



# Forest Chatter



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*"I lost count of the people who told me they cried (as I did) when Leo left his cage for the last time and returned to the rainforest"*

## From the President...

**I write this report a few days after returning from Borneo with Nine Network's 60 Minutes crew who televised the release of Leo, Juminten and Titin.**

What a whirlwind event this was. There were 14 days of production, 7 days of editing and pre-and post segment website and social media monitoring.

Some of the viewer statistics are very impressive. Over 1.5 million people watched 'Jungle Orphans' on television, 100,000 plus people read our Facebook page and we received over 2,500 likes and 500 supporter comments.

The offers of help following the feature airing are inspiring and we are still following up on your generosity and support.

There is no doubt this nationally televised feature captured a broad audience and created a magnificent opportunity to raise the profile of critically endangered orangutans in Borneo.

I lost count of the people who told me they cried (as I did) when Leo left his cage for the last time and returned to the rainforest.

I was also incredibly impressed with the professionalism and sensitivity shown by the 60 Minutes crew during production of this heartfelt story and for the beautiful footage shot.

For those who want to see the 12 minute segment again (or for the first time) the footage is live on the 60 Minutes website via link from our home page.

Another highlight of my trip to Borneo was meeting baby Lou; her touching story is featured within the pages of this newsletter. It is a gorgeous account of her life and I encourage you to read it and watch the video on our You Tube channel.

The team at BOS Foundation Indonesia chose to name baby Lou as a beautiful testimony to our Vice President Louise Grossfeldt to acknowledge her work and love for orangutans.

Baby Lou's story is also a reminder of how vulnerable baby orangutans are and highlights that people who should know better make mistakes caring for precious orangutans like her.

Onto other matters back home and by the time you read this we will have hosted a special event in Sydney to meet our new Orangutan ambassadors. Keep a look out for more announcements on our website and Facebook page.

We are now on track to reach our goal of releasing 170 orangutans by the end of 2013. The only thing stopping us now is securing the funds to do so.

We have orangutans waiting to go home and the protected rainforest reserves to release them in: it's just the enormous logistical costs that hold us back.

Earlier this year we introduced a new corporate sponsorship program to

release orangutans and are delighted to say that two socially conscious organisations, the RDA Foundation and King Furniture, came on-board.

They donated enough for us to release two orangutans back to the wild. So it was a very special moment for them knowing they have helped to release Leo and Juminten too.

I encourage you to promote our unique corporate sponsorship opportunities where you work too to help us to set another orangutan free.

During the 60 Minutes interview I made a personal pledge "Orangutans will not become extinct in my lifetime". Together through your ongoing support and our commitment we can help to save the species.

King regards,

Tony Gilding  
President BOS Australia

**Follow our orangutan release blogs:**  
[goingback2dforest.wordpress.com](http://goingback2dforest.wordpress.com)  
[orangutanforest.wordpress.com](http://orangutanforest.wordpress.com)

Photos: BOS Australia President; Tony Gilding on location during the filming of the 60 Minutes feature (left), 60 Minutes sound man Jason Macauley crosses the Lesik River (below) © BOS Australia





# 14 days with 60 Minutes

60 Minutes Reporter Alli Langdon, BOSF President Tony Gilding and Vice President Lou Grossfeldt travel by helicopter to the release site © BOS Australia

**In April the Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation (BOSF) team embarked on an incredible yet arduous expedition deep into Borneo Indonesian rainforest with the Nine Network for 60 Minutes Australia.**

The journey took the 60 Minutes' crew to the Foundation's Samboja Lestari orangutan rehabilitation centre in Eastern Kalimantan and into protected rainforest reserves culminating in the release of 3 BOSF orangutans back to the wild.

The story was produced to showcase the plight of the critically endangered orangutan, the impact of deforestation on their habitat, and how the Foundation rescues and rehabilitates orangutans for release.

President of BOSF Australia Tony Gilding and Vice President Lou Grossfeldt worked alongside the crew and we asked Tony about his experience.

Here is Tony's story.

