**MARCH 2022 IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**EIGHT-YEAR-OLD’S WISH CREATES LEAPS AND BOUNDS FOR ENDANGERED SPECIES**

Make-A-Wish® Australia has made unicorns fly, sent kids to the moon and recently granted a **ribbeting** adventure for eight-year-old Oliver from Mackay, Queensland.

Oliver, an enthusiast of deadly and endangered animals, travelled to Canberra to have his very own expedition at the Namadgi National Park, 30 mins south of Canberra, to help an almost extinct amphibian species.

“We’re so grateful that Make-A-Wish were able to make Oliver’s wish come true, it means so much to him and our family,” said Samantha, said Oliver’s mother, Samantha Deighton.

“While having his treatment for acute lymphoblastic leukaemia, Oliver watched every episode of Deadly 60, a children’s TV show that travels the globe in search of the world’s 60 deadliest animals.

“Oliver also loves David Attenborough, he makes little videos for our family and friends where he recites facts and loves to draw and make books about animals in the wild,” said Samantha.

“His knowledge amazes me, he recently told me there are only 60 Northern Corroboree frogs left in the wild,” she added.

To make Oliver's wish a day to remember, Make-A-Wish researched the best places for him to have a hands-on experience with the critically endangered Northern Corroboree Frog.

Make-A-Wish reached out to universities and researchers in the field and were introduced to Dr Sarah May and Dr Ben Sheele, who both helped the Wish Force team of volunteers create a unique, bespoke Wish experience for Oliver.

On arrival to Namadgi National Park, Oliver was met by threatened species officers and scientists, who work directly with the endangered Northern Corroboree frogs. Together they released 30 frogs into the wild, a crucial part of the recovery program.

Oliver then joined the threatened species team at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, a protected area on the fringe of Namadgi National Park, to get a behind-the-scenes experience and help the team with their conservation.

He helped the team release a critically endangered Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby into its new enclosure, and feed critically endangered Grassland Earless Dragons.

“This was an incredible educational experience for Oliver, he said it felt like a proper expedition,” said Samantha.

ACT Government Threatened Species Program Manager, Dr Sarah May, said the Northern Corroboree frogs are a critically endangered species, native to high country wetland environments, like we have in parts of the ACT.

“We’ve been successfully breeding this species for many years, to help protect the species from extinction and bolster the number of animals in the wild. Ongoing releases like this are critical to the species’ future.

“It’s heartening to know that young people like Oliver are not only aware of the importance of conserving our species, but are willing to be part of their recovery,” said Dr May,

“We’ll let Oliver know if we find one of his frogs out in the park in the future, their distinct tummy markings will be their way of telling us that they are one of Oliver’s frogs.

“My message to others interested in our threatened species program at Tidbinbilla Nature reserve is to come and visit or check out the website,” concluded Dr May.

CEO of Make-A-Wish Australia, Sally Bateman, said right now, due to the impacts of COVID-19, Make-A-Wish has more than 800 seriously ill children waiting for a wish.

“The need for community support is greater than ever before. We hope by sharing Oliver’s story and the amazing work of the Wish Force, we can highlight the lasting impact that wishes have on seriously ill children and their families,” said Ms Bateman.

“With no government funding, Make-A-Wish relies on the incredible generosity and support from donors, volunteers, partners and the special friends who help make these wishes happen.

“Wish kids need stars like you,” added Ms Bateman.

During March, guests and crew of Hungry Jack’s can donate to Make-A-Wish by purchasing Wishmaker Stars ($1, $2 and $5) at any Hungry Jack’s (in-store, drive-thru or online) until April 4.

All proceeds from Wishmaker stars sold at Hungry Jack’s goes to Make-A-Wish.

To find out how you can volunteer for Make-A-Wish Australia, please visit [www.makeawish.org.au](https://www.makeawish.org.au/) or call 1800 032 260.

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# About Make-A-Wish

Make-A-Wish Australia is part of the world’s largest wish-granting organisation and brings the local community together to grant the life-changing wishes of children with critical illnesses. Since 1985 it has delivered more than 10,000 unforgettable wishes to children around the country. From the incredibly humble to the seemingly impossible – the Wish Force has made unicorns fly, sent kids to the moon and even brought dinosaurs back from extinction. Over the past five years, Make-A-Wish Australia has led the world in the adoption of the Wish Journey, a carefully curated program which focuses on wish capture and design, building anticipation for each child ahead of their one true wish being realised. In December 2021, Make-A-Wish was incredibly proud to again place among Australia's most reputable charities.