

# A BASIC CARE GUIDE FOR



## BARE-NOSED WOMBATS

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# PREAMBLE

## Why another wombat manual?

I do not intend to contradict the way a lot of carers raise their wombats, but to reinforce the things that are being done well. I may be able to suggest a different way to look at caring practices for those carers that are new to the wonderful world of wombats.

I have been a wombat carer for many years and have had hundreds of wombats of all sizes and temperaments pass through my hands. Much of my experience comes from personal observation. I have noted that every wombat should be treated according to their temperament and needs. Every wombat is different. I hope this manual is a guide to carers wishing to achieve best practice when handling large and small wombats.

This manual is not written as a textbook to tell you how to raise these amazing native animals. I have tried to cover the fascinating facts I have found about wombats. If you can glean some useful ideas that will make your caring better, then I have achieved my goal.

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Email: [info@wombatprotection.org.au](mailto:info@wombatprotection.org.au) [www.wombatprotection.org.au](http://www.wombatprotection.org.au)

The Wombat Protection Society of Australia is a Not for Profit Charitable Organisation which was formed to raise money to fund projects that provide all species of wombats with immediate protection from harm, enhance the quality of life of individuals or groups of wombats and to fund projects which develop or maintain suitable habitat and/or sanctuaries for wombats.

The Society has held 2 conferences, the first in Aubury in 2011 and the second at Penrith Panthers in 2017. These very well attended conferences brought together people interested in the welfare of wombats. They range from carers to Universities who are researching the treatment of mange in wombats. The Society is also a supporter of Mange Management Victoria.



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Office of  
Environment  
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## WOMBAT CODE OF PRACTICE

**NSW Wildlife Council in conjunction with OEH have compiled a Wombat Code of Practice which is available for downloading from the OEH or NSW Wildlife Council website.**

**Other wildlife Codes of Practice are also available**

<http://www.nwc.org.au/wombat-code-of-practice/>

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/wildlifelicences/110004FaunaRehab.pdf>

<https://www.ehp.qld.gov.au/wildlife/caring-for-wildlife/pdfs/cp-wl-rehab.pdf>



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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Caring for wombats is a passion that has plagued me since the early eighties, along the way I have made many lifelong friends. Many of these people are wonderful native animal carers in their own right.

They have been my sisters, my soul mates, my babysitters. They have offered their properties as release sites and often been the reason I still care for wombats. I love and salute you all.

My husband Peter is as passionate about wombats as I am and does all the outside cleaning. He collects tons of grass every year, picks up wheelbarrows full of “poo” and gives me the capacity to be a “free spirit” – you truly are the wind beneath my wings!

Thank you to Mark & Lorraine Schofield for proofreading and making corrections to this manuscript.



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## 1. RESCUING WOMBATS

All wombats come into care through misadventure. This can include motor vehicle strike, shooting or illness. It can also include flooded burrows and bushfires. Most wombats come into care through a concerned member of the public. They are often in very poor condition and are always very stressed.

### 1.1 PERSONAL SAFETY

The first thing to remember when rescuing any animal, but especially a wombat, is that **your safety is of the utmost importance**. Most dead wombats are on the side of roads or even worse in the middle of the road. They are usually on a bend or an area where it is unsafe to pull over. Caution must be taken. You should always have your rescue equipment handy along with a fluoro safety vest. If the rescue is at night you will need to be even more careful and carry a good torch. If at all possible, it is advisable to have another rescuer with you. These rescues are much easier if there are two people. It is a great idea if the rescuer pulls the dead wombat off the road and marks the animal with paint. This will show other rescuers that the animal has already received attention.



## **1.2 RESCUE KIT**

When I commenced wombat rescues, I would carry a rescue kit that would make any vet proud.

Over the years this kit has become simpler as my priority is to get the orphaned/injured wombat home or to a vet for further treatment. Over time each wombat rescuer will develop a personal rescue kit which best meets their own needs.

For small wombats I take:

- A basket with a hot water bottle wrapped in blankets or some other heat source
- A couple of pouches of different sizes
- A pair of good round- tipped sharp scissors
- Disposable gloves
- Wet ones
- Fluoro vest
- Marking paint.
- A good torch

For an adult wombat I take:

- An extra person if possible to assist with the pickup
- A wombat trap
- Large blankets.
- A net with a handle for catching young wombats

## **1.3 HANDLING A RESCUE**

No two wombat rescues are the same. Some are very traumatic for both the carer and the wombat. Other rescues are very straightforward. Each situation will need to be assessed on its own merit.

It is easy to criticise how a wombat rescue was carried out, but unless you were there and know the full circumstances, it is best not to comment adversely on another carer's rescue.

A wounded wombat will need vet treatment or even euthanasia. You will need to make a decision quickly about the action to be taken to ensure that the injured wombat does not suffer unduly. If you decide that euthanasia is the only option, you will need to get a shooter out. They will know how best to terminate the wombat. Remember that the fate of this wombat is in your hands. The decision you make should not be influenced by your emotions, but what is best for the wombat.

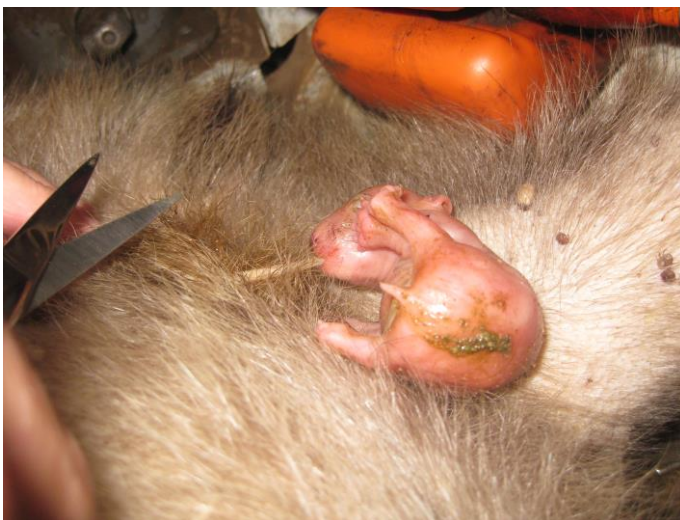
If the wombat is a female you will need to determine if she has a joey (pouch young) on board. If the wombat has been dead for some time it may have become bloated. If this the case it may be difficult to determine the sex of the animal. Rescuers checking dead or injured wombats should always check for a joey.

