

‘Together we can do ANYTHING!’



These inspiring mother-daughter duos have followed their dreams, conquered fears, taken on challenges and beat the odds

‘We were born to be wild’

HOPE & BELLA, SYDNEY, NSW

Hope Nugent’s life was intense working as an underwater zookeeper. So much so that when she was about to give birth, her colleagues joked that she’d give birth in the oceanarium tank. Thankfully, it didn’t come to that, but her baby daughter Bella was barely nudging two weeks old when she got her first taste of aquatic life when her mum took her to visit her workplace, Sea Life Sydney Aquarium.

“Bella has always been a natural when it comes to anything to do with animals – water or land-based. She’s grown up surrounded by large stingrays, grey nurse sharks, fish and reptiles. Even her first word was ‘fish,’” Hope chuckles.

Ever since she was a tot, Bella was destined to follow in her animal-mad mum’s footsteps. She raised her first pet, a mouse named Diggy, at age four. Hope often found her wearing her favourite white princess dress while playing in the quarry mud with tadpoles or chasing frogs.

Bella really can’t get enough when it comes to nature, knowing the names and history of every animal in her mum’s care. And their house is full of pets including frogs, turtles and pythons!

Single mum Hope will happily while away the hours after school hanging out with Bella and Stumpy, their bearded dragon – who Bella calls her study buddy. Bella’s animal antics to date have rescuing and releasing a great white shark, Fluffy,

hand rearing abandoned animals, releasing sea turtles back into the ocean and nursing injured snakes back to health.

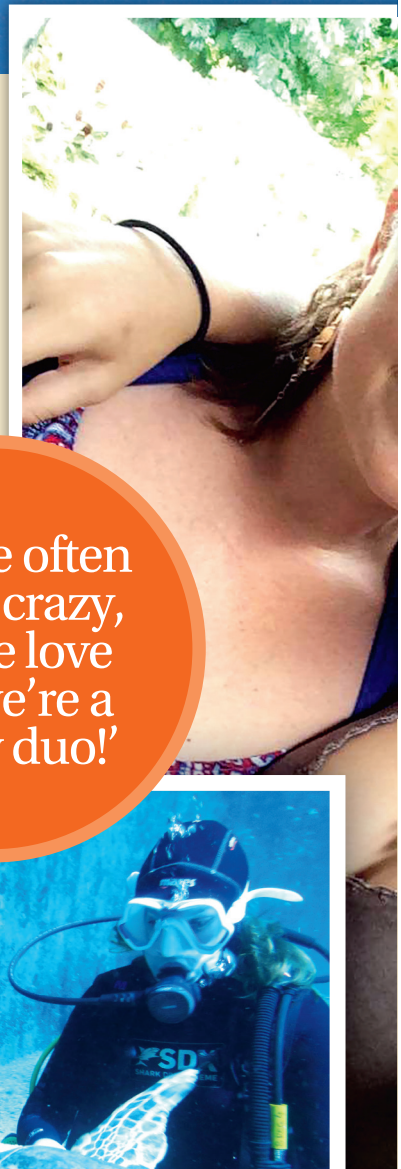
“People often called us crazy, but we love that we’re a quirky duo – we were born to be wild,” says Hope, 40. “I’m also a commercial diver and scuba instructor. And guess what? Bella also got her scuba-diving licence when she was 12 and has been my scuba-diving bestie ever since.”

The pair now spend their vacations diving in the Great Barrier Reef or snorkelling with humpback whales.

Hope has spent half of her life underwater and there’s no place she’d rather be. And Bella, now 17, has literally followed in Hope’s footsteps.

The fact that Bella shares her mum’s passion makes Hope’s heart swell with pride.

And as for Bella? “Animals bring so much joy into my life and I’m so lucky I get to share that with Mum,” she says.



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Hope and Bella love being underwater.