



Sanctuary's devil double

Currumbin has welcomed two endangered joeys

BY KRISTY MARTIN

SARAH Mulhall is celebrating the birth of two new Tasmanian Devils at Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary, which have come along just as the creature has just been declared an endangered species.

Ms Mulhall, 28, senior mammal keeper at the sanctuary, said numbers were dwindling due to the Tasmanian Devil Facial Tumour Disease (DFTD), an infectious and fatal condition believed to be affecting close to 80 per cent of the devil population.

The condition is characterised by cancers around the mouth and head and is passed on from devil to devil through biting.

"They all die (after contracting the disease), most within three months," Ms Mulhall said.

The latest birth will add at least two new faces to the sanctuary's Tasmanian Devil population which includes four born 15 months ago, including the new mum Allunga, as well as her parents Midnight and Adam.

Ms Mulhall said she was "over the moon" about the birth of the joeys, which she said proved the sanctuary's captive breeding pro-

gram was a success.

"They are a second generation captive born animal, which is pretty exciting," Ms Mulhall said.

"The mum is only 15-months-old, but they have to breed early because they don't live long."

Sanctuary staff did not want to disturb Allunga and her young this week, for fear she might lose the joeys, which are currently only about 3cm in length.

The newborns names will be decided in a competition to be judged by eight-year-old Tasmanian Devil activist Ceilidh Bishop.

Earlier this year Brisbane resident Ceilidh became aware of the disease after visiting the sanctuary.

She has since joined the plight to save the devils by raising money for the Save the Tasmanian Devil research program, which was established to investigate the disease.

Ceilidh has declared today as "Little Devils Day" at her school, which will include a free dress day and a one-hour educational session on the DFTD.

"Ceilidh's commitment to the cause is very rewarding for us," Ms Mulhall said.



□ SARAH Mulhall with Allinga the Tasmanian Devil. Two more devils were born at the sanctuary this month to Allinga's sister devil, Allunga.

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