



# Rabbit Run-Away Chronicles



e-News Issue # 17 - Nov / Dec 2016

Rabbit Run-Away Orphanage & HRS Australian Chapter



Welcome to the Christmas 2016 edition of Rabbit Run-Away Chronicles, our newsletter for Rabbit Run-Away Orphanage and the House Rabbit Society Australian Chapter...

## A Safe and Happy Christmas Season to All

*In 2012, the University of Guelph in Canada published a study which tracked shelter intake and adoption numbers at four shelters in Massachusetts and Rhode Island from 2005-2010.*

The study results found that:

- \* rabbits were the third most frequently surrendered animal.
- \* rabbits had a combined 22.61% euthanasia rate
- \* adoption rates ranging from 58.82%-79.85%.
- \* adoption rates were higher when local foster groups were used to help care for the rabbits.
- \* The majority of the rabbits (77.26%) at all four shelters were owner-surrenders
- \* rabbits were surrendered because (1) the owners were unable or did not want to care for them, and (2) because of housing problems or having too many rabbits.
- \* Most (81.47%) of the rabbits were unaltered, and most (71.11%) were adults.

#### References:

Cook AJ, & McCobb E (2012). Quantifying the shelter rabbit population: an analysis of Massachusetts and Rhode Island animal shelters. *Journal of applied animal welfare science* : JAAWS, 15 (4), 297-312.



## The Rabbit Doctors - Vet Trivia

Rabbit anatomy is amazing! They are perfectly adapted to a lifestyle of running and hiding from predators, but did you know that it shows in their poo? Rabbits produce two different kinds of droppings: the hard pellets we all know, and soft caecotrophs, or 'night faeces', that are generally eaten directly from the anus.

But why? This allows the rabbit to digest its food more efficiently, and have less food material in its gastrointestinal system at any point in time, so bunny can be lighter and escape more quickly from any threats. Wow!

If you're noticing uneaten caecotrophs around your rabbit's enclosure or stuck on its bottom, get in touch with your rabbit-friendly vet; this could be a sign of disease including not enough fibre in the diet, dental disease or even obesity!

- Dr. Belinda Oppenheimer BVSc (Hons)





# WANTED: 12 Christmas Angels...

to provide temporary INDOOR foster homes for our buns from mid December 2016 (or earlier) to mid to late January 2017. We will provide a basic setup and all vet care and support during this time.

When the foster period is over, our Christmas Angels will also have the choice of permanently fostering their foster buns. Their long term vet care and any bunny minding, will be covered by the Orphanage for the life of the bunnies. This is our way of saying *Thankyou*. Please contact us if you can help.



## Meet our Snow White bunnies



**John, Harold, Phillip & Madge** The night their mother was found she had 9 babies. The surviving 4 were transferred to the Orphanage. These beautiful rex crossed with silver fox babies have shiny iridescent white fur, big pink eyes and very sweet natures. They need loving permanent homes.



**Grace and Millie** were rescued from a life of living rough on the streets. They have been at the Orphanage since 2012 waiting patiently and growing older by the day.

They are sweet, gentle, clean and deserving of a loving home to live out their lives together.

**Totoro and Gulliver** met at the Orphanage when Totoro came to stay whilst her owners were overseas.

Gulliver came in with 17 other buns from a backyard breeding rescue effort.

Sadly Totoro's owners did not return and they remain at the Orphanage waiting for a loving home. They have been here for over one year. Contact the Orphanage if you are interested in fostering or adopting these or any of our other bunnies. [See our website](#) for more details.



# What We Do!

Rabbit Runaway Orphanage is Victoria's First No-Kill dedicated Pet Rabbit Rescue, and the first and only official Chapter of the House Rabbit Society in Australia.



## What makes us different

1. No kill means we support all buns
2. Our foster program
3. Our special needs (VIB) foster program
4. Rehabilitation program
5. Assist other pounds and shelters
6. Education, information & advice
7. Referral Centre

Perhaps our most significant difference to other rabbit welfare organisations is our special needs support program.

- We pay for the vet care of rabbits identified to have special needs, for the life of the bun (currently 90+ in this program).
- In addition, we assist owners who adopt cashmere and angora rabbits (long-fur breeds) by paying for grooming for the life of the bun.
- We constantly review the care needs of the rabbits we place into foster and permanent care homes (and the needs of these foster carers and rabbit owners), and provide ongoing support to maximise the wellbeing of these buns throughout their life.
- Further, if the health of a rabbit adopted from the Orphanage changes at any time, we offer to provide support for its vet care - by providing this ongoing support, we reduce the likelihood of re-traumatising the rabbit through surrendering/dumping/neglect due to financial limitations.

