

FREE THE BEARS NEWSLETTER

# BEARS' PRINT

DECEMBER 2017

22 YEARS  
OF PROTECTING BEARS

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

**VOLUNTEERS SPECIAL EDITION**

**SPOTLIGHT ON** our incredible volunteers - going the extra mile for the bears

**FOCUS ON** new homes for rescued bears in Laos and Vietnam

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



# MESSAGE FROM MARY



*Thanks to your continued support, these bear cubs rescued in Laos over the past two years will be enjoying the holiday season in a beautiful forest home!*

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

It is often said that moving house is one of the most stressful periods of your life – and I'm sure many of you who have experienced this will agree. The sense of uncertainty about the new home that you are moving to, the fear of having to leave things behind in your old house, and the stress of having to do all of this within a fixed timeframe can cause sleepless nights and real anxiety. Fortunately for the bears in our sanctuaries, it is our dedicated teams of keepers, vets, project managers and builders who take on this stress on behalf of the bears – they remain blissfully unaware of the changes afoot until the very last minute!

In order to end the practice of bear bile farming, new sanctuaries and spaces in which rescued bears can live have been desperately needed for many years. We're absolutely thrilled to be able to share with you – our wonderful supporters – the news that these past few months have seen the first groups of bears moving into two world-class sanctuaries designed and built by our teams to help bring forward the day that this vile industry can be ended once and for all. We still have much more to do, but with each den that is created, each forest habitat that is furnished, the possibility of ending this industry draws one step closer. It is fitting that we are sharing this news with you in a special edition of our Bears Print newsletter which we are dedicating to the hundreds of volunteers who have helped our work over the past 20+ years. Whether it is through manning a fundraising stall, baking a cake, running a

marathon or rolling up your sleeves and pitching in at one of the sanctuaries, we really could not have achieved all that we have without you! On behalf of the bears, and so many other animals that are without a voice – we thank you all from the bottom of our hearts!

With much love and bear hugs,

***Mary***



*Our 200th rescue in Cambodia has been given the name Mary bear by our team*

***As we head into a new year the bears in our sanctuaries need your help now more than ever! Please consider making a year-end donation to the bears, or better still commit to sponsoring one of our rescued bears so that we are able to continue to offer a safe home to bears in need.***

# A SPECIAL MENTION FOR A VERY SPECIAL LADY

I wanted to use this opportunity to give a special mention to my dear friend Jeanette Akkanen – who recently “retired” as our New South Wales State Support Group Coordinator

Jeanette has been involved with Free the Bears Fund for many years, initially as a volunteer and then, when the need arose, Jeanette stepped up and took over the role of State Support Group Coordinator for NSW. Over the past 10 years Jeanette, with the support of her dedicated volunteers and enthusiastic new recruits, has raised well over \$1million for the bears and with her quiet manner and gentle approach has made our Support Group of NSW a very successful branch of the Free the Bears family.

The funds raised by Jeanette and her volunteers have been used to create new sanctuaries, equip veterinary clinics, fill education centres and build quarantine areas which have provided a much-improved quality of life for the hundreds of rescued bears in our care.

Jeanette has been saying for several years that she would like to see a new generation of Free the Bears supporters stepping up and taking the reins - Jeanette will always be involved and of course will be kept in the loop on fundraising events and assist in the general running of the NSW branch. It was a pleasure to meet Samantha Lamb our new NSW Coordinator when I visited Jeanette and the team earlier this year, and great to see that Sam



*It was so lovely to catch up with Jeanette and all of her wonderful volunteers last month*

is already planning new ways to bring in those much-needed dollars to support our bears. Jeanette and Sam both travelled last month to Laos in order to check on the progress of the new sanctuary, taking their partners with them and getting their hands dirty to help the bears along the way!

On behalf of the Board of Free the Bears I would like to thank Jeanette most sincerely for her dedication and compassion. Jeanette’s husband Laurie and daughter Sharon also deserve a very big ‘thank you’ as they have always been at Jeannette’s side and provided her with the support needed to achieve such wonderful things for the bears.



*Meeting with the team at Taronga Zoo during my visit to Sydney*



# NEW LOVES AND SAD LOSSES



## **Mary bear – Cambodia Rescue 200**

A very special milestone 200th bear to be rescued in Cambodia, Mary bear arrived on 30th June 2017 after being kept, supposedly as a pet, in Battambang for around eight years. Subsequent health examinations have revealed suspicious thickening of the wall of her gallbladder which suggests she may previously have been exploited for her bile.

