensure that the general public understand the threat that bear bile farms pose to wild bear populations when herbal and synthetic alternatives are readily available. Lastly, we need somewhere to take the bears once they have been rescued, a safe environment where they can recover from decades of abuse and learn to live their lives again.

The past year has seen some incredibly exciting changes in Laos, with the government publicly committing to confront the issue of the wildlife farms that have surreptitiously been establishing themselves throughout the country. Across the border in Vietnam, a decade of enforcement, seizures and tightening of regulations has left the bear bile industry on its last legs. The only question facing bear bile farmers in Vietnam today is when to give up on this dying trade, they know that there is no future in this industry.

For more than a year our teams in Laos and Vietnam have been laying the groundwork for new sanctuaries that will help bring forward the end of the bear bile farming business in Laos and Vietnam. By creating a safe home for rescued bears, government officers will be better served in enforcing wildlife laws and punishing anyone found to be breaking the law or failing to care for their bears. For those farmers who recognise the futility of persisting in this industry, our new sanctuaries will offer the opportunity to hand over their bears and in some small way atone for the horrors that these animals have had to endure. After more than a little blood, sweat and tears – plus some incredible support from our friends around the world, both sanctuaries are finally ready to welcome their first residents. Over the next three years, our new sanctuaries in Laos and Vietnam will be developed to provide warm dens with specially-woven bear-sized hammocks for up to 200 new arrivals. Ursine-approved swimming pools will be filled with cooling water, and climbing towers will offer each of our new arrivals to truly feel like they are King (or Queen) of the Castle for the first time in their lives!

Sadly, as the end draws closer for this industry the threats facing those bears that remain trapped in tiny cages grow by the day. Recent investigations in Vietnam have revealed that bears are surviving on literally just a few mouthfuls of rice each day – with no economic incentive in caring for their bears many of the farmers are simply allowing them to slowly starve to death. The need for new sanctuaries has never been greater – so please consider helping us build a brighter future for these bears today:

- **\$100** buys the strong nylon that our teams lovingly weave into hammocks for the rescued bears to relax in
- **\$250** covers the cost of a full health check for a newly rescued bear, the first step to rebuilding shattered lives
- **\$1,000** allows us to build a swimming pool or climbing tower, perfect for stretching out muscles that have spent years in cruel confinement
- **\$3,000** covers the cost of caring for a rescued bear for one year – including veterinary care, a nutritious diet and somewhere that they can finally call HOME!

In 2020 the spotlight will once again be on the bear bile farming industry at the World Conservation Congress where a panel of experts will deliver the results of their investigation into the impact of bear bile farming on wild bear populations. Working with our partners and like-minded organisations we are convinced that we can end bear bile farming in Laos and Vietnam by 2020, ending the suffering of captive bears and securing a safer future for bears in the wild.



A young Moon bear cub awaits rescue in Laos



# FOCUS: Luang Prabang Wildlife Sanctuary



The first enclosure is almost ready to welcome bears at the Luang Prabang Wildlife Sanctuary

Following an extensive search for the ideal home for up to 150 bears rescued from bile farms in Laos, we found the perfect site just 8km away from our existing sanctuary at Tat Kuang Si in late 2015. Thanks to an incredible response from our unbelievably generous supporters around the world, by New Years' Eve we had raised the AU\$250,000 (\$180,000USD) to purchase this 25-hectare block of rolling hillside and water-filled valley. This meant that we were able to begin 2017 with our most ambitious project to date in Laos – the creation of a world-class wildlife sanctuary that will allow us to end bear bile farming in this country whilst also supporting government-led efforts to curb the illegal wildlife trade! The new site is over 50 times larger than our existing centre at Tat Kuang Si, offering us the opportunity to establish optimal standards for the animals that will soon call it home.

Looking back over the past few months, everything seems a bit of a blur. Our team has been working at a staggering pace to create much-needed space for our growing family of bears. An entire construction team has been hired – providing regular employment for local villagers – and the first bear enclosure is almost complete. We aim to relocate Xai's group – Xaykeo, Lom, Vieng, Ninh, Dinh and Civit Sabai – from House 3 at Tat Kuang Si to the new sanctuary; creating much-needed space for our fast-growing nursery groups who will then be able to move into more spacious digs. Enclosure 1 at the Luang Prabang Wildlife Sanctuary covers approximately 2,000m<sup>2</sup>, almost twice as big as the bears current home. Our team and volunteers have already been busily fitting it out with two climbing towers, aerial walkways, pools, caves and heaps of other cool stuff for the bears to play on.

While not quite as much fun as building ursine playgrounds, the Quarantine Area within the new sanctuary will house all incoming bears while they undergo health checks. With the raison d'être for the Luang Prabang Wildlife Sanctuary being

the closure of Laos' bile farms, we can expect many of the bears to have serious health concerns that will need addressing before they can venture into the great outdoors. The Quarantine Area will also house the bear cub nursery and our animal hospital in the future, with the whole complex covering around 2,500m<sup>2</sup>. The first unit of this area – intended as the initial stop for bears once they are released from farms – is almost completed and the whole compound is screened by a garden that will over time grow into a lush rainforest.