## Wish List

- TOWELS: large coloured or patterned
- BATH MATS: no rubber backing
- DOONA COVERS: patterned for rabbit enclosures
- Cat play tunnels: shorter length
- Cat scratching posts: 2 holes in base and 2 levels

- Litter trays: bright colours if possible
- Large wooden lounging logs
- Trampoline pet beds: small
- Treat balls and treat toys for food pellets
- Hay: fresh full size bales of Oaten Hay
- Plastic laundry basket x 4
- Jigsaw puzzles from Kmart: 4 to 6 pieces for under 2yrs used to hide pellet treats
- Any Oxbow rabbit products
- Any products from My Little Helpers store

[www.mylittlehelpers.com.au](http://www.mylittlehelpers.com.au)

- Any products from Rabbit Toys Australia, particularly toys  
<http://www.rabbittoyssaustralia.com.au/>

- Any products from Mosuki Bunny shop, particularly toys  
<https://www.ecwid.com/store/mosukibunnysshop/#!/Toys/c/20054015>

## CRAFT SKILLS NEEDED

- Knitting: to knit small bunnies
- Sewing: Sew doona covers to size for bunny enclosures
- Woodwork: make little box houses with no floor and with 2 openings for the rabbit enclosures
- Handy person: to help Bryce with odd jobs, Orphanage maintenance and upkeep

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

- Shelter attendants: weekly or fortnightly 9.30 – 12.30pm
- Foster carers long and short term
- Data entry: once a week
- Vet support: fortnightly
- Bunny Photos and Profiling: once a week
- Researcher/writer: for bi monthly newsletter articles



## Winston's Challenge Dates

Location	Dates
Banyule (Greensborough, Heidelberg, West Heidelberg)	Saturday December 3, 2016
Darebin (Reservoir, Thornbury)	Saturday December 10, 2016
Knox (Boronia, Ferntree Gully) and Yarra Ranges (Lilydale)	Saturday December 17, 2016



28  
Celery Day

A day to donate  
your spare change  
on the 28th of  
each month - save  
the date!







## The Perfect Gift: our 2017 Calendar

Our 2017 calendar is now available and makes a wonderful Christmas gift stocking filler! The theme is "The Pet Rabbit Bill of Rights", available from [our website](#) or at the Orphanage.



Bunny Education - See the links below for handy information about caring for your bun:

[Bunny Care Booklet](#)

[Responsible Bunny Ownership](#)

[The Myxomatosis Virus](#)

[The Bunny Diet](#)

[Bunnies as Indoor Pets](#)

[Companion Bunnies](#)

[When a Bunny Needs a Vet](#)

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## Summer Buns

With summer finally here and the weather warming up we have had queries about giving your buns time outside. Your buns can certainly have some time outside, but there is a heightened risk of buns contracting Calici and Myxomatosis this season.

### MYXOMATOSIS VIRUS

Your rabbits are at greater risk of contracting Myxomatosis this year, due to the increase in mosquitoes which have been in plague proportions. Mosquitoes can carry the Myxomatosis virus from rabbit to rabbit. We cannot vaccinate against myxo in Australia as it is a live virus and our government will not allow it into the country.

### CALICI VIRUS

There are currently three strains of Calici virus in Australia. The current Calici vaccine does not fully protect our buns against one of the strains. Some vaccinated buns have died from this new strain of Calici. There are steps underway to bring a vaccine to Australia that will cover all the strains.

### SUPERVISION OUTSIDE IS CRUCIAL

Always supervise your buns when they are having outdoor time as there are many risks for a prey animal. Use a pet fence around their outdoor play area so you are not chasing them all over the yard. Rabbits can disappear as soon as your back is turned.

They can dig or jump out of their pen, be exposed to predators such as cats, dogs and foxes and scare easily. Something as common as a bird flying overhead can be perceived as a possible threat to your bunny so give them a place to hide.

Place a carrier or box in the pen where they can take shelter if they are scared, put the carrier away from the edge of the pen so your bunny cannot use it to jump out.

Never put your bunny in direct sun and take them indoors if the weather is over 25 degrees, always provide a bowl of fresh water.