## **Laos Rescue 50**

Our 50th bear to be rescued since we started working in Laos in 2003 joined us in early November after being seized from a private residence by officers from the Department of Forest Inspection, Vientiane Capital. Thought to be around the same age as Brenda and Beryl, this little male Moon bear cub has joined our nursery group at Tat Kuang Si Bear Rescue Centre.

## **Vietnam Rescue 46**

With some space freed up by the opening of our new bear house at Cat Tien Bear Sanctuary, a cry for help in re-homing the last remaining bear at the Soui Tien Amusement Park on the outskirts of Ho Chi Minh City could finally be answered.

## **Cambodia Rescue 202**

A tiny female Sun bear was bought into our care in September after being confiscated from a villager's house in O'Chum district, Ratannakiri province. Weighing just 4kg on arrival this cub is thriving under the care of our Cub Nursery team, led by the indefatigable Mr. Heng.

## **R.I.P. George**

We were devastated to lose George, undoubtedly one of the biggest characters at our Cambodian Bear Sanctuary, to tuberculosis in November. Over the past seven years George was a constant friend to everyone and was always guaranteed to bring a smile to your face when watching him in his constant quest for attention.

## **R.I.P. Sara**

One of the original bears at Phnom Tamao Wildlife Rescue Centre when Free the Bears first started working in Cambodia twenty years ago, Sara will be sadly missed by everyone who had the pleasure of knowing her.

# FOCUS:

## A new sanctuary for bears – Vietnam

The swollen riverbanks of the Dong Nai river showed no sign of receding following the impact of Tropical Storm Talas in late July, the muddy ground saturated following days of almost nonstop rain. Taking advantage of a brief break in the clouds, the team of vets, bear care staff and park rangers swung into action and began the process of moving sixteen Moon bears (also known as Asiatic black bears) to the new Cat Tien Bear Sanctuary. Each individual bear was sedated for a quick health check before being loaded into a transportation cage and hoisted onto the back of a sturdy truck, ready to be carried 3km away from the Cat Tien National Park headquarters and to their new home – a rugged hillock known as Elephant Hill sandwiched between bamboo forest and the Dong Nai river. Once the truck had reached the new sanctuary, the bears were carefully offloaded and placed in stretchers for the final leg of their journey up to the first of the new bear houses that we hope will eventually offer a safe home for more than 100 victims of Vietnam's bear bile industry.

The climb to the top of the hill was taken one careful step at a time, with the sleeping bears weighing up to 200kg each blissfully unaware of what lay ahead. Once at the new bear house each animal was gently rested down on a bed of freshly cut browse and given the reversal agent for the sedative. Waking up just a few minutes later, the bears could immediately see that things had changed for the better – each spacious den being lovingly furnished with specially woven hammocks, and the new environmentally-friendly design of the building allowing for maximum light and ventilation. Standing on hind legs, the bears were able to peer outside into the spacious forest enclosures that were to be their new home. Over the course of three days, all sixteen bears were moved and given time to acclimatise to their new environment before being allowed outside to explore.

Watching the bears stepping cautiously out into the forest and beginning to explore the dense undergrowth with stunning views over the southern section of Cat Tien National Park, it is hard not to think about the hundreds of other bears remaining