**How did the opportunity arise to feature the plight of the orangutan with Channel Nine's 60 Minutes program?**

The team from 60 Minutes contacted us in late 2012 after hearing about BOSF's work and our orangutan rescue, rehabilitation and release programs.

**Tell us about filming schedule; when and over what duration did the filming take place?**

The expedition took place over 2 weeks including travel and filming.

Filming was challenging and took much longer than usual due to inaccessibility to remote locations and difficult conditions resulting in a 12 minute broadcast feature aired on Australian television on Sunday May 5 2013.

Coordinating the logistics of the trip was extremely complex due to unique orangutan safety and health requirements, entry and filming authorisation permits and took nearly 6 months of planning to execute.

**Where did the BOSF team and 60 Minutes crew travel?**

The BOSF team and 60 Minutes crew left Australia in mid April flying from Australia via Singapore to Eastern Kalimantan, Indonesian Borneo.

The segment was filmed throughout Eastern Indonesian Borneo and involved travel on foot, by vehicle, plane and helicopter and in true adventure style; via a slippery makeshift sling across a raging river ravine to access the camp and release sites.

**Where did the BOS Foundation team and crew stay during the production of the segment? What were the conditions like?**

Throughout the trip, we experienced a diverse range of living arrangements and conditions.

It started out well with the creature comforts of a Singapore hotel and concluded with camping by a rapid river after torrential rainfall; sleeping under a leaky tarpaulin deep in the rainforest eating canned sardines and corned beef.

The crew were amazing; they never once complained about the conditions despite challenges such as losing our temporary toilet during a fierce rain storm and no beer after a hot humid day traipsing in the inhospitable Borneo rainforest.

**What was the experience like working with the 60 minutes crew to produce this story?**

Despite working, travelling and living alongside four relative strangers in close confines and enduring extreme heat, high humidity and heavy rainfall; our spirits and resolve still remained high.

There was plenty of humour and banter around the camp site after filming (of which we can't possibly publish here!)

What happens on tour stays on tour so-to-speak, but we all worked really well together and promised to stay in touch in the future.

**Were there any unique challenges encountered during filming?**

We encountered plenty of transport challenges along the way.

On the day we planned to film the release, the river had risen due to torrential rainfall and it was difficult to get to the release and camp sites except through improvisation making and using a rope sling slung between trees to cross the river.

So there we were at the last minute transporting heavy equipment and people over a rapidly rising river.

The challenge continued. When we arrived back at camp after the release we discovered roads were inaccessible and so we would have needed to walk for 11 hours carrying more than 100 kilograms of gear each on our backs to get to transport.

Fortunately the producer convinced 60 Minutes' head office the only practical way out was by helicopter and this was arranged to collect us to take us back to civilisation.

**Tell us about the release of Leo, Juminten and Titin?**

As with all of our releases, the lead-up, preparation and logistics form the bulk of our work.

When we finally arrived at the release site and strategically positioned the cages to release Leo, Juminten and Titin; they naturally sprung out of their cages in sheer amazement and scaled the nearest trees to survey their new landscape.

It is always very emotional releasing our orangutans and this release was no different. There is no greater experience than giving back freedom to a once captive orangutan.



*"There is no greater experience than giving back freedom to a once captive orangutan"*

Photo © BOS Australia

[www.orangutans.com.au](http://www.orangutans.com.au)



### How did the 60 Minutes crew react?

Reporter Alli Langdon, Vice President Lou Grossfeldt and I were the lucky ones as we could watch on and enjoy each release take place.

The 60 Minutes film crew were amazing; their focus was capturing the best footage for every moment during the releases. They strategically placed 4 cameras throughout the site to ensure every angle was covered.

I think when the film crew reviewed the release footage it was their first opportunity to really take it in and appreciate the experience.

### What was special about Leo's release?

I loved it when Leo, who weighs in at 86 kilograms, rattled his cage because he was so anxious to escape it.

When we released the lock on Leo's cage he realised he could fit his powerful fingers underneath the door and forcefully push it up; he was gone and up the first tree in a matter of seconds.