A live joey will need to be taken from the dead mother. This may not be an easy process as the joey has just gone through a traumatic experience and will resist any attempts to be taken from the pouch.

If you are not able to ease the joey from the pouch you will have to cut the pouch carefully to remove him. (see pictures below). You will need a sharp pair of round- ended scissors or a scalpel. You will need to put your fingers into the pouch, between the joey and the top of the pouch to prevent the joey from being cut.

If the joey is still attached to the teat, the teat should be cut as close to the mother as possible. The teat should not be forced from the joey's mouth as he will release it in due course.

Remember the mother is dead and unable to feel any more pain.





**THIS BABY DID NOT NEED TO BE CUT FROM THE POUCH**



## 1.4 CATCHING JOEY AT FOOT

The joey may have been flung out of the pouch during the impact of the accident. He may be on the road near the mother. If he is bigger (around 2 kilos), he may have left the mother's pouch and be hiding nearby.

Trying to catch a joey at foot is like trying to catch a greasy piglet. However, these joeys will return to the dead mother for many days. The joey will become more cunning each time you try to catch him. It is best to set a trap.

## 1.5 SETTING A WOMBAT TRAP



Setting a trap to capture a joey at foot can be a long process, but with persistence you will eventually succeed.

The trap needs to be checked often, as a wombat – even a juvenile left in a trap, can cause damage to itself trying to escape.

To set the trap you should:

- Rub a pouch over the dead mother to obtain her scent
- Put the scented pouch into the trap
- Take the dead mother away.

## **2. CARING FOR THE RESCUED JOEY**



**In NSW it is illegal for a member of the public to raise rescued Australian fauna unless you have a license issued by OEH.**

**When you receive an orphaned joey into care it should be placed on heat as quickly as possible.**

- **All wombats coming into care are suffering from shock. In the field you can use hot water bottles filled with warm tap water or a heated disk. This heat management will stop them from losing heat, or help them retain critical core temperature.**
- **If the joey has no signs of injury they should be taken straight home for further assessment and care. Once home the wombat should be checked over thoroughly. This will determine if there are any injuries which were not visible at the rescue site.**
- **Failure to take a bottle or settle may indicate an injury which had not been detected during the initial inspection. When checking over the joey you should remember that both sides of the wombat should be the same. If one leg looks out of place compare it with the leg on the other side. If one leg is different it may be broken and require vet treatment.**
- **The joey should be weighed during the assessment process. A record of the progress condition and weight of the joey should be maintained during rehabilitation.**

- Weighing the joey on a daily basis is the best way of deciding if he is improving. It takes only a few seconds to check his weight.  
Once the joey has settled into a routine, the weigh-in process may be reduced to once or twice a week.
- A joey should sleep most of the day. A joey may have internal injuries if they are not sleeping as often and as long as they should. If the Joey is trying to stand, or is generally unsettled it could be an indication of pain.  
Vet assistance should be sought to determine if there is a problem.

### 3. AGE OF WOMBATS (APPROXIMATE)



3 MONTHS

6 MONTHS





**8-9 MONTHS**



**10-12 MONTHS**



**14-15 Months**

**18-20 MONTHS**





## **4. PLAN OF ACTION**

After you have weighed your joey, you now have to decide a plan of action for this particular animal. You should document your Plan of Action and refer to and update the plan during the caring and rehabilitation process.

This plan should include short term care and any treatment required as well as long term plans for this wombat.

Consider-

Are you going to care for the wombat or pass him on to another carer?

Do you have the facilities?

Do you have a buddy or are you able to obtain a buddy?

### **4.1 WARMING THE JOEY**

If the joey is cold, he **MUST** be warmed before he can be fed. Heating is a slow process, but good results should be noticed within half an hour. It may take another couple of hours to get the joey to the correct temperature.

The joey should be placed on a hot water bottle that has been filled with warm tap water. The water bottle can be kept warm by sitting it on a heat pad or heat stone. A thermometer should be used to make sure the heat stays at an even temperature. It is also a good idea to check the heat by testing with your hand

Never heat a joey by placing it in front of a heater. This process only heats the outside of the wombat and not the core. Heating a wombat by this method can be very damaging to the long term health of the wombat.

### **4.2 FEEDING THE JOEY**

You will need to determine which milk product you are going to use for this particular joey and how often he will need feeding.

Offer milk to the joey as soon as he has obtained the correct temperature and has settled. Try to make the feeding experience as pleasurable as possible. Take him to a quiet area which is relaxing and where you will not be disturbed.

Remember that joeys drink with their eyes closed – you do not have to wake a wombat to have him feed. Pick the wombat up and place the teat in the side of the mouth.

Once the wombat has started to suck the teat can be moved around to the front of the mouth. Once the joey has become accustomed with the routine he will take the bottle without waking.

❖ 100- 200 gram Joey

Joeys that are between 100 to 200 grams need to be feed every 2-3 hours **AROUND THE CLOCK**. If this is not possible then please hand him onto someone who has the time to care for him correctly. **PLEASE** do not have him euthanised because YOU feel the wombat may not survive. Many carers have a wonderful gift for raising these tiny tots. Before passing on the joey to another carer you should always record the joey's weight and condition. Any other important facts , eg injuries, treatment provided, response to treatment, if feeding or not can be valuable. Keeping records for individual wombats is very important, so that they can be referred to in the future.

❖ 200-700 gram Joey

A joey that is between 200 grams to 700 grams should be fed every 3 to 4 hours = 6 to 7 feeds within 24 hours

❖ 700 grams – 1.5 kilo Joey

Joeys that are 700 grams to 1.5 kilos should be fed every 4 hours (around the clock) = 6 feeds

❖ Joeys over 1.5 kilos

Joeys over 1.5 kilos should be fed every 4 hours, but the middle of the night feed can be stopped = 5 feeds.

## 5. THE MILK PRODUCTS

There are three suitable commercial milks available for feeding orphaned wildlife. Do not be afraid to try different milks to suit an individual wombat's needs and preference. A joey may prefer one milk formula over another. If he refuses to drink a particular formula you should try another brand of milk. A joey may even have an allergic reaction to a particular formula.