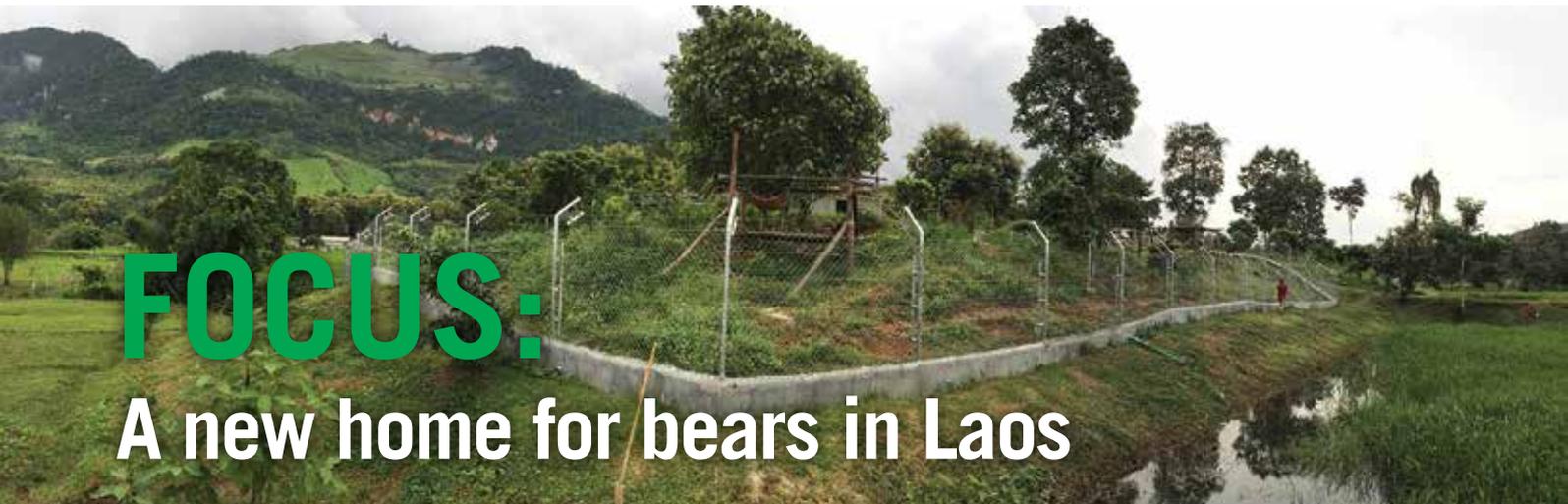
in Vietnam's bear bile farms. As bears like Phat, Duc and Nui struggled with deciding whether to climb the new platform or head straight for the pool and a cooling dip, we're reminded that perhaps 1,000 bears remain trapped in a living hell, devoid of any stimulation and oftentimes being illegally tapped for their bile or starved to death in order that their owners can harvest their body parts for sale on the black market. Several of the bears chose to spend their first night outdoors, climbing to the top of the trees to enjoy a cool breeze and the sight of the stars filling the dark sky. For those bears that remain in Vietnam's bile farms, such simple, natural behaviours are impossible to contemplate.

The completion of the first of six planned bear houses within the new Cat Tien Bear Sanctuary marks the first phase of a renewed effort to rescue and rehabilitate as many as possible of the bears remaining in Vietnam's bear bile farms. Sadly, due to the suffering they have endured at the hands of the bile farmers, it is unlikely that any of these bears can ever be returned to the wild, however the new sanctuary will offer them the next best thing to a completely wild life. Work has already started on the next bear house within the new sanctuary – a dedicated house for rescued Sun bears - with further developments including a full Veterinary Hospital and Quarantine Area planned for construction in coming months in order to support the efforts of the Vietnamese government to end bear bile farming once and for all. Our thanks go out to all our supporters and donors, especially Welttierschutzgesellschaft e.V., the Marchig Animal Welfare Trust, Peter, Joan, Sue, Malcolm and Nola who have helped us create a truly world-class environment for rescued bears in southern Vietnam. The building and expansion of new sanctuaries for the lifetime care of rescued bears has been identified as one of the final barriers to ending bear bile farming in Vietnam. Time is ticking for the estimated 1,000 bears remaining in Vietnam's bile farms, but with your help we are determined to see as many of these poor animals as possible given the opportunity to enjoy a second chance at life.





*Stepping outside into a beautiful new world – thanks to our wonderful supporters!*



# FOCUS:

## A new home for bears in Laos

*From overcrowded to overwhelming – the new Luang Prabang Wildlife Sanctuary in Laos is the answer to our prayers – and key to ending the bile farming industry in this country*

Hot on the heels of the bears being moved to their new home in Vietnam, by late September the first bear house at our new Luang Prabang Wildlife Sanctuary was ready to receive its first residents. For several months our Bear Care Crew had been busily training the bears to voluntarily enter their transportation crates (using honey, of course!) and so the process was completed without the need to sedate any of the bears – they were simply walked into their transport crates, loaded onto the back of the B.E.A.R-mobile and driven around 40km to their new home. Once at the new sanctuary they were given a few days to settle in their dens before the doors were opened up and they could explore outside. The environment at the Luang Prabang Wildlife Sanctuary is wildly different to that at Tat Kuang Si, whereas our original sanctuary is located in primary forest the new site occupies a landscape of mountain valley and rolling hillside. For Xaykeo, Vieng, Lom, Dinh and Ninh this was the first time they had been outside of the

