



# Rabbit Run-Away Chronicles



e-News Issue # 42: March-April 2021  
Rabbit Run-Away Orphanage & HRS Australian Chapter



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

## Derek Zoolander's Great Adventure

*Little native Australian rabbit flies to Germany... read about his adventure*

Derek Zoolander is a native Australian rabbit, affectionately referred to as a 'bush bun' at the Orphanage. For most Australians, who have not observed this species consider them to be feral pests. In the state of Victoria the native rabbit is not considered part of the feral population once in captivity in someone's care. However, it is against the law to release ANY rabbit into the environment, domestic or native, as the law does not distinguish between the two. Derek was found hanging out at the 'Melbourne Zoo' with the primates. The staff can be forgiven for mistaking Derek for a domestic rabbit as he is very friendly, and not afraid of humans. Derek's story continues on page 2 and 3.



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# Derek Zoolander great adventure

When Derek arrived at the Orphanage, he was desexed and vaccinated and placed into a foster home. His foster carers, Elise and Valentin, who were from Munich, were intrigued with his quirky, unique and inquisitive personality, and quickly fell in love with this little Australian. Native rabbits are very clean and before long he became a free range house rabbit, and very much part of their family. He used his litter tray, and would appear at dinner time in the kitchen for his fresh salad greens and treats. When Covid reached Australia everything changed. I will let Elise continue their story.

After we fostered Derek Zoolander, we renamed him 'Rambo'. In early 2020, Valentin got stranded overseas while on a trip to celebrate his PhD thesis when the borders closed due to the pandemic. I filled in my time volunteering at the Orphanage and soon realised that I would need to return home to be with Valentin, but I would not leave my little Rambo behind. I started enquiring into Rambo's transport in October 2020 for a trip planned for April 2021. Due to COVID, limited flights, and most airlines and pet transport companies only taking cats and dogs, it was extremely challenging to get a pet company to agree to "take Rambo's case". I contacted every pet company in Australia. They either did not get back to me or told me they could not take rabbits until further notice. Luckily, I found a direct contact with someone at Jetpets through my workplace, so I did not have to deal with their online quote service.

First, Emirates Airline refused because rabbits take up too much space in the plane (they need their own animal hold as they can't be with cats and dogs). Then a friend in Singapore Airlines contacted their Cargo service, and they agreed to take a rabbit. However, we found out that they do not allow food on the plane with the pets, for biosafety reasons. So that was not an option. Next, Qantas agreed to transport Rambo via London, but they had no idea when the next flight would be. We waited for a month, hoping

there would be some good news. Meanwhile, I asked Jetpets to deliver a travel crate to my house so that Rambo would have plenty of time to become familiar with it. We got a PP30 crate (62cm x 45cm x 41cm), a drinking bottle and a water bowl with a funnel, all attached to the door. They did not include a stay dry fleece as they said it might be a choking hazard for small



animals, and they were not willing to take the risk. The first few days, I left the crate next to Rambo's tray, so that he would get used to this massive blue and orange

box. After a while, I started giving him his bedtime pellets in the crate, so he would go inside and get the message this crate was safe. Finally, I used the crate as his actual litter tray and he used it normally.

By the end of March, we realised Qantas would not be an option as they couldn't tell us when the next flight was, and time was passing. Jetpets enquired with Malaysia Airlines, as this is also one of their partner airlines.

They logged a booking request for the 7th of April, on the 22nd of March. We got the confirmation on the 1st of April, so just one week before the flight...

Rambo's itinerary was the following:

- ◆ Melbourne -> Kuala Lumpur  
4hrs stopover
- ◆ Kuala Lumpur -> London  
overnight comfort stop
- ◆ London -> Munich

Jetpets took care of the transport to London, and they contacted their partner in England (JCS) to organise the transshipment to Munich. I had to contact Gradlyn, a German pet company, to organise the customs clearance in Munich.

Wednesday 7th of April was the day of Rambo's departure, I put lots of newspaper in his crate, his blanket, his monkey toy and his favourite treat.

I packed some critical care, two different zip lock bags with his favourite pellets and treats for a refill in transit. The Jetpets driver picked up Rambo in the morning, although his flight was not until 11 pm. He spent the day at their animal centre at the airport. I got an update at 6 pm that evening with photos, saying he was relaxed, had all his food, and was ready to board his plane. I didn't sleep that night and the night after. Jetpets told me I wouldn't get an update when he arrived in Kuala Lumpur, but I would hear back when he arrived in London. I didn't hear anything when he arrived in London, so I contacted Jetpets to see if they had heard anything, but they hadn't. 'If the animal centre in London had any concerns, they would have called Jetpets immediately. No news is good news.' they told me.

Friday morning, European time, Rambo

boarded his final flight to Munich. The landing was scheduled for 11:55 am. Custom clearance took quite a while, and Valentin, my partner, picked him up at 3 pm.

Although Rambo was a bit scared in his crate, he moved around and seemed to be getting excited as he saw and heard Valentin. Rambo had not seen Valentin for a whole year at this point, and we quickly realised he still remembered him! Valentin and I were on a video call as Valentin opened the crate in the apartment. I couldn't believe it when I saw Rambo jump out of the crate with so much happiness and comfort, even though the apartment was a completely new environment for him. He zoomed around, and found his favourite spot on a blanket next to the window.

I arrived in Munich three days later, and our little rabbit family were finally reunited after one year apart. Rambo was always a super cuddly and sociable bunny, but he is now even more! He even sleeps in our bed now.



I really want to thank you, Judi, for all the work and energy you put into the Orphanage. Without you and the Orphanage, I would not have my little Rambo. You bring so much happiness to every bunny, and I'm sure many people would agree!

# VOLUNTEER CORNER

## Volunteers of the Month— March & April 2021



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

[https://  
www.rabbitrunaway.org.au/  
hrs-information-sheets](https://www.rabbitrunaway.org.au/hrs-information-sheets)

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### Michael Carr and Beatrice Leo

We caught up with this lovely couple and spoke to Michael about their experience.

*How long have you both been volunteering with the Orphanage?*

We have volunteered at the Orphanage for two years. Beatrice found the orphanage online when looking to adopt our rabbit .

*What is the best thing about volunteering?*

Personally I don't know of a higher sacrifice being made than by Judi and Bryce in running the shelter every day. Therefore, working

with high quality volunteers to contribute what we can to help provides high personal satisfaction for us .

*What do you like most about bunnies?*

One of our favourite things about the bunnies is how they express their feelings and thoughts without a voice.

*Big congratulations also to Beatrice and Michael who recently celebrated their engagement, from all of us at the Orphanage .*

Many of our volunteers have put off celebrations during Covid, so our next edition will be dedicated to celebrating milestones with them.