**BIOLAC makes 4 formulas of milk:**

- ❖ M100G for tiny joeys under 200 grams
- ❖ M100 for joeys 200 grams to 1 kilo
- ❖ M150 for joeys that have dense fur
- ❖ M200 for animals that are producing dark pellets.

**Note: I do not use M100 on babies that weigh more than about 800 grams – I change them onto M150.**

## **WOMBAROO**

**Wombaroo makes 3 milk formulas for wombats:**

- ❖ <.4 is for joeys that are less than 40% through pouch life
- ❖ .4 is for joeys that are 40% through pouch life
- ❖ >.6 is for joeys that are more than 60% through pouch life.

**Note: Wombaroo is very concentrated milk, and water **MUST** be given between feeds. Lots of carers add more water to the formula, but this is **NOT** what is recommended by the manufacturer. They recommend that extra boiled water be given between bottles.**

**DI-VETELACT OR DIGESTELACT only come in one strength.**

**Wombats that refuse a bottle when first in care often will accept Digestelact. Wombats often prefer this sweeter formula when first taking to a bottle. They can be changed over to another milk formula within a couple of weeks. While Digestelact is suitable for tiny joeys, as the animal grows there is not enough energy in this milk for his requirements.**

## **5.1 DON'T BE AFRAID TO TRY DIFFERENT MILKS**

**Some joeys prefer some milk formulas over other formulas. Don't walk around with blinkers on – just because you prefer one brand over another does not mean your joey will have the same taste as you. If your joey refuses to drink try another band of milk. I know of a few joeys that have had an allergic reaction to both Biolac and Wombaroo. This can happen in rare cases. The milk must then be changed to another brand.**

## **5.2 DEHYDRATION**

**If a joey comes into care and is severely dehydrated (10% or over) mix 5 grams of glucose dissolved in 100 mls of warm boiled water and offer small amounts as often as possible.**

**I never offer Vitiate or Lactate to very small joeys that are dehydrated as the trace elements in these products may increase dehydration.**

## **6. BOTTLES AND TEATS**



There are a variety of bottles and teats available. I purchase my teats both latex and silicon from Marie Wynan.

Email [wynan@activ8.net.au](mailto:wynan@activ8.net.au)

These teats are of very high quality and Marie makes a large variety.

Some joeys are very fussy about the teat used. You may need to try a number of teats both latex and silicon before you find one the joey will accept.

You should use a bottle not much bigger than the quantity of milk that is being given as the milk will become too cold if the bottle is too large you will spend half the feed time reheating the bottle.

The size of the teat hole is important when feeding. Wombats have a very strong suck once they have settled into a feeding routine. If the hole in the teat is too big the milk may get into the lungs or start to pour out of the nose. These do not make for a good feeding session and must be avoided. The solution is to change the teat to one with a smaller hole.

All bottles and teats need to be sterilised after each meal. There are many ways to do this. The microwave steriliser has been used with great success.

Microwaving the milk in plastic bottles should be avoided. If the contents of the bottle are made too hot the milk will denature. The best way to heat a bottle is to place it into a container of boiling water. Care still has to be taken that the contents do not become too hot.

Milk should be offered at body temperature.

If you have more than one wombat in care at the same time you may need different formulas for each wombat.

Making up a day's supply of bottles at the same time can be very convenient, especially if you are doing a lot of night feeds.

**All equipment and prepared bottles should be kept in the fridge as this keeps them at a temperature that does not promote bacteria. When caring for joeys we are trying to replicate how the mother cares for a joey. Having a teat with a large hole does not give the joey the ability to suck, but makes him take the milk far too fast.**

**This may be convenient for the carer as it gets feed time over quickly. However it is not the correct way joeys should be fed because it could cause colic and leave the joey feeling very distressed and overfull.**

## **7. REFUSING THE BOTTLE**

**Getting a newly arrived joey to take a bottle can sometimes be a very frustrating job, especially if he is over 2 kilos.**

**You really do need an extra pair of hands to hold these fighting bundles of muscle. They are very strong animals even when very young and especially if they become very stressed.**

**Ensure that you do not have the hole in the teat too big as this will make the feeding process even harder.**

**I place a hole in the teat with a small needle passed over a hot gas ring until it glows red. I then place the hot needle in the top of the teat**

**Make sure that the wombat's eyes are covered and never feed for more than about 30 minutes. The joey should associate the feed as a pleasant time, not a time that is associated with a massive struggle.**



## **7.1 OTHER REASONS FOR REFUSING A BOTTLE**

**Small wombats often get blocked noses and this prevents them from sucking. Gently clean the nose with a cotton wool bud or even round- ended tweezers.**

**This process is sometimes easier said than done as wombats do not like you touching their noses.**

**Very young wombats will not suckle if their tongue is stuck to the roof of their mouths. If this is the case you will need to put the teat between the tongue and the roof of the mouth to break the suction. This process can take a bit of coaxing and may take a few attempts. It sometimes can be difficult to determine if the wombat is actually sucking or just has the teat in his mouth.**

**By placing a finger lightly on the teat you can feel the milk is being sucked. You can also “encourage feed” by very lightly pressing on the teat.**

**It is a good idea to place a tissue under the wombats neck before feeding. This will help to soak up any spillage.**

**It is very important that the wombat’s mouth is cleaned of all milk that has seeped out while feeding. This can be done with a moist tissue or a ‘wet one’. Also check under the neck for excess milk. Milk that is allowed to dry on the wombat becomes very hard and can cause bacteria.**

**If your baby seems to have an upset tummy or is suffering from diarrhoea a small amount of natural Yoghurt given before the bottle may aid in settling the tummy. If diarrhea does become excessive the cause should be found. Wombats are capable of picking up tummy bugs that need treating with antibiotics. Your hands should be thoroughly washed and dried before feeding.**

## BARE NOSE WOMBAT - GROWTH & FEED ESTIMATES FOR BIOLAC MILK FORMULA

**REMEMBER :-** To make your milk formula measure out powder(gms) into a measured container and top up with warm (pre boiled IF 100GOS milk ) water to the calculated mls. EG: 20GRAMS POWDER AND THEN ADD SUFFICIENT WARM WATER TO 100MLS MARK ON CONTAINER AND SHAKE CONTINUOUSLY UNTIL ALL POWDER IS MIXED IN WELL. **DO NOT PLACE 100MLS ON TOP OF THE 20GMS CREATING A FORMULA >THAN THE 100MLS IN TOTAL.**