familiar environment of Tat Kuang Si in over a decade and so they relished the opportunity to smell and taste new plants, feel the cool breezes running through the valley and explore the wide range of climbing structures and enrichment items that had been built for their entertainment. Civit Mai, typically one of our most boisterous bears, surprised everyone by refusing to explore for several weeks, preferring to hang around the dens and lounge about in his new hammock. Most amusing of all the bears reactions had to be that of Pak (Laos Rescue 46), who since arriving at Tat Kuang Si in March had only dared to venture outside once or twice. Caught up in the excitement of everything she hurried out of the dens the moment the door was opened, competing with Vieng and Lom to reach the closest climbing tower. AND THEN SHE REALISED WHAT SHE HAD DONE! She stopped in her tracks, turned around and scurried back to the dens, but once there she clearly had a change of heart and turned around again to rejoin the others.

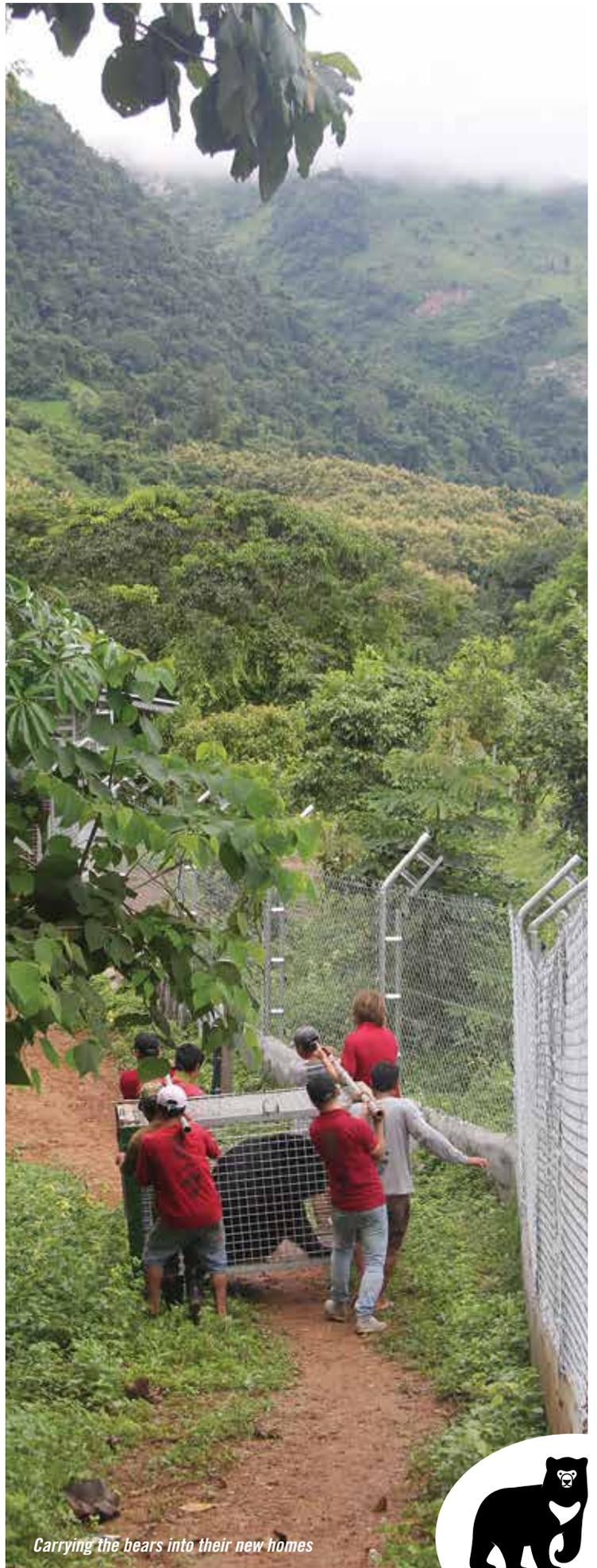
Watching her sitting on the grass, gently sniffing and tasting the plants all around her was a sight that made all of the hard work that has gone into this new sanctuary 100% worthwhile. Our hope is that over the next few years we'll get to see many more bears like Pak taking those precious first steps onto grass, and gazing around not to the sight of metal bars and darkness, but to stunning green vistas, light and fresh air. We still have much work to do...

