Dr Peggy has written another book!
In between doing her scientific field studies, hosting numerous Conservation Volunteer groups, giving lectures to various groups across the country, designing hundreds of beautiful jewelry pieces, creating quirky exhibits for art shows, perpetually entertaining biologists, geologists, entomologists and an abundance of other 'ologists as well as copious amounts of teachers, university lecturers, eager wannabes, business people, artists, friends and family at her, and Mike’s, beautiful bush home - she managed to find time to produce *Dr Peggy’s EchidnArtefacts & More*.

This charming book celebrates her amazing collection of echidna artifacts. *Dr Peggy’s EchidnArtefacts & More* not only honors the artists who contributed to her collection but also, through entertaining anecdotes and snippets of echidna facts, takes the reader on a fun journey exposing the life of a field scientist working with the marvelous monotreme.

As Dr Peggy says, “The book has been 26 years in the making.”

The story began in January 1988 when keen young field biologist, Peggy Rismiller, arrived on South Australia’s Kangaroo Island, from Germany, to start post doctoral studies on the black tiger snake and the short-beaked echidna. She had not seen either in real life.

By April of that year Peggy had bought herself an echidna puppet. But she still hadn’t come face to face with the real thing. She was given an echidna stick pin for luck.

Four months later she had experienced several enchanting echidna encounters. So she bought an echidna t-shirt and decided to stay for two years.

Twenty six years later Dr Peggy is still on Kangaroo Island and still studying the short-beaked echidna.
What she has discovered about this elusive, uniquely Australian, creature during those years in the field has branded her the world’s foremost echidna expert.

And her collection of echidna artifacts has also evolved over the years. From those humble beginnings of a puppet, stick pin and t-shirt her home is now the habitat for a huge, eclectic gathering of echidna artifacts that must number in the thousands.

No doubt one of the most difficult things for Dr Peggy must have been deciding which of her beloved echidna memorabilia would appear in the book, ending up with 236 pieces she felt best represented the diversity of her collection.

Dr Peggy had carried the idea of the book in her head for several years before she found the time to produce it, promising that one day, when it was written, she would launch it at the Kangaroo Island Art Feast.

Every spring, Kangaroo Island celebrates the extraordinary talents of its eclectic coalition of artists, hosting a unique week long feast of art, food and wine.

This October the Art Feast was held over 34 different venues spread across the Island. And this was the year Dr Peggy was able to keep her promise.

The book launch was held in conjunction with an exhibition celebrating the Elegance of the Echidna at the Teasdale’s home, a beautiful venue overlooking Pelican Lagoon.

Dr Peggy approached the Island’s artist asking if they would contribute their own special take on the echidna for the Elegance of the Echidna exhibition. Sixteen KI artists answered Echidna Mother’s call – continued next page...
The design and layout of Dr Peggy’s EchidnArtefacts & More was the work of Adelaide freelance designer/graphic artist Victor Hugo Ortegon. He was also the creator of his name sake – Victor the Echidna – the books narrator, purveyor of little known echidna facts and self proclaimed art critic. But there is much more to this story.

The Victor who appears in Dr Peggy’s EchidnArtefacts & More is a tribute to another Victor – a little echidna who lived far away from his homeland in the San Diego Zoo in the USA. Victor was transported from Australia to San Diego in 1956 as an adult echidna. For the first 30 years he was there he was known as Erma, until a vet examination determined that ‘she’ was in fact a ‘he’. So Erma became known as Victor and lived the next 26 years as a boy until he died of heart failure in April 2012, and estimated to be at least 58 years of age. He was the longest/oldest captive echidna in the world.

Victor was a very popular exhibit at the zoo and over the years enthralled and captured the hearts of thousands including one young Mexican boy, Victor Hugo. Victor Hugo felt an immediate connection to this strange little spiny creature that carried his name. Years later still enchanted by echidnas, Victor moved to Australia and found Dr Peggy’s website. A friendship blossomed. Now, through Victor, the graphic artist, the spirit of Victor the echidna has returned to Australia and lives on in Dr Peggy’s EchidnArtefacts & More.
Winemaker Matt Rechner was strolling through the vineyards one day, deep in thought, trying to come up with a name for his new McLaren Vale winery. As he walked he had the strangest feeling he was being watched. He turned around and there, fixing him with its glittering black eyes, was a feisty little echidna.

It was a Eureka moment for Matt – of course– he would call the winery Echidna Wines. But it turned out echidnas are popular in the wine industry; an interstate winery was already using echidna on one of their labels. But Matt really wanted that name so he replaced the ‘c’ with a ‘k’ and Ekhidna Wines was born.

When Matt was approached by Dr Peggy and asked if he would be willing to supply the wine for the launch of her book he didn’t hesitate for a millisecond.

In the midst of a busy long weekend, Matt downed tools, loaded his vehicle with Ekhidna, sparklings, whites and reds, hopped on the ferry and spent the evening diligently dispensing his wines dressed in his distinctive black Ekhidna T-shirt with its great logo and catchy slogan – “Australia’s great nose”. Next morning Matt was back on the ferry and back at the winery in time for the lunch crowd.

