

Oakleigh Monash
Leader



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\$1 Incl. GST



THE BOXER
OAKLEIGH BOYS
IN THE RING p8



BABYLOVE
NEW BUBS ON
SHOW p28



WILD ACCUSATIONS: Michele Phillips dedicates her life to caring for wildlife injured in bushfires and on our roads. After several unfounded complaints, the Oakleigh South resident fears an uncertain future for her and her shelter. Story page 5.

Picture: MARK STEWART N22WG208

DID YOU KNOW | Licensed wildlife carers spend a lot of their own time, energy and money to help wildlife in need.



Michele Phillips runs a registered wildlife shelter from her Oakleigh South home. Animals include injured birds and possums. Pictures: MARK STEWART N22WG208

Swoop stuns shelter

Home operator in the clear after inspection, but flow-on potential a worry

Wildlife | Michelle Carnovale

A WILDLIFE rescuer is furious a complaint made against her to Monash Council may jeopardise future funding grants she desperately needs to keep her afloat.

Oakleigh South Wildlife Shelter operator Michele Phillips relies on donations, grants and her own hip pocket to pay for the hundreds of dollars needed each week to nurse injured birds and animals back to health.

The passionate volunteer said she was left fuming after council and Department of Sustainability and Environment officers inspected her home on Monday last week for alleged breaches of her licence.

An unknown resident had complained about Ms Phillips's shelter, which is also her home.

"I was stunned," she said.

"They came a month ago as well because a neighbour had complained, but everything was fine."

Ms Phillips said the DSE officer found nothing wrong with her



set-up after the inspection on Monday last week, and she was worried the complaints would tarnish her reputation and chance of future funding.

"It just caused me a lot of trouble for no reason," she said.

Previously, Ms Phillips has received money from the council's discretionary fund.

Now preparing for what is tipped to be a busier fire season than last summer, Ms Phillips

said she was in desperate need of volunteers to help her with rescues and caring for injured animals.

"I want people to learn what I'm doing," she said. "We've all been told it's going to be a very busy fire season so I need volunteers and donations to cope."

She thanked *Leader* readers who came to her aid after this paper ran a story on October 13, asking for help.



Michele Phillips with a four-week-old wattlebird, and (left) holding a baby ringtail possum.

DSE officer Glenn Sharp confirmed that an Oakleigh South animal shelter had been inspected on November 16 following a complaint "and found there was no evidence to support the complaint".

► To help Ms Phillips, phone 0411 600 591.