



# COMMUNITY

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### OFFICE HOURS

Monday: 8.30am - 4pm  
Tuesday-Thursday: 9am - 3pm  
Friday: 9am - 1pm

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### Booking Deadlines

#### Tuesday's Edition

Display: 5pm Thursday  
General Classifieds: 10am Monday  
Deaths: 11am Monday

#### Friday's Edition

Display: 5pm Tuesday  
Classifieds: 10am Thursday  
Deaths: 11am Thursday

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#### Classifieds

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# Author recognised for conservation work

**JENNY DENTON**

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CHILDREN'S author, Rohan Cleave, has been honoured for a second time by the Children's Book Council of Australia for a story about a species on the brink of extinction.

*Bouncing Back: An Eastern Barred Bandicoot Story*, was shortlisted for the Book Council's Eve Pownall Award for Information Books, in the lead-up to Book Week.

His previous work, *Phasmid - Saving the Lord Howe Island Stick Insect*, received an official honour for the same award in 2016.

The children's writer, zoologist and stick insect expert visited Cohuna last year to talk to residents about his work during Book Week.

"It's still home to me and always will be," Mr Cleave said.

He described *Bouncing Back*, as "a story of hope that continues on."

It tells how the Eastern Barred Bandicoot, a rabbit-sized marsupial native to south-eastern Australia which had apparently disappeared from mainland Australia, was rediscovered living in a rubbish tip in Hamilton, in Western Victoria.

It goes on to describe the recovery program for the species, devised by various organisations working together to keep the mainland population alive through captive breeding, with the intention of eventually releasing the animals back into protected areas in the wild.

Mr Cleave, who grew up on a property at Wee Wee Rup, continued farming there after finishing his schooling in Cohuna.

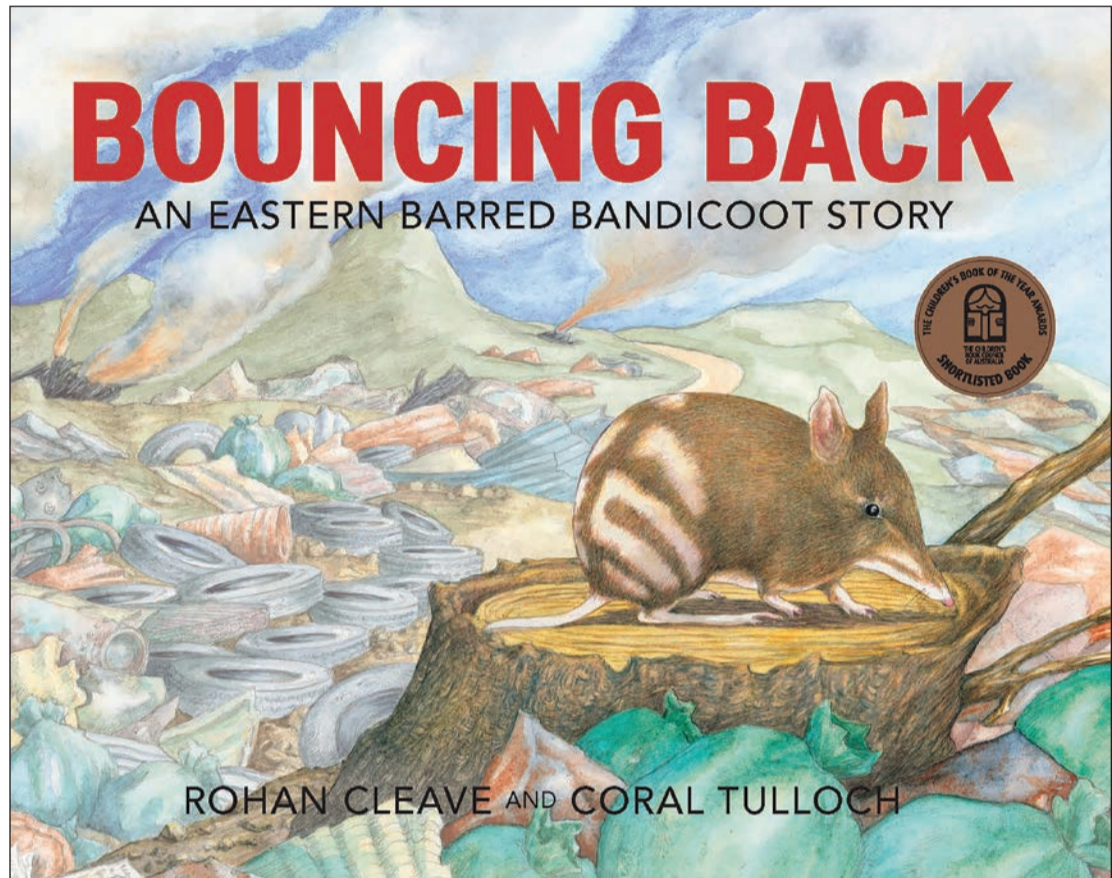
"I love the country," he said. "I always prefer trees, creeks and open spaces. And growing up I always had pets and collected different animals, like turtles and frogs, to study."