*Civit Sabai chilling out at the Luang Prabang Wildlife Sanctuary*



With the transfer of the first bears to the new sanctuary we finally had some space to reorganize the bears remaining at Tat Kuang Si. Again our team were able to move everyone using positive reinforcement and in less than 10 days a further 14 bears were moved to more spacious homes; the four cubs rescued in 2016 (Paulli, Everon, Bamboo and LR043/Kung Fu) were moved into the dens vacated by Xai's group in House 3, shortly followed by the six youngsters rescued in 2015 (Coco, Conker, Nam Et, Louey, Winnie Skylark and Momo/LR038). Once settled, all ten youngsters were mixed to form a nursery super-group, with all of the youngsters quickly bonding and making the most of their beautiful new forest home. Brenda and Beryl, our youngest cubs, were then able to move into the Nursery enclosure vacated by the 2016 cubs, while Morris Moonbeam and Civit Sabai were shifted from House 3 down to the area vacated by the 2015 cubs in House 1. Despite now weighing a far-closer-to-normal 200kg now (down from 280kg on arrival), Morris once again tested the strength of everyone, and ultimately broke several wheels of the trolley used to move the transport crates down the road! Last but not least – Nam and her son Pi Mai were able to enjoy the area vacated by Morris and Civit Sabai, and have been a real joy to watch as Pi Mai tests his own abilities (and the patience of his mother) on a daily basis!

There are currently believed to be around 150 bears languishing in bile farms across Laos, plus perhaps dozens more being kept individually in terrible conditions. Please consider making a donation or sponsoring a bear in order that we can continue to develop the new sanctuary and provide a safe home for these bears in need.



*Carrying the bears into their new homes*



# SPOTLIGHT ON

## ***THE EXPERIENCE OF A LIFETIME - travelling to make a difference, by Alex Cearns***

Immersing yourself in a volunteer travel experience to a Free the Bears sanctuary is an exciting opportunity for anyone with a love of wildlife and a compassionate heart. I've led two fundraising photography tours for Free the Bears with World Expeditions, who have supported this amazing group for over a decade. World Expeditions donate part of each person's tour fee to the bears, raising more than \$250,000 to date.

My first tour with World Expeditions was to the sanctuaries supported by Free the Bears in Agra and Bangalore, India, in October 2014. It was such a rewarding experience I was keen to do it again – as were many of the “expeditioners” who joined that trip. Less than two years later, in June 2016, I led a photography tour to the recently opened (then still under development) sanctuary in Cat Tien National Park, Vietnam as well as the sanctuary in Cambodia. Seven compassionate animal lovers travelled with us and each contributed above and beyond throughout the tour.

Before leaving, we checked the wish list and discovered enrichment items such as Aussie Dog treat balls were a priority. Important to the bears' emotional wellbeing, our group carried 24 balls in their luggage. The bears quickly got the hang of tipping and rolling the balls to extract the tasty morsels crammed inside. One 10-year old female Moon bear particularly captured our hearts as we watched her playing with one of our treat balls for the first time. Her absolute joy and excitement over the contents of the ball was captivating. She took it into the pool and splashed around for over an hour. It was an emotional sight as we remembered where she came from and how much better her life was now.

Tour members Di and Dave had pre-purchased around \$500 worth of much needed protective clothing and equipment for the sanctuary staff. They also purchased hammock materials, which we constructed into a sturdy, comfortable hammock for moon bear Go. He was delighted with his new bed and proceeded to roll around in it with glee.



***Our group with just some of their excess luggage – lovingly carried for the benefit of the bears***



***Watching this Moon bear playing with her new treat ball bought tears to our eyes***

After an amazing week in the Vietnamese jungle, we headed to Free the Bears flagship sanctuary in Cambodia. The sanctuary cares for more than 120 rescued Sun and Moon bears and runs education and research programs to promote bear conservation across South East Asia.

Several adorable cubs were in care at the time. Angela from our group became enchanted by the smallest Sun bear in the sanctuary, a sweet 4-month old cub who weighed in at only 4.5 kilos. Angela generously purchased the naming rights and took on a 1-year sole sponsorship for \$3000, christening her 'Arya Stark', after her favourite Game of Thrones character. The name is a perfect fit for this little cub who will no doubt grow up to be strong and feisty. A short time later Dave and Di fell in love with a gorgeous 7-month old female Moon bear cub who they sponsored and called 'Essee' after their beloved dog back home in Australia. Fellow expeditioners Mary and Robert had previously sponsored and named two bears, Jesus and Willow, and so this trip was a great opportunity to catch up with their bears.