INFORMATION & PROMPS - Milk formula followed throughout all feeding - gms x 5 = mls 2.5gms to 12mls 5gms to 25mls 10gms to 50mls 20gms to 100mls	MILK formula	AGE DAYS	BODY LENGTH mm	WEIGHT gms	10% body weight mls per day	12% of body weight mls per day ** Recommended	15% of body weight mls per day	Biolac Milk MLS/feed@12% per day *** Recommended feed	Number of FEEDS PER DAY
Average growth rate = 40gms per day	100 GOS	80	128	103	10ml	12mls	15.5mls	1.5mls per feed	8 x day 2 -4 hrly
	100 GOS	90	149	151	15mls	18mls	22.mls	2.25 mls per feed	8 x day 2 -4 hrly
	100 GOS	100	156	213	21mls	25mls	32mls	3.25mls per feed	8 x day 2 -4 hrly
250 to 750gms= Transition of feeds per hr per day				250	25mls	30mls	37.5mls	5mls per feed	6 x day 4 hrly
	100 GOS	110	162	291	29mls	34mls	43.5mls	5.5mls per feed	6 x day 4 hrly
	100 GOS	120	169	387	38mls	46mls	58mls	7.6mls per feed	6 x day 4 hrly
	100 GOS	130	175	502	50mls	60mls	75.3mls	10mls per feed	6 x day 4 hrly
>600gms check for overheating	100 GOS	140	182	640	64mls	76mls	96mls	12.5mls per feed	6 x day 4 hrly
				750	75mls	90mls	112.5mls	15mls per feed	6 x day 4 hrly
800gms to 1.5kgms weight = Transition of feeds per hour per day	100 GOS	150	188	802	80.mls	96mls	120.mls	19mls per feed	5 x day 4-5hrly
Transition from 100 GOS to Biolac 150	50mls @100 + 10mls@150	151 to 155					120.mls		5 x day 4-5hrly
DAY 2	40mls@100 20mls @150						120.mls		5 x day 4-5hrly
DAY 3	30mls@100 30mls @150			900		108mls	120.mls	21mls per feed	5 x day 4-5hrly
DAY 4	20mls@100 40mls@150						120.mls		5 x day 4-5hrly
DAY 5	10mls@100 50mls@150						120.mls		5 x day 4-5hrly

	150	160	195	984	98mls	118mls	147mls	23.5mls per feed	5 x day 4-5hrly
	150	170	201	1191	119mls	143mls	178.65ml	28mls per feed	5 x day 4-5hrly
	150	180	208	1426	142mls	171mls	214mls	34mls per feed	5 x day 4-5hrly

### BARE NOSE WOMBAT - GROWTH & FEED ESTIMATES FOR BIOLAC MILK FORMULA

INFO	MILK	AGE/DAYS	BODY LENGTH mm	WEIGHT gms	10% body weight of water per day	12% of body weight mls per day ** Recommended	15% of body weight mls per day	Biolac Milk MLS/DAY@12% *** Recommended	Number of FEEDS PER DAY
1.5kgs to 4kgs = Transition of feeds per hr per day				1.5kg	150mls	180mls	225mls	36mls per feed	4 x day 6hrly
	150	190	214	1691	169mls	202mls	253mls	50mls per feed	4 x day 6hrly
	150	200	221	1936	193mls	232mls	290mls	58mls per feed	4 x day 6hrly
Transition from 150 to 200 biolac	50mls @150 + 10mls@200	200 to 203							4 x day 6hrly
DAY 2	40mls @150 + 20mls @200	204 to 207		2kg		240mls		60mls per feed	4 x day 6hrly
DAY 3	30mls@150 30mls @200	208 to 210							4 x day 6hrly
DAY 4	20mls@150 40mls@200	211-215							4 x day 6hrly
DAY 5	10mls@150 50mls@200	216-219							4 x day 6hrly
	200	220	234	2584	260mls	310mls	390mls	77mls per feed	4 x day 6hrly
3kgs -Start introducing supervised outdoor pen warm days only	200	230	241	2956	295mls	354mls	40mls	88mls per feed	4 x day 6hrly
3kgs -Joey eating grass. Note: 100mls PER FEED MAXIMUM. Feeds now reducing -grass replacement	200			3kgs	300mls	360mls	300mls	100mls per feed	3 x day 8 hrly
	200	240	247	3363	300mls	400mls	300mls	100mls per feed	3 x day 8 hrly
Emerging from pouch provide fresh water	200	250	254	3783	300mls	300mls	300mls	100mls per feed	3 x day 8 hrly
	200	260	260	4kgs	300mls	300mls	300mls	100mls per feed	3 x day 8 hrly
	200	270	267	4623	200mls	200mls	200mls	100mls per feed	2 x day 12 hrly



5kgs-supervised bush walks until 2/12 before release IF being released on different property.	200	280	270	5043	200mls	200mls	200mls	100mls per feed	2 x day 12 hrly
Fully out of pouch -eating grass = fresh water	200	290	280	5463	200mls	200mls	200mls	100mls per feed	2 x day 12 hrly
5-6kgs- to be moved to outdoor pen.				7kgs	100mls	100mls	100mls	100mls per feed	1 x day
				8kgs		100mls	100mls	100mls per feed	1 x day

INFO	MILK	AGE/DAYS	BODY LENGTH mm	WEIGHT gms	10% body weight of water per day	12% of body weight mls per day ** Recommended	15% of body weight mls per day	Biolac Milk MLS/DAY@12% *** Recommended	Number of FEEDS PER DAY
				9kgs		100mls	100mls	100mls per feed	1 x day
				10kgs		100mls	100mls	100mls per feed	1 x day
				11kgs		100mls	100mls	100mls per feed	1 x day
weaned				12kgs		100mls	100mls	100mls per feed	weaned
Released into wild - open door policy.				20kg					

**BARE NOSE WOMBAT - GROWTH & FEED ESTIMATES FOR BIOLAC MILK FORMULA  
COMPILED BY LYN OBERN**

## 8. DETERMINING A VIABLE SIZE FOR SURVIVAL

The question of what is a viable size for survival is a complex one. It can be a torment for a carer.