But after nine years on the land, he decided on a different path.

"I went off to become a panther wrangler on a movie set," Mr Cleave said.

The film was a 100 year anniversary adaptation of the HG Wells science fiction novel, *The Island of Dr Moreau*, starring Marlon Brando, Val Kilmer and David Thewlis.

It was always a dream to work at the Melbourne zoo, and Mr Cleave finally found a job there,



Rohan Cleave's second children's book, *Bouncing Back*, was shortlisted for the Children's Book Council Eve Pownall Award for Information Books.

then undertook training via Box Hill TAFE.

Over his time at the zoo he has worked with almost every type of species, from native mammals to ungulates - hoofed animals like giraffes, bison, hippos and elephants, carnivores including tigers, otters, meerkats and finally invertebrates, housed in the very popular Butterfly House, where he settled down.

His first book, *The Phasmid*, was about the Lord Howe Island Stick Insect, which also "came back from the dead."

Believed to be extinct for nearly 80 years, the phasmids were rediscovered on a volcanic outcrop, just off the coast of Lord Howe Island and prompted an extraordinary conservation effort as well as worldwide interest.

"The writing came about because at the time I had two young kids I loved reading stories to," Mr Cleave said.

"And I was thinking I was involved in one of the most amazing stories of hope and survival.

That's how the dream to publish started."

Both books combine conservation, science, education and art - in the form of beautiful images by illustrator Coral Tulloch.

*The Phasmid* was also the first children's book to be published by CSIRO Publishing.

Mr Cleave described his work, both as a zookeeper and writer as "trying to get people to connect with the environment, animals and their own backyard".

"Every single species is important and plays a vital role in the environment and their ecosystem," he said.

Mr Cleave believes in hope, which provides a strong motivation for his writing.

"We are continually buoyed by hope I think," Mr Cleave said.

"Volunteers and small groups can do amazing things if we put our minds to it."

Meanwhile, Mr Cleave said the situation for both the Lord Howe Island stick insects and Eastern Barred Bandicoots was looking a



Zoologist, Lord Howe stick insect specialist and children's author Rohan Cleave. **Picture — ALEX AND LILLY CLEAVE**

lot more positive now, with captive breeding occurring and stable populations in various zoos and protected sites.

*Bouncing Back* has also been shortlisted in the non-fiction category of the Wilderness Society Environmental Award for Children's Literature, which will be announced on September 15 at the Hobart Writer's Festival.

## Weather

### Temperatures

Monday: minimum 2.1 degrees, maximum 15.9 degrees  
Tuesday: 1.5, 16.5  
Wednesday: 2.0, 15  
Thursday: 2.0

August minimums: lowest -0.8 degrees [23rd], highest 9.3 degrees [16th, 22nd] average 4.0 degrees [long-term average 5.1 degrees]. Lowest on record: -1.9 degrees [8th, 1963]. Highest on record: 14.0 degrees [30th, 1969].  
August maximums: lowest 11.7 degrees [1st], highest 21.5 degrees [24th], average 15.1 degrees [long-term average 16.2 degrees]. Highest on record: 28.1 degrees [30th, 1980]. Lowest on record: 9.0 degrees [6th, 1974].

### Rainfall

Month to date: 16mm [long-term average 37.2mm]. Year to date: 145.8mm. [long-term January-August average: 242.1mm]. Last year to August 28: 132.6mm. Highest on record for August: 119.0 [1985]. Lowest on record: 1.3mm [1914].



Source: Bureau of Meteorology.

### Stream salinity

Loddon River at Kerang from Friday, August 23: 241us/cm, 213, 133, 132, 124, 117, 114. Barr Creek at Capels Flume: Not available due to low water level.

### Forecast

**Today:** Morning frost and fog, 0-18  
**Saturday:** Sunny, 4-20  
**Sunday:** Partly cloudy, 9-21  
**Monday:** Mostly sunny, 3-20  
**Tuesday:** Mostly sunny, 8-22  
**Wednesday:** Partly cloudy, 10-25

### Daylight

**Today** sunrise 6.48am, sunset 6.03pm  
**Saturday** 6.46am, 6.03pm  
**Sunday** 6.45am, 6.04pm  
**Monday** 6.43am, 6.05pm  
**Tuesday** 6.42am, 6.06pm