Witnessing the extent of the commitment that Free the Bears makes to these animals made me want to raise more funds for the sanctuaries. While watching a busy group of juvenile Sun bears coming and going from their night dens, I decided to create a composite image of their antics. In 90 minutes I captured the shots I needed, with the final image looking like an apartment building. I called it 'Bear Apartment Six' and sold prints as a limited-edition for \$100, raising a further \$9,070 for the bears.

Overall, our trip was a huge experience for all of us. We'll never forget our love for the bears we helped to support and the sense of comradery that comes with such adventure.

*Alex Cearns is an internationally renowned animal photographer and owner of Houndstooth Studio. She has been donating her photography services to Free the Bears for more than 5 years.*

# SPOTLIGHT ON

## GOING THE EXTRA MILE FOR THE BEARS

It never ceases to amaze us the lengths that some of our volunteers will go in order to help the bears. Of course, if you have visited one of our sanctuaries and seen for yourself the transformation that we're able to bring about in the lives of these beautiful creatures, you have a little extra incentive. Here are just two stories of how a visit to our sanctuaries led to some incredible supporters truly going the extra mile...we hope that they might inspire you to take on a challenge to benefit the bears in 2018!



*Veronica celebrating the end of her epic walk across Australia*

### **My Walk Across Oz by Veronica Hegarty North Beach, W.A. to Bondi Beach, N.S.W. April - October, 2016**

"I wanted to support Free the Bears by raising awareness and funds for the organization. I have been to the Cambodian Sanctuary as a volunteer and have seen Mary Hutton's amazing achievements as well as the dedication and devotion of the local staff towards the bears. The reason for taking on my journey was that I love walking, I enjoy a challenge and walking across Australia seemed like a suitable challenge.

On my journey a typical day would involve walking between 30km and 40km at an average speed of 5km per hour. My hubby, John, who was my unflinching support, drove the car and towed a small caravan. He would meet up with me for lunch and again for dinner, then we would camp for the night. During the day, John loved chatting to everyone he met so while he did the talking, I did the walking.

We encountered all kinds of weather from lovely, sunny days to rain, floods, ice and gale-force winds but we saw Australia at its best. My journey provided many highlights including the wonderful people we met along the way who all had such interesting stories to tell, the long, straight stretches of road with endless views, and the dingo that followed me on the Nullarbor (whether he thought I was dinner or was just curious, I didn't know).

All in all, it was an exhilarating experience but none of it could prepare me for the greatest thrill of all, when our son from Hong Kong and our daughter from Melbourne were there to greet us when we finally put our toes in the water at Bondi Beach. We celebrated our achievement with lunch at the famous Icebergs Restaurant."

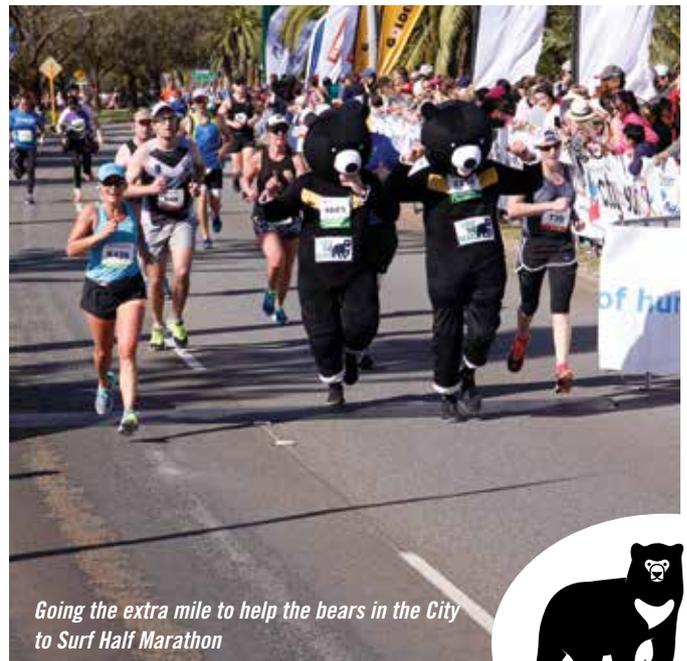
### **Going the extra mile by Rob Herkes**

"I worked for many years at Perth Zoo so have known about the work of Free the Bears for just about 20 years now, getting to know Sean and Viva the sun bears when they first arrived from Cambodia and later on also being part of the team that welcomed Jamran and Bopha to WA. Matt Hunt, Free the Bears Chief Executive, and I worked together in 2001 and so we always catch up when he returns to Perth, and I've visited the sanctuary in Cambodia a number of times.

