

FROM THE HEART
OF THE FOREST



www.orangutanfoundation.org.au

November 2021

ORANGUTAN FOUNDATION
INTERNATIONAL
AUSTRALIA

A word from our President



Happy Orangutan Awareness Month!

This week marks the start of a very special Orangutan Awareness Month as OFI officially celebrates 50 years – yes... half a century! – since, as a very young woman, our fearless and inspirational leader Dr. Biruté Mary Galdikas arrived in Borneo in November, 1971, to start her pioneering work with orangutans.

She has been working “in the field” ever since, dedicating her life to the conservation of orangutans and their rainforest home. Dr. Biruté has saved the lives of thousands of orangutans and has helped ensure that wild orangutan populations and their tropical rainforests will thrive into the future.

Although OFI traditionally celebrates Orangutan Awareness Week in the first week of November, we are honouring this momentous milestone all month. Please join us as we extend our heartfelt congratulations and thanks to Dr Biruté on her 50 year anniversary. We are so grateful for her tireless efforts and continued dedication, and we are so proud to support her work. [Visit our website](#) to find out more about her incredible story as she shares memorable moments from her 50 years in the field.

On a personal note, I would like to thank everyone who has sent me such lovely, kind messages of congratulations on being awarded the Order of Australia Medal in the 2021 Queen's Birthday Honours List. My private investiture ceremony took place in late September at Brisbane Government House. What a day! What an honour! One I will never forget.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our wonderful supporters, who continue to contribute to our cause. This month please take the time to consider how you can help orangutans and protect their rainforest habitat. Read on to find out how you can make a difference.



Kobe 

Kobe Steele, OAM
President, OFI Australia



News from the field - our COVID-19 response



The pandemic has seen a huge shift in the practices at the OFI Care Centre and Quarantine. Many extra precautionary measures have been taken to ensure the orangutans, and the staff who care for them, are protected at all costs. We are pleased to report all the staff at the Care Centre are fully vaccinated and there have been no reported cases of COVID-19 amongst staff or orangutans.

As orangutans are susceptible to human illness and disease, strict safety measures remain in place. Staff are regularly tested for COVID-19 and must have their temperature checked on arrival at the Care Centre. They are also required to wear masks and personal protective equipment (PPE).

Unfortunately, many of our projects to upgrade facilities at the Care Centre were put on hold when the pandemic hit, as any outsiders including contractors, were banned from entering. A separate private access road has recently been built to allow contractors to enter the Care Centre, far away from any orangutans. This means our work to install and replace large quarantine and sleeping enclosures can recommence. We also hope to see construction of the third Haha finalised soon.

Thanks to your continued support, we have been able to keep our staff and orangutans safe. We are funding the cost of rapid antigen tests, which are expensive in Indonesia, as our staff need to be tested for COVID-19 on a regular basis as do any new rescued orangutans arriving into Quarantine. We continue to provide funds needed for extra orangutan enrichment activities, and have recently supplied our staff with new uniforms - read more about that below!

Thanks to the strict safety measures in place, orangutans are once again enjoying daily release to the Learning Forest and school is back for the infants at the playground jungle gym. Like us, orangutans are beginning to enjoy more freedoms. We cannot wait to return to Borneo when it is safe to do so, and see our dear friends, both human and orangutan, again.

OFI staff receive new uniforms

Looking after orangutans is hard (and often messy!) work. When we heard OFI staff uniforms had become tired and threadbare we had to do something about it.

Thanks to your support we have been able to supply all 230 of the OFI staff at the Care Centre, Camp Leakey, Tanjung Puting National Park and our orangutan release sites with new uniforms.

Staff were absolutely thrilled to receive their new uniforms. The positive impact is not only felt by OFI staff; it extends to the local businesses that supply the items too! We have received many individual messages from OFI staff expressing their gratitude. You can almost see their smiling faces behind their masks! Thank you for helping us make this happen.



Have you met our gorgeous infant orangutan Jez?



Jez arrived at the Orangutan Care Centre and Quarantine in mid-2020 after being confiscated from a home in a nearby village. Upon arrival Jez was already marking himself out as a trailblazer. He was the first orangutan handled by vets in full body PPE, due to the added risks of COVID-19. Jez's wide eyes looked up at the vets all kitted out, but it didn't seem to faze him as he reached out and wrapped his hand around a veterinarian's gloved thumb.

Like every orangutan who arrives at the Care Centre, Jez spent his first 30 days in mandatory quarantine to ensure he was fit and healthy. This is essential for the safety of all orangutans, now more than ever! After Jez had been given a clean bill of health, he went straight to Camp Danielle, the infant facility.