### What was the highlight of the expedition?

Apart from the emotional experience of releasing 3 orangutans under our care after nearly 20 years; the next best thing was a hot shower and a cold beer when we got back to dry land.

### What does BOSF hope to achieve as a result of the 60 Minutes feature story?

Any publicity helps us to focus attention on the incredible work the BOS Foundation does to rescue, rehabilitate and release orangutans.

We hope this story encourages people to support us to save critically endangered orangutans; the rainforest where they live and other endemic species that struggle to survive in the unique and threatened biodiversity regions of Borneo.

### What do you think the Australian public will learn about orangutans after this story airing?

I think they will be amazed by the courage and tenacity of BOS Foundation's Indonesian team who work so hard in challenging conditions.

I also believe people will be alarmed by the immense scale of rainforest destruction and the proliferation of palm oil plantations on orangutan habitat in Borneo.

### How can Australian's help the BOSF?

Every donation helps us to secure the AUD \$10,000 it costs to release one more orangutan.



60 Minute's producer David Alrich travels by sling across the Lesik River © BOS Australia

Thanks to donors we have now secured protected rainforest reserves to relocate orangutans safely and have teams ready to release and monitor their progress and wellbeing.

We still have another 600 orangutans waiting to return to the wild and the only obstacle stopping us is funding.

Some of our rescued orangutans will never be suitable for a release back into the wild. For them we want to make their lives as fulfilling as possible and continue to deliver critical emotional and physical care, food, treatment and a safe environment in which to live out their lives.

Every adoption and donation we receive gets us closer to making this happen.

## The final journey

*"Juminten, Leo and Titin have spent an incredible combined 36 years in rehabilitation for release under our care"*

Over two challenging days in April the team from Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation (BOSF) Samboja Lestari released another three orangutans into Kehje Sewen Forest, Kutai Timur in Eastern Kalimantan, Indonesian Borneo.

The Kehje Sewen Forest is an Ecosystem Restoration Concession acquired and established by BOSF in 2009 to release rehabilitated orangutans from Samboja Lestari into protected and managed reserves.

The release was gruelling and hampered by heavy rainfall, flooding and inaccessible rough terrain. It took place by land and air involving vehicles, helicopter and slings over the rapidly rising Lesik River.

While every release is significant this one was especially poignant because Juminten, Leo and Titin have spent an incredible combined 36 years in rehabilitation for release under our care.

These orangutans are among some of our older and most cherished who were rescued from degraded forests devastated by raging fires and lost habitat from commercial palm oil and acacia plantations.

Juminten, Leo and Titin have eagerly awaited release while living at BOSF's pre-release islands in preparation for their journey home.

Juminten is a beautiful 15 year old female orangutan who is romantically linked with Leo. While wild at heart, she is also an affectionate and loving friend and cares for the young of other orangutans.



Photo © BOS Australia

Leo is a huge, robust and very handsome male orangutan with a gentle and playful spirit and highly protective of other females but Juminten, his true love has stolen his heart.

Female Titin is a big healthy orangutan with gorgeous soft and soulful eyes and doting mother to Titon and Tina-Toon. She is relaxed, gentle and kind with a soft spot for Leo and a firm friend of Juminten's.

Today Juminten, Leo and Titin roam high amongst the tree-top canopies of lush protected rainforest reserves and are free to be wild orangutans as nature intended.



Photo © BOS Australia





## Lovable Lou

Baby Lou had a heartbreaking start in life. She was only a few months old when she was taken from a commercial palm oil plantation to a village and kept as a pet.

We don't know what happened to her mother; but it's almost certain she was brutally killed by machete for encroaching onto land converted for palm oil production in search of food and water for her baby.

Baby Lou became both an orphan and a pet living for a few years in a small village as a plaything. Later she was taken to the Kutai National Park displayed in a cage at the main entrance and fed chocolate.

Alarmingly, Lou was eventually set free deep into the park alone. Being a baby without guidance or food from her mother she lacked natural instinct, physical strength and will to survive.