Recently I made the fatal error of telling Matt that if he ever needed a hand, all he had to do was shout. It didn't take long for him to shout, and so earlier this year myself and Will, one of my colleagues from work in the WA fire and emergency services, found ourselves bound for Luang Prabang in Laos where Matt needed some help building the new sanctuary. After seeing the well-established Cambodian sanctuary, it was fantastic to see the new site in Laos and imagine what a beautiful home this could be for hundreds of rescued bears. Of course, this all takes money, something that Matt would repeatedly remind us of at the end of a long day working in the hot sun, when we were weak and impressionable!

We decided to run in the Perth City to Surf Half Marathon Race to help raise funds, but that wasn't enough for Matt – he wanted us to do it in bear suits so that we raised some awareness too! Our family and friends were incredible, helping us raise almost \$6,500 which will go a long way in Laos!

Now we are just looking forward to next year when we hope to offer further assistance again and see the bears enjoying their beautiful new home"



*Going the extra mile to help the bears in the City to Surf Half Marathon*





# FREETHEBEARS Membership Form

Join us in protecting, preserving and enriching the lives of bears throughout the world. Your support makes all the difference - thank you.

Please tick (all prices are GST inclusive):

- New Member** I would like to join for 12 months and receive a quarterly newsletter **A\$60**
- Renewal** I would like to renew my existing membership for an additional 12 months **A\$35**
- Renewal** I would like to renew my existing membership for an additional 36 months **A\$90**
- Life Member** I would like to become a Life Member **A\$325**
- Donation** I would like to make a donation of
- T-shirt** I would like to order a [Free the Bears T-shirt](#)
- White**  **Grey**
- S**  **M**  **L**  **XL**  **XXL** **A\$20**
- Postage within Australia, please add **A\$5**  
Postage outside Australia, please add **A\$12**

Payment Method

Total A\$

- No receipt required**
- Cheque enclosed** (made payable to [Free the Bears Fund Inc.](#))
- Money order enclosed**
- Credit Card**  **Visa**  **Mastercard**

Name of Cardholder

Card number

Expiry

Signature

- Save the trees!** I would prefer to receive the newsletter by email
- Volunteer!** I would like to help out a Support Group

Name

Address

Suburb  Suburb  P/Code

Phone

Email

# I CARE FOR A BEAR Sponsorship Program

Please choose one of the following bears available for sponsorship; you can read more about them on our website:

- | Cambodia                           | Laos                           | Vietnam                       | India                            |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brandy    | <input type="checkbox"/> Kham  | <input type="checkbox"/> Hope | <input type="checkbox"/> Amitabh |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shoelace  | <input type="checkbox"/> Lom   |                               | <input type="checkbox"/> CJ      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mokiup    | <input type="checkbox"/> Vieng |                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Hero    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seripheap |                                |                               |                                  |

When you become a new sponsor of a bear you will receive a certificate of sponsorship, a photograph of your bear and a [Free the Bears T-shirt](#). Please tick below (all prices are GST inclusive):

- 6 month Sponsorship** **A\$200**
- 1 year Sponsorship** **A\$400**

T-shirt

Please indicate your choice of T-shirt and select your shipping type below:

- White**  **Grey**
- S**  **M**  **L**  **XL**  **XXL** **A\$20**

Postage within Australia, please add **A\$5**  
Postage outside Australia, please add **A\$12**

Payment Method

Total A\$

- No receipt required**
- Cheque enclosed** (made payable to [Free the Bears Fund Inc.](#))
- Money order enclosed**
- Credit Card**  **Visa**  **Mastercard**

Name of Cardholder

Card number

Expiry

Signature

## DID YOU KNOW?

You can now pay your sponsorship by monthly auto-deductions or direct deposit?