The utilities themselves have been a daunting task, with hundreds of meters of underground powerline installed, all existing structures being rewired to an Australian standard, plumbing for pools, sprinklers and water feeders laid and over a kilometre of road graded to the top of the sanctuary which has the most amazing views right down to the Mekong River!

Our construction team has also been busy preparing for other species as the Luang Prabang Wildlife Sanctuary will also provide a home for animals confiscated as part of wildlife law enforcement efforts. Already we have nine monkeys, a Leopard cat and an Alexandrine parakeet in our care waiting to move into their new home. In early April local Forestry officers also bought us a young otter that sadly died soon afterwards of the injuries sustained during its capture. Whilst the focus of the new sanctuary will be overwhelmingly on the bears, we recognise that options for the placement of rescued wildlife are sadly limited in Laos and so the creation of a new sanctuary to serve the northern provinces will greatly aid the efforts of the Laos government to address the illegal wildlife trade.

All in all, it has been an incredibly busy and yet rewarding period for the team in Laos and we're all so grateful for the continued support of everyone who has helped turn this dream into a reality – we'll look forward to sharing pictures of the bears enjoying their new home in the next issue of the Bears Print!



The first Bear House at the new Cat Tien Bear Sanctuary in Vietnam is almost completed



## FREETHEBEARS Membership

Please tick (all prices are GST inclusive)

<input type="checkbox"/> New Member	I would like to join for 12 months and receive a quarterly newsletter.	\$60
<input type="checkbox"/> Renewal 1 year	I would like to renew my existing membership for another 12 months	\$35
<input type="checkbox"/> Renewal 3 years	I would like to renew my existing membership for another 36 months	\$90
<input type="checkbox"/> Life Member	I would like to become a Life Member	\$325
<input type="checkbox"/> Donation	I would like to make a donation of \$	<input type="text"/>
<b>Total</b>		<input type="text"/>

## I CARE FOR A BEAR Sponsorship Program

Join us in protecting, preserving and enriching the life of a bear. When you become a sponsor of a bear, you will receive a certificate of sponsorship that includes a photo of your bear and a FREE THE BEARS T-Shirt.

Bears available for Sponsorship are:

<b>Cambodia</b>	<b>Laos</b>	<b>India</b>	<b>Vietnam</b>
Brandy	Kham	Amitab	Hope
Shoelace	Lom	CJ	
Mokiyup	Vieng		

Please tick (all prices are GST inclusive)

<input type="checkbox"/> 6 month sponsorship	\$ 200
<input type="checkbox"/> 12 month sponsorship	\$ 400
<input type="checkbox"/> T-Shirt	I would like to order a fund T-Shirt with the fund logo
White <input type="checkbox"/>	S <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> XL <input type="checkbox"/> 2XL <input type="checkbox"/>
Grey <input type="checkbox"/>	Postage within Australia + \$ 5
	Postage outside Australia or + \$12
<b>Total</b> <input type="text"/>	

All donations over \$2 are tax deductible

**Total**

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
YOU CAN PAY YOUR SPONSORSHIP BY MONTHLY AUTO DEDUCTIONS OR DIRECT DEPOSIT (\$34 PER MONTH)  
CONTACT HEAD OFFICE ON 08 9244 1096 OR EMAIL [accounts@freethebears.org.au](mailto:accounts@freethebears.org.au)

### Payment Methods

- Cheque or money orders payable to: Free The Bears Fund Inc
- Credit Card
- No Receipt Required

Cardholder Name	
Card No.	
Expiration Date:	Security Code
Signature	Date

## GIVE A BEAR A TREAT Virtual Gifts

To ensure our bears are mentally and physically stimulated, we provide enrichment for them on a daily basis. This can be in the form of Treat Balls, Honey, Hammocks, Health Check, Climbing Tower & Swimming Pools. You will receive a photo & certificate in a folder when you buy a bear a treat.

Please tick (all prices are GST inclusive)

<input type="checkbox"/> HARVESTED HONEY \$20	<input type="checkbox"/> TREAT BALL \$60
<input type="checkbox"/> HAMMOCK \$100	<input type="checkbox"/> HEALTH CHECK \$250
<input type="checkbox"/> SWIMMING POOL \$750	<input type="checkbox"/> CLIMBING TOWER \$1000
<b>Total</b> <input type="text"/>	

## CONTACT DETAILS

First Name	Surname	
Address		
City	State	Postcode
Email		
Phone		

### PLEASE POST YOUR FORMS TO:

Free the Bears Fund Inc  
PO Box 1393  
Osborne Park DC Western Australia 6916  
**Phone:** 08 9244 1096  
**Email:** [accounts@freethebears.org.au](mailto:accounts@freethebears.org.au)  
**Web:** [www.freethebears.org](http://www.freethebears.org)



- I prefer to receive communications via EMAIL
- I prefer to receive the newsletter via mail only
- I prefer to receive no further communications from Free the Bears