



Wildlife carers and rescuers Jude Lennox, Kim Rettig and Ruth Waterhouse with orphaned pademelon, Baby Joe, at Bonorong Wildlife Sanctuary. Pictures: Chris Kidd

# Wildlife roads to ruin

## Desperate call to slow down amid state roadkill crisis

**Tess McCracken**

Hope for change is what keeps one wildlife carer's spirits up as she looks after animals like Baby Joe, whose mother was killed on a Tasmanian road amid a statewide "roadkill crisis".

Ruth Waterhouse is joining a chorus of voices urging Tasmanian drivers to slow down to help decrease rising rates of roadkill being found on the state's roads.

More than 500,000 animals are killed on Tasmanian roads each year and leading animal rescue organisation Bonorong Wildlife Sanctuary and RACT have joined for a month-long campaign to improve road safety outcomes for humans



**RACT's Garry Bailey and Bonorong director Greg Irons with Madge the wombat.**

and Tasmania's native animals.

RACT chief advocacy officer Garry Bailey said Tasmania is the worst performing state in terms of road safety and it was coming at a cost to native wildlife and human lives.

"Tasmania is grappling with a severe roadkill crisis, which poses a dual threat to both our native wildlife and the safety of our drivers," Mr Bailey said.

"It is a bad look for Tasmania to have dead animals on our roads.

"What we need to do is convince people they need to slow down at dawn and dusk when there are more animals on the road."

RACT data shows in 2023,



there will be 1000 wildlife-related vehicle insurance claims through RACT and 3000 across the state.

Bonorong Wildlife Sanctuary director Greg Irons said the centre will eventually reach capacity if drivers don't change their behaviours on the roads.

"If people spent one week with us, even one day, and saw what these animals go through when they are hit by a car, the behaviour would change immediately," he said.

"It just seems year after year, we're yelling and screaming the same message with great support from people like RACT...yet the numbers are going up every single year.

"For Tassie tourism, we're a clean, green image with carcasses littering the road.

"We've got to start walking the talk, not just talking the talk."

Ms Waterhouse will have the 400g orphaned joey in her care until he reaches about 2kg and said there needed to be a change in driver behaviour.

"There are more joeys out there and animals in care than there are carers, so let's fix that, but let's go to the source of the problem," she said.

"Our roads go across their pathways, their pathways to food, to mates, to new territories, they aren't going to change, but we need to change."