Kutai National Park rangers eventually called in the BOSF team at Samboja Lestari for help. They found Lou in a shocking state and she was taken back to Samboja Lestari for a blood transfusion.

As with all new arrivals, the foundation sought a name that would embody her enduring spirit and she was called Lou after our treasured Vice President and primatologist Louise Grossfeldt.

Louise's namesake is slowly recovering and needs ongoing medical care and love. We all hope she grows into an emotionally and physically healthy orangutan so we can set her free.

See baby Lou on You Tube or follow the link on the home page of our website: [youtu.be/iGsNh7F\\_iWY](https://youtu.be/iGsNh7F_iWY)

Photo: Louise Grossfeldt meets her namesake, the adorable baby 'Lou' © BOS Australia

## Meek, mild Miko

Baby Miko was only a few months old when he was rescued by the BOS Foundation in February 2010 after being confiscated from a village in Kerang Bengkirai near Sebangau National Park by the Natural Resources Conservation Agency.

Tragically Miko's young life began held as a pet in a small cage for the viewing and playing pleasure of his owner. He was weak, severely dehydrated and had strange injuries to his small fragile hands and fingers.

Being such a young, vulnerable orangutan kept as a pet, it's likely his mother was killed and that he probably witnessed her brutal death.

Miko was taken to Nyaru Menteng for treatment and rehabilitation and was named Miko after the paramedic who saved him.

On arrival baby Miko was incredibly shy, nervous and cautious. He was so distressed and malnourished that he refused to eat or drink and cried so much his eyes were constantly swollen which affected his vision.

Today Miko has made huge progress. Once a sad, tearful orangutan, he is now a joyful, vivacious and hilariously comical character with a ravenous passion for forest fruits and his friends.

### Vital statistics

**Name:** Miko.

**Gender:** Male.

**Origin:** Kerang Bengkirai near Sebangau National Park in Central Kalimantan, Indonesian Borneo.

**Lives:** Nyaru Menteng Rehabilitation Centre, Indonesian Borneo.

**Cutest characteristic:** Miko's big; round soft brown eyes are incredibly soulful and charming.

**Favourite past time:** Miko loves his daily siestas and naps up to three times a day.



Miko © BOS Australia

**Hangs out with:** Miko's best friend is Joan, they love spending time together and have a very strong bond.

**Favourite food:** Wild forest fruits.

**Current weight:** 10.7 kilograms.

**Current age:** Approximately 2.5 years.

**Education:** Forest School – Group 1.

### Help Miko and claim a tax deduction!

Your adoption will contribute to Miko's health, well-being, medication, ongoing vaccinations, and support the wonderful surrogate mothers who care for over 600 orangutan orphans in our care. With your adoption we can help set Miko free.

When you adopt Miko, you can claim for a deduction on your tax return.

### Adopt Miko today!

Visit [orangutans.com.au/Orangutan-Survival/Baby-Miko.aspx](http://orangutans.com.au/Orangutan-Survival/Baby-Miko.aspx)

### Editor's Note:

*We had so much news to share with you that we needed to find more space! Jungle juice and our Volunteer profile will return in our next edition of Forest Chatter.*

Jay



**BOS Australia**  
primates helping primates

Borneo Orangutan Survival Australia

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Our newsletter is proudly written and produced by BOS Australia volunteers.

Thank you for your continued support.



## We love hearing from you

We know you've been spreading the orangutan word, so why not tell us about what you're up to? Email [contact@orangutans.com.au](mailto:contact@orangutans.com.au) or post your photos online at [www.facebook.com/bosaustralia](http://www.facebook.com/bosaustralia)

## Can you help us?

Your donations provide food, shelter, protection, medicine and companionship for orangutans in our care. Visit [www.orangutans.com.au](http://www.orangutans.com.au) to help us set them free.

Donations by cheque are payable to Borneo Orangutan Survival (BOS) Australia at PO Box 3916, Mosman NSW 2088.

Make a one-off or regular payment via direct debit or by credit card either online or by calling us on (02) 9011 5455.

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