Matt has always had a keen interest in echidnas. “I have done a lot of reading about them. I think they are amazing creatures”, he told Puggle Post.

The marvelous monotreme hasn’t just loaned its name to the Ekhidna wines, there are also 6 different Ekhidna beers, an Ekhidna ginger beer and an Ekhidna apple cider and an Ekhidna Kitchen restaurant!

Let’s raise our glasses to Australian noses – be they furry or fragrant.
Creating your own echidna!

Dr Peggy’s EchidnArtefacts & More wasn’t the only book launched at this year’s Kangaroo Island Art Feast. Echidna Discoveries and Activities made its debut that day too.

The book is an ideal resource for teachers and the general public to learn about the echidna through fun puzzles, games and loads of craft ideas.

Aimed at children from 7 to 70 and upwards it contains 56 pages of fascinating echidna facts mixed with echidna cross-words, word games and board games, ‘how to make’ echidnas from salt dough, cardboard, felt and papier-mâché, echidna fridge magnets, echidna bookmarks and echidna stamps and much more.


All echidna information has been updated by Dr Peggy and the layout, and most of the illustrations, were produced by artist and Project Manager of Conservation Volunteers Australia and Echidna Care Inc volunteer extraordinaire - Frances Lewis.

As the book says..."Explore and discover echidna secrets and have fun”
The contents of *Echidna Discoveries and Activities* were well and truly tested on Kangaroo Island’s younger residents at an Echidna Party, as part of the Art Feast and before the book’s ‘official’ launch.

Brightly coloured echidnas appeared out of cardboard and paint, cup cakes were turned into edible echidnas and there was even a water melon spitting competition.

And what did the astute critics think about the book? “It’s cool!”

Dr Peggy demonstrates the proper melon spitting technique to eager contestants.
Competition was fierce at the inaugural Great Echidna Cupcake Competition. **Top left:** with the help of Dr Peggy the younger generation show how to turn a cupcake into an echidna. **Bottom left:** the older kids give it their best shot. **Top and bottom right:** some echidna creations. **Far right:** but the judge’s decision was final.. yummy!
Raylene Nagy of Victoria is one of our regular “echidna watchers”. She emailed us recently to share a story about a local echidna who had taken up residence in a dog kennel on a friend’s property, much to the disgust of the kennel’s usual resident.

“The farm dog was barking at something”, said Raylene, “And when my friend went to investigate she discovered this echidna.”

A young echidna got itself into a prickly situation in Darwin’s rural area recently when it decided to take shelter in a big, black gumboot - and got stuck.

The owner of the gumboot was alerted to the plight of the prickly stowaway when his dogs started barking at the boot. Looking into the boot he just saw spines so took the boot-and-echidna combo to the Ark Animal Hospital where Veterinarian Stephen Cutter X-rayed it to find out just how stuck the echidna was. It turned out that he was thoroughly wedged so the boot was carefully cut open to release its prisoner.

Once released from his rubber cage, the 3kg male was given a check-up, deemed healthy and released near where he was found ... away from the dogs!

You know the marvellous monotreme and the Puggle Post magazine have one characteristic in common... they are both elusive creatures and you never know when you are going to see one.

So, if you think you may have missed a few issues of Puggle Post – you probably haven’t, as there hasn’t been one to hit the newsstands since the February 2013 issue.

It’s all a matter of timing and at least we have managed to get this one out before the calendar turned over to 2015!

And what better way to illustrate the dilemmas of a frustrated editor than with Dr Peggy’s latest quirky creation aptly called “Time Walk” - so that’s where all the time goes - walkabout!

Ed’s New Year’s resolution – must get out more often!

Cheers....
Echidna Care Inc have produced Echidna Road Signs that have been designed to help protect your local echidnas from becoming just another road kill statistic. Put up warning signs on any roads your echidnas may have to cross so you can warn motorists of the danger (to the echidnas!).

The yellow plastic signs with the wording "Echidnas Next 4Kms" are available in 4 different sizes:

- **12 x 12cm (swing, with suction cup)** $2
- **18 x 18cm** $3
- **25 x 25cm** $4
- **38 x 38cm** $6

Bonus: Buy any two signs and get a free Echidna Watchers Guide (what all good echidna watchers should have) and road sign magnet. Postage for any two signs $4. Postal address: Echidna Care Inc Post Office Penneshaw Kangaroo Island South Australia 5222

Please pass this E-newsletter on to any person or group you think may be interested.

Echidna Care Membership

Has your membership lapsed?

Or would you like to make a research donation?

Know someone who wants to join Echidna Care Inc?

Membership fees for Echidna Care are for a 12 month period. There are several membership categories:

- **Standard-Individual** $15
- **Student/pensioner** $10
- **Group Membership** $25
- **Overseas** $A25

Please send your fees or donations to:

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