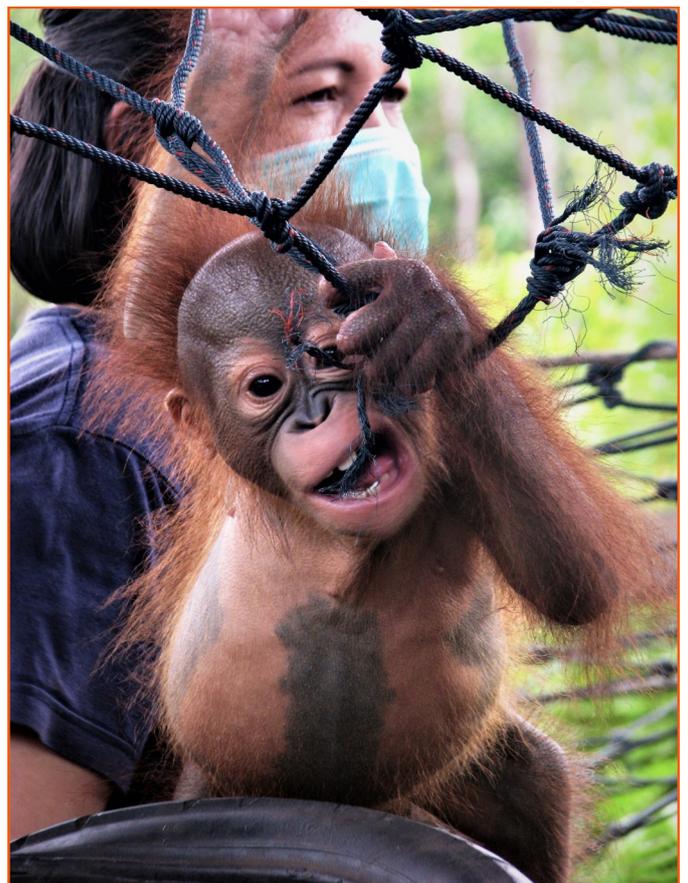
This adorable little guy was so small when he arrived his teeth had yet to appear in his mouth. Nowadays he has a nice set of gnashers that he uses liberally, with bananas being his absolute favourite! Jez has really settled into his home at Camp Danielle and has made many friends. Even though he is smaller than most of the other infants he loves to interact with them, and he is never far from his only slightly bigger "sister" Crystal. They love to play, often teaching each other key cognitive and physical skills in the process.

Jez is now approximately one year of age and is still so young that he requires constant care. His sweet eyes shine with the brightness of infancy as he gazes affectionately at his caregiver, Ibu Enang. He remains close to her while out in the Learning Forest. The pair sit contentedly on the forest floor together, completely relaxed in one another's company. Jez has effortlessly won the hearts of all the caregivers.

In the playground Jez happily entertains himself for hours at a time. A little wobbly and awkward, Jez stands up on a tyre and grabs the ropes above him with both hands to steady himself. He uses his teeth to bite down on the ropes as he wrestles with the net. When he finally manages to prop himself up he looks around triumphantly. Jez isn't shy about asking for help. He often uses Ibu Enang's arm to stabilise himself. He asks for a quick hug of reassurance before launching off again.

Whatever happened to Jez in the past is in the rear-view mirror. Now OFI will care for Jez and watch over him for as long as he needs us.

[Click here to foster one of our beautiful foster orangutans today!](#)



Your small actions can make a big difference!

We often get asked “what can I do to help orangutans?” Believe it or not, there are many small actions you can take everyday that will have a positive impact on orangutans and their forest home. To celebrate Orangutan Awareness Month we encourage you to consider how you can make a difference. Here are some ideas!

Make sustainable choices

- ♥ Every choice you make as a consumer has an impact on the planet. The fast and cheap option isn't always the best! When shopping, try to avoid products containing palm oil. Palm oil is one of the biggest threats facing orangutans as it is one of the largest contributors to the deforestation and destruction of their habitat.
- ♥ Consider where your timber and paper products are sourced from. Purchase recycled materials where possible, or look for items labelled with the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification.
- ♥ Reduce, reuse and recycle! By reducing our consumption of products the entire planet will benefit. You can reduce your waste by taking a reusable cup with you to get your morning coffee. You can also reduce your environmental footprint by avoiding 'fast fashion'. Simply buy less and reuse (and re-wear!) more.

Support OFI Australia's conservation work

- ♥ You don't need to be in Borneo to make a difference. You can help save orangutans and protect their forest habitat by supporting our work. Visit our website to make a donation, foster an orangutan or purchase merchandise from our shop. You can also contribute through your workplace giving program, or even leave a gift in your will!
- ♥ We also have many opportunities for 'hands-on' people who would like to get involved in our work. You can fundraise for us, attend an event, or volunteer for us. Check out the Get Involved section on our website for more ideas.

Stay informed

- ♥ [Visit our website](#) for information about orangutans, their habitat and the threats to their survival. Find out how you can get involved in our work.
- ♥ Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#), share our content to help raise awareness for orangutans!
- ♥ Check out this [ABC Radio podcast](#) to listen to an interview with Kobe Steele, and find out why she has dedicated her life to orangutans.

Everyone has a role to play to protect orangutans and their home. Together, we can make a difference!



Purchase a palm oil free soap and plant a tree!

We are pleased to partner with Orangutan Alliance, who have created a limited edition lemon myrtle scented soap. For every bar of soap sold, one tree will be planted in an area critical to the survival of endangered species. Purchasing this soap bar is not just a fantastic palm oil free alternative; each tree planted will also play a role in mitigating climate change. Every tree helps bring back balance in the Earth's intricate ecosystems.



Each soap bar is:

- ♥ Certified palm oil free
- ♥ Cruelty free – not tested on animals
- ♥ Vegan
- ♥ Planet friendly, biodegradable, compostable, with plastic free packaging
- ♥ Australian made.

The soap bars are now available for purchase in our shop. Please support this wonderful cause!

[Click here to buy now!](#)

Containers for Change

Containers for Change is a fantastic initiative available to everyone in Queensland and Western Australia to increase recycling efforts to help keep our environment litter free.

Every container you recycle through the Containers for Change charity program will mean 10 cents is donated to OFI Australia to help us in our fight to save orangutans. You just take your eligible containers to any refund point and use our Scheme ID number. By doing something as simple as recycling, you can support orangutans and help clean up Australia at the same time!

For Queensland use Scheme ID No. C10046445

For WA use Scheme ID No. C10455891

To find your closest deposit centre and for more information,

[Check out the Containers for Change website](#)



Contact us

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