If a carer is not able to adequately care for a smaller joey (i.e. less than 300 grams) instead of determining that euthanasia is the only course of action to be taken, they should consider passing him to another carer who has a proven record in succeeding with the care of smaller joeys.

I have raised joeys from 100 grams and these wombats have grown to be released and produce babies.

### 8.1 WOMBATS WITH WOUNDS

When taken into care both babies and adults may have suffered from some sort of injury. These can vary from very slight to life threatening, but all will need to be treated. These damaged wombats will need to see a Vet ASAP as most will need antibiotic coverage.



**Foxie**



**Grace**



## 8.2 MEDICATION AND DRUGS

While treating ill or injured wombats medication should only be given under the advice and direction of a Vet. Below are some commonly used medications. Preparations such as Panacue 25, ImaxGold and Baycox should be given for the treatment of worms and coccidiosis.



## **9.0 CARING PROBLEMS**

### **9.1 HYPOGLYCAEMIA**

A joey can develop hypoglycaemia if they are not fed on time or as often as they should be. When the blood sugar (glucose) drops below normal levels, they can suffer seizures. They can also be hard to feed and may seem confused or unsettled. This condition can also lead to a coma or even death.

If you are caring for a joey you **MUST** be able to devote time to making sure that they are fed on time and as often as required based on their weight or age.

Carers who are not feeding and caring for animals correctly are bordering on animal cruelty.

### **9.2 REM (Rapid Eye Movement)**

Sometimes a joey wombat may suffer from REM. This should not be confused with hypoglycaemia. REM mostly occurs when the wombat appears to be asleep. It causes twitching and jerking. A carer will often think that the animal is having a seizure. The best cure is to nurse the joey suffering REM until the episode has ended, then put the joey back into their bed. Some wombats never suffer from REM while others suffer often. REM is like a little dream.

### **9.3 INTERNAL PARASITES**

A joey who has not put on weight or who has dull fur may be suffering from worms – Strongyloides or Coccidiosis.

The joey should have their “poos” checked by a vet as soon as the problem is noticed to determine the best course of action to be taken.

Wombats in the wild can cope with a worm burden, but once added stresses occur, eg being in care, drinking different milk or living in a strange environment, the worm burden can explode. If not treated, the wombat in care may die.

Worms can be treated with either Panacur 25 or Ivomec; or Baycox for Coccidiosis.

## 9.4 EXTERNAL PARASITES.

Wombats who are not coping in the wild will often come into care covered with parasites i.e. ticks, lice, fleas.

If the wombat is in extremely poor condition they may be covered with all three parasites. While the parasites will not kill the wombat the secondary cause such as anaemia will produce problems for the wombat. These problems may even lead to death.

The use of Frontline Spot On used at the same dosage rate as for dogs will remove all the parasites with no ill effects to the wombat.

A wombat which comes into care during summer with fly strike (maggots) can be treated with Apex Ear Drops.



TICKS

FLEA



LICE



## WORMERS FOR WOMBATS COMPARRISON

DOSAGE-1ML PER 10KGS

1X WEEK FOR 3 CONSECUTIVE WEEKS THEN  
3 MONTHLY

DOSAGE-1ML PER 50KGS  
ONCE ONLY THEN 3 MONTHLY

DOSAGE- 0.2 - 0.4MLS MLS PER KG  
1 X WEEK FOR THREE WEEKS

PANACUR	IVERMEC GOLD	IVERMECTIN ORAL
BARBERS POLE WORM		
BLACK SCOUR WORM		
LARGE MOUTH BOWEL WORM		
NODULE WORM		
THIN NECKED INTESTINAL		
SMALL BROWN STOMACH WORM		
SMALL INTESTINAL WORM		
LARGE LUNG WORM	LUNGWORM	LUNGWORM
WHIPWORM		
TAPEWORM	TAPEWORM	
HOOKWORM		
	SMALL STRONGYLES	
	PINWORM	
	HAIRWORM	
	LARGE MOUTH STOMACH WORM	
	NECK THREAD WORM	
	ASCARIDS	
	LARGE STRONGYLES	
	BOTS	BOTS
	THREADWORM	
		GASTROINTESTINAL ROUND WORM
		ITCHMITES

CHART BY LYN OBERN

## 9.5 BLOAT

Once in a while a carer will report that their wombat has developed bloat. Not much is known about the cause of bloat except if it is not treated the animal may die.

Bloat does not mean a death sentence and changing the diet and exercising the wombat to remove the built-up gas often makes a difference. A good wildlife vet will be able to give more instructions on how to treat this condition.

Bloat is extremely painful and often the wombat walks backwards due to the pain.

I have found that feeding wombats carrots, sweet potatoes corn or oats often promotes bloat.



## 9.6 TOXOPLASMOSIS

Australian native animals are susceptible to becoming infected by “Toxo” – these oocysts are passed in the faeces of cats and can live in the soil for several months under the correct conditions.

**TOXOPLASMOSIS IS A ZONOSIS AND CAN BE TRANSMITTED TO HUMANS.**

Wombats that contract “Toxo” do so mostly through contaminated food i.e. grass that has been picked where cats have been. It can also come from food purchased from produce stores that have cats. “Toxo” can cause sudden death. It can be treated with antibiotics under the supervision of a vet, but usually by the time the symptoms are noticed it is too late for the wombat. Care must be taken when picking grass to make sure it is in an area where the grass can not be contaminated.