Please contact the Head Office on (08) 9244 1096 or email [sponsorship@freethebears.org](mailto:sponsorship@freethebears.org)

Please post your form/s to:  
[Free the Bears Fund Inc.](#)  
PO Box 1393, Osborne Park DC  
Western Australia 6916

**Phone** +61 8 9244 1096  
**Fax** +61 8 9244 4649  
**Email** [info@freethebears.org](mailto:info@freethebears.org)  
**Web** [www.freethebears.org](http://www.freethebears.org)



# GET INVOLVED

## JANUARY 2018 - COMING EVENTS

### WA

#### Volunteer Information Session

Karrinyup Leisure Centre

**Thursday 18th January 2018 6pm**

Come along for an update on Free the Bears activities and learn about the exciting projects and events we have lined up for 2018. RSVP to Jeannie on [accounts@freethebears.org.au](mailto:accounts@freethebears.org.au)

### WA

#### Outdoor Movie Night – Paddington 2

Burswood Parklands

**Friday 19th January 2018, 7pm**

Come along and enjoy this great sequel as we follow the adventures of the world's most famous bear. A great Christmas gift idea! For more information and tickets visit: <http://bit.ly/2zX9D9F>

### SA

#### Movie Fundraiser Night

Date + Venue to be confirmed

For more information on this event please contact [sasupport@freethebears.org](mailto:sasupport@freethebears.org)

## FEBRUARY 2018 - COMING EVENTS

### NSW

#### Volunteers meeting – into 2018

73 Valentia Avenue, Lugarno

**Saturday 10th February 2018, 2pm**

Contact Jeannette on [Jeannette@freethebears.org.au](mailto:Jeannette@freethebears.org.au) if you would like to come join the team in planning for another successful year for the bears

### NSW

#### Mardi Gras Fair Day

Victoria Park, Camperdown

**Sunday 18th February 2018, 10am-8pm**

Come visit our stall as we join in the family-friendly carnival of rainbow festivities at this years Mardi Gras. Pick up some goodies for your favourite bear!

### WA

#### Painting Class Fundraiser – We ART Bears!

North Perth Town Hall

**Sunday 25th February 2018 at 1.30pm**

For more information and tickets: <http://bit.ly/2k3PsA1>

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As another year draws to a close we are proud to say that our family of friends and supporters is continuing to grow around the world. We are indebted to the following organisations and philanthropic trusts for their help in our fight to end the exploitation of bears whilst providing a safe and secure home for victims of the illegal wildlife trade. In Australia our friends at Perth Zoo Wildlife Conservation Action, Australian Ethical Investments and the Taronga Conservation Society Australia have all kindly lent their support to our efforts to build a brighter future for the world's smallest bear, whilst our friends across the pond in the United States – the US Embassy Regional Small Grants Programme, the US Fish & Wildlife Service, the San Diego Zoo Global and the National Geographic Society – have generously given their support to our work aimed at combatting the illegal trade in Moon bears for their bile. Finally our friends in Europe at Bears in Mind (Netherlands), Hauser Bears, the Sylvanus Charitable Trust, Primrose Trust, Jean Sainsbury Animal Welfare Trust and Marching Animal Welfare Trust have all been vital in helping us secure a safe home for rescued bears in Laos while our friends at Welttierschutzgesellschaft (Germany) and La Passerelle Conservation (France) have provided much-needed assistance to our programme in Vietnam.

Finally, our thanks go out to every single individual, class, team, business and family who has lent us their support over the past year - with the number of bears in our care continuing to grow and our field programmes expanding to ensure that wild bear populations are protected, we really do mean it when we say that we can only change the lives of bears thanks to our incredible supporters! You encourage us, you inspire us, and you drive us to want to achieve so much more every day for the bears. Wishing you all the very best for 2018 as we continue to work together to Free the Bears!

Photographic credits for this newsletter are due to Alex Cearns and FTB staff and volunteers.

Cover Photo: Ninh has lived most of her life at our Tat Kuang Si Bear Rescue Centre in Laos, having been rescued as a cub in Bokeo province back in 2005. It is clear to see from this photo that she approves of her new home at the Luang Prabang Wildlife Sanctuary!

**PLEASE HELP US SAVE ON POSTAGE AND PAPER by receiving the FTB newsletter and receipts via your email. You can sign up for the newsletter via our website or Facebook page. 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)**



## 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.



### 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%

### FREE THE BEARS UK

PO Box 6395, Basildon, Essex, SS14 0NY, UK

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