### **9.7 FAILURE TO THRIVE.**

**In spite of a carer's best efforts some wombats will fail to thrive and will die. It is important to have a post mortem conducted to determine the reason for the failure to thrive. I have often given a few drops of Arnica to wombats that are stressed and are having problems adjusting to being in care.**



**The above photos are of a poor little wombat that was raised from 300 grams. Unfortunately the carer did not provide the right housing and environment for him.**

**Despite the new carer taking him to a couple of vets, he was diagnosed with everything from mange to ring worms, when in fact he was suffering from stress.**

**If this little male had not gone to an experienced carer he would have eventually died. He was subjected to TV, air conditioning, lights that were never turned off, and he was never taken outside or fed grass.**

**A good indicator of stress and failure to thrive is Alopecia, this is a condition where the fur starts to thin and fall out. Alopecia can be identified by fur loss equal on both sides.**



## 10 TEMPERATURE CONTROL

### 10.1 MAINTAINING THE JOEY'S TEMPERATURE



**MY BROODER PURCHASED WITH A GRANT FROM IFAW**



**BASKET WITH HEAT PAD**



**MICROWAVE HEAT DISK**

**A tiny joey needs to be kept at the correct temperature, which is between 29-32° C. This is hard to achieve as the temperature within a house differs from day to night and from summer to winter.**

**I use a heat pad with a hot water bottle on top, with blankets over the top of the joey. The number of blankets depends on how cold the joey is.**

**I also have a pet water bed that I keep on all year. It can take a couple of days to get the heating process correct, so the joey needs to be checked every half hour to ensure that they are neither too hot nor too cold.**

**The use of a “Brooder” for a very tiny joey can be very helpful. A “Brooder” is great, but still has to be monitored to make sure the joey is at the correct temperature.**

**Even the slightest change in temperature can affect a tiny joey. A joey which is slightly too hot or slightly too cold will use their energy trying to find the correct temperature instead of putting that energy into thriving and growing.**

**A joey who is too hot or is stressed will display these signs:**

- red hands and feet
- hiccups.
- skin problems
- unsettled and not sleeping

**The pouch temperature is 32°C for furless joeys and 28°C for furred joeys.**

**Once the joey is between 500- 700 grams they should start to thermoregulate and will not require additional heat.**

**Some older joeys that come into care and are stressed may require additional heat. These older joeys have often been without their mothers for some time. They can be cold, hungry and very scared. These joeys can also be dehydrated.**

**Unless you have had lots of practice subcutting wombats, I suggest you take them to a wildlife vet or experienced wombat carer.**

**Most joeys can be rehydrated orally. They should be offered small amounts of fluid/milk often, after they are warm.**

## 11. THE THERMOREGULATING JOEY



**COCO AND CROSBY IN THEIR COT**



**A joey that is thermoregulating (keeping their own body heat) but is still too small for a hanging pouch should be housed in a “cot”. The cot set- up is only limited by your imagination. However, do not be fooled into thinking that a small joey will not investigate ways to escape.**

**All my cots have a wire lid that is placed over the cot to make sure the joey is safe and secure.**



## 12 TEETH



**After the Joey's teeth have erupted you may find that they have problems eating grass. You should check their mouth to determine if their jaw is in alignment. Wombats will have difficulty eating grass if their teeth do not line up. There are a number of treatments like having the teeth filed back which can correct this problem. They need to be referred to a wildlife vet for appropriate treatment.**

### **13. TOILETING**

It is assumed the joey puts his bottom out of his mother's pouch to go to the toilet.

Hand raised wombats can be toileted by lifting their rear end from the pouch keeping the head covered; then gently dabbing the cloaca i.e. the posterior opening that serves as the only such opening for the intestinal, reproductive, and urinary tracts of certain animal species.

**THIS PHOTO IS USED WITH PERMISSION OF BOB CLEAVER  
WOMBAT RISE SANCTUARY SOUTH AUSTRALIA**



## 14. SKIN



HAPPY HEALTHY WOMBATS

### 14.1 TREATMENT OF SKIN PROBLEMS IN A JOEY



**A rescued joey may have been exposed to the elements, or if they have been on artificial heat they may develop skin problems. The quicker they are off artificial heat the less skin problems you should have.**

**The use of Biolac M100G milk for babies less than 500 grams will help a joey to thermoregulate faster. Therefore they need less artificial heat.**

**A joey with peeling skin can be treated with a number of products including QV cream. It is a trial and error process for the carer as individual animals will respond differently to soothing products.**

**My preference is to use Pawpaw Cream. It must not contain any petroleum products**



**If the skin problem becomes chronic the joey will need to be bathed gently in tepid water with oatmeal soap. If oatmeal soap is not available rolled oats wrapped in a chux cloth can be used to sponge the joey.**

**This bathing is not stressful and seems to soothe the joey. Remember to bathe the joey in a heated room. He should be dried well.**

**It is nice to offer a bottle after bathing to settle him.**

## **15 HOUSING GROWING WOMBATS**

### **15.1 HOUSING WOMBATS FROM 2-6 KILOS**



**When the joey is around 2 kilos they will need to be housed in something a bit bigger than their original cot. At this stage I place the joey in a hanging pouch. This gives them the choice of whether they would like to snuggle up together if they have a buddy, or stay out in their small compound. This hanging pouch stays with the joey until they are fully entrenched in a burrow.**







**THESE PHOTOS SHOW DIFFERENT WAYS TO CONTAIN JUVENILE WOMBATS**



## **16. CARE OF THE OLDER WOMBAT**

**An older joey which comes into care will need special escape proof housing. Wombats are great climbers and escape artists. Consequently, their housing will need either a secure lid or very high sides.**

**I have seen some impressive set-ups for juvenile wombats. Your set-up is only limited by your imagination and finances. Furred wombats are not the plaything of children nor are they the family pet. Many wombats in care have become humanised. With the buddy system (discussed further in the Care Guide) wombats bond with each other and not the carer.**

**A joey should not be left to wander the house or yard unsupervised as he may become injured or stressed in this unfamiliar environment.**

**While a carer may think it is cute to have a wombat following family members around this is very stressful to the wombat as they are looking for the security of their mother. Wombats should not be carted around the countryside for the purpose of displaying them to friends and relatives.**

**There are times when we must take our wombats with us but it can be done in such a way that they are not noticed. Wombats that need to be taken with their carer can be placed in a carry bag or basket that can be carried without being noticed by members of the public. When feeding is necessary the carer should find a quiet, private area to feed.**

## **16.1 HOUSING LARGER WOMBATS**



**MARIE & RAY WYNAN'S COMPOUND**

**When the larger wombat has settled into life in their burrow they should be let out every day for some exercise and to graze. However as they mature they seldom budge during the day as they are becoming very nocturnal.**

**At this stage I no longer let them wander around the house yard but confine them to their compound and fenced safe area. They are often just looking for mischief and they are telling you they are ready for release**

**I withdraw all contact with the mature wombat and place their feed, replenish their fresh water and clean their compound while they are still asleep.**

**It is at this point that wombats need secure safe compounds. These compounds can be expensive to build. They need to be as large as possible, wire or tin needs to be placed 1 metre into the ground to stop them from digging out.**

**If you are not able to provide a wombat enclosure you should pass the wombat onto a carer who has these facilities.**

**For the safety and wellbeing of the wombat in care the enclosure should:**

- be as big as possible but a minimum of 7x5 metres**
- extend 1 metre underground to ensure the wombat is not able to dig out**
- extend at least 1.3 metres above ground to stop wombats climbing out**



**JUNE & LEX FREW'S COMPOUND**



**SHIRLEY & PETER LACK'S COMPOUND**





**BELINDA & PHIL DONOVAN'S COMPOUND**



**STARTING TO BUILD A NEW COMPOUND**

## **17. THE BUDDY METHOD**



### **HAPPY BUDDIED WOMBATS**

**By the time joey reaches 2-3 kilos they will need to have a buddy. I try to buddy earlier if I can. You should maintain a network with other carers in your area, so you are able to establish a buddy system for the wombats. It is essential that a carer does what is best for the wombat even if this means passing the animal on to another carer for buddying.**

**I have found that the difference in size of the wombats to be buddied is not as important as the temperament of the wombats.**

**Getting older wombats to buddy can take a few weeks. It is better for the wombats to be as close in size as possible as this makes it easier at release time.**

**Wombats are animals that are slow to adapt to change.**

**Introducing buddies should be a slow but enjoyable process for both the wombats and the carer.**

**Once the wombat has a buddy, I spend many hours sitting outside with them. I start by sitting on the ground, so the wombat can run back to "Mum" if they feel threatened.**

**As the wombats become accustomed to exploring their new surrounds, I will sit on a chair (with a good book in hand!) while they explore. I do this in the early morning and the late afternoon rather than in the heat of the day.**

**Wombats of all ages dislike heat and direct sunlight. If baby wombats become overheated their eyes swell and become red. This condition will disappear when the joey is back inside away from the sunlight.**

**By this stage I also have a compound assigned to them. The compound has a ready-made burrow and during the day I hang their pouches in their compound, so they can become familiar with their new homes.**

**I still bring them in at night.**

**As they become secure in their compound the wombats will climb out of their hanging pouches and start to look at renovating the existing burrow. Over the next few weeks the wombats will spend more time working on the burrow than sleeping in their pouch. Once they are in the burrow full-time the hanging pouch can be removed.**

**When wombats first go into the burrow they may be reluctant to come out even for a bottle. Food and clean water should be left out overnight as they do come out to eat when all is quiet. As soon as they hear a noise they retreat back to the burrow. It can take a few days before they become confident to leave the burrow during the day and no, you will not have to dig up the burrow to make sure they are O.K. They will come out when they are ready.**



**THE STARTER BURROW**





## **18. WOMBATS WITHOUT A BURROW**



**Wombats raised without access to a burrow will not learn “Burrow Protocol”.**

**A wombat which does not understand appropriate burrow behaviour will venture into burrows that are occupied by other unwelcoming wombats. This can result in the wombat being aggressively beaten by the burrow owner.**

**Wombats must live in a burrow system to survive. Wombats also need to have access to a burrow so they can obtain trace elements from the soil. It is essential that a wombat learns burrow behaviour before release to survive.**



**THIS BEAUTIFUL GIRL WAS FOUND WANDERING AROUND A SAW MILL. SHE DID NOT HAVE A BURROW OF HER OWN AND HAD BEEN ATTACKED. IT TOOK MANY WEEKS BEFORE HER WOUNDS HEALED AND FOR HER TO ACCEPT A BURROW.**

## **19. THE MATURE WOMBAT**

### **19.1 WALKING THE LARGER WOMBAT**

Every carer's facilities are different and adjustments will need to be made to ensure the wombat is receiving the best care possible. Carers who are not able to provide a large compound should take their wombats for a walk around their property so they can be exercised.

As the wombats get older and are coming to the release stage, I would stop this practice a couple of months before the planned release so the wombat can sever their contact with humans. Carers who pass their wombat to others for a soft release may not realise that the wombat which has continued to be walked will still be in the habit of following humans. They will continue to follow the release site owner.

The wombat will often become aggressive when they are not getting the attention they have had from their carer.

If you are able to provide a large compound for the wombat and have not maintained human contact prior to the release, the wombat will be able to be released without this stress.

## **20. PREPARING WOMBATS FOR A SUCCESSFUL RELEASE**

Once the wombat is around 20-25 kilos and takes exception to human contact it is time for them to be released. Consideration should be given to the area chosen as the release site:

- ensure that the area is not already over populated with wombats
- ensure that to the best of your knowledge mange is not a problem
- check that the wombat is away from main roads and people who will do them harm
- is a habitat suitable for wombats and is it connected to National Parks, State Forest or other wildlife corridors?

There are two options for releasing the wombat.

## **20.1 THE SOFT RELEASE**

The soft release involves building a temporary compound around a burrow and keeping the wombat in the enclosure for a couple of weeks.

When the wombat seems at ease with this environment the door can be left open for the wombat to come and go as they please. The wombat needs to be checked every day and supplied fresh food and water every day.



**MARA RELEASED 17/4/2017**



**TRANSPORT BOX**

## **20.2 THE HARD RELEASE**

The hard release consists of taking the wombat to an area, finding an empty burrow, putting the wombat down the burrow, and hoping they will be OK.

The hard release is not the kind of release that I like or would encourage.

## **21. PREFERRED RELEASE OPTION**

My preferred release option is to transport the wombat to another property which has an existing compound and leaving the wombat in the compound so they can be monitored.

When they are settled and are showing signs of wanting to be let out of the compound, the door to the compound is left open so the wombat can come and go as they like. During this period the wombat is learning their new home range but still has the security of being able to return to a home burrow. They can also be supplementary fed for as long as it takes for them to leave the area. A wombat which has been released with other hand raised and released wombats seems to fit into the existing community with little or no problems. Females seem to move further afield quicker and with less stress than males.

A wombat which has been raised on the property they are being released to can often be released between 15 and 18 kilos but still under supervision.

When transporting a wombat to a release site Pamlin may need to be used. This is not always the case as most wombats travel with no problems. I have never had to sedate a wombat for travel although I do always carry Pamlin just incase things go wrong. Wombats that are being transported in a motor vehicle need to be in an air conditioned compartment (never in the boot or in the back of a ute). Transportation should be carried out in the cool of the morning or evening. Wombats transported in the heat of the day can die quickly from heat stress.

## **22. NOT ALL RELEASES ARE SUCCESSFUL**

After completing a soft release the new carer should keep an eye on the newly released wombat. If they have a misadventure they can be brought back into care.

Injuries can be as simple as a slight limp to more major injuries like a broken leg.

The wombat can also receive nasty bites from other dominant wombats. These bites will need to be checked for infection.

Released wombats attacked by dominant wombats may need to be taken to another release site if they continue to be harassed.



**THIS LARGE MALE WOMBAT HAD TORN HIS GROWTH PLATE SOON AFTER RELEASE. HE WAS BROUGHT BACK INTO CARE. THE PLASTER HAD TO BE REPLACED OFTEN AS HE CHEWED IT OFF. THERE WAS A GOOD MANAGEMENT PLAN IN PLACE WHICH MADE THE SECOND RELEASE SUCCESSFUL.**

## **23. NOT ALL RESCUED WOMBATS ARE JOEYS**

Many wombats that come into care have passed the joey stage. These wombats have experienced some trauma that requires human intervention. They may have been hit by a car or been attacked by another animal.

Unfortunately not many carers have the facilities or the experience to care for a larger injured wombat.

The injured wombat will need to be under vet care. They will need a management plan in place with the help of your vet and maybe another experienced wombat carer.

**They will often need long term care before they will be ready for release.**

**A wombat larger than 12-15 kilos will resent the fact that they are confined. They will sulk and refuse food, thus losing weight and condition.**

**You can often offer a larger wombat a bottle and some will take it with little fuss. However, getting them to eat grass can be very difficult. Syringed milk with high protein cereal and Critical Care can be tried.**

**Wombat biscuits can be used to tempt the appetite of the wombat uninterested in food. These biscuits can be offered whole or broken into small pieces.**

**These wombats may need injections of Pamlin to help with their stress levels. Pamlin also acts as an appetite stimulant. They will also need antibiotic injections. Veterinary advice will be needed for a long term management plan. If the wombat is a female with a pouch young, in most cases the joey will have to be removed.**

### **23.1 WOMBAT BISCUITS**

- **Put cut grass in a blender with some water and blend**
- **Retain blended liquid**
- **Mix blended liquid with Rolled Oats and a small amount of Critical Care**
- **Shape mixture into patty sized biscuits**
- **Bake in a very slow oven for about an hour.**
- **Any other ingredient (eg grated carrot) that you think may stimulate the wombat's appetite may be added.**





**SOME ADULT WOMBATS IN CARE ARE VERY HAPPY TO TAKE A BOTTLE**

## **24. "MUM IN THE SHED" (SOME GOOD STORIES)**



**This wombat came into care with a pouch young. She was comatosed, could not walk, and could not feed herself. She was named "Mum in the Shed" by her carers Bill and Lesley Waterhouse. It was obvious from the large amount of injuries she had that she had been hit by a car. Bill and Lesley decided to try to save her and with the advice of Dr Howard the baby was taken. Many hours of work and dedication were given to "Mum" and she was successfully released 18 months later.**



**"MUM IN THE SHED" AFTER MANY MONTHS IN CARE**



## 25. DELIGHTFUL DEVINE'S STORY

THE FOLLOWING TWO PHOTOS SHOW DEVINE WHEN SHE FIRST CAME INTO CARE. IT WAS OBVIOUS SHE HAD BEEN ATTACKED. SHE WAS A VERY ILL WOMBAT BUT WITH A LOT OF TLC SHE WAS RELEASED AFTER 18 MONTHS WITH HER TWO BUDDIES.





**DEVINE JUST PRIOR TO HER RELEASE**



**DEVINE 6 MONTHS AFTER HER RELEASE, STILL BEING SUPPORT FED BUT COPING WELL IN HER NEW ENVIRONMENT AND LOOKING GREAT!**



**DEVINE WITH HER 4<sup>TH</sup> BABY WHO LOOKS JUST LIKE MUM**

## 26. USE OF CAMERAS

Using infra-red cameras to monitor a wombat in care is not essential, however it does make looking after wombats easier. As wombats are nocturnal animals it can sometimes be difficult to view what is happening at night especially at the release site. These cameras can be purchased from about \$400.00 – there are many suitable brands on the market.



**A MONITOR USED IN THE HOUSE TO CHECK WOMBATS AT NIGHT**





**THE ABOVE TWO PHOTOS SHOW SOME GOOD NIGHTTIME VIEWS OF WHAT IS HAPPENING AROUND THE BURROW**

## **27. FEEDING GRASS TO WOMBATS**



### **27.1 FEEDING GRASS TO JOEYS**

**Joey wombats from 2 kilos should be introduced to small amounts of grass with the roots and dirt still attached. If this is not done at this stage, the joey takes much longer to acquire the taste for grass and is happy to just stay drinking milk. The microorganisms contained in the dirt and roots help to build up the joey's gut flora, this in turn develops nice "poos".**

## **27.2 FEEDING LARGE WOMBATS**

**Wombats eat grass, grass and more grass. They will consume vast amounts of grass daily. If you are feeding a number of wombats collecting grass can be very time consuming, particularly during drought or wet weather. Grass collection has to be done on a daily basis or at least every second day to ensure freshness.**

**I have raised wombats totally on grass with no supplementary feed, but on hindsight I now feel that wombats should be fed 80% grass and 20% other food such as meadow hay. I also feed a very small amount of rolled oats mixed with kangaroo pellets.**

**If the wombat becomes accustomed to a small amount of supplementary food the carer has this option available to them, when it is impossible to collect the amount of grass required by the wombat.**

**The grass you are feeding the wombats should be collected from your local area.**

**If the wombat is being released in an area with different grass they should be given grass from that area prior to release.**

**In a perfect wombat world the wombat should be allowed to graze but not many carers are in a position or have the facilities for this to occur.**

**When collecting grass caution should be taken on where it is collected; make sure the area you are collecting from is not contaminated with other animal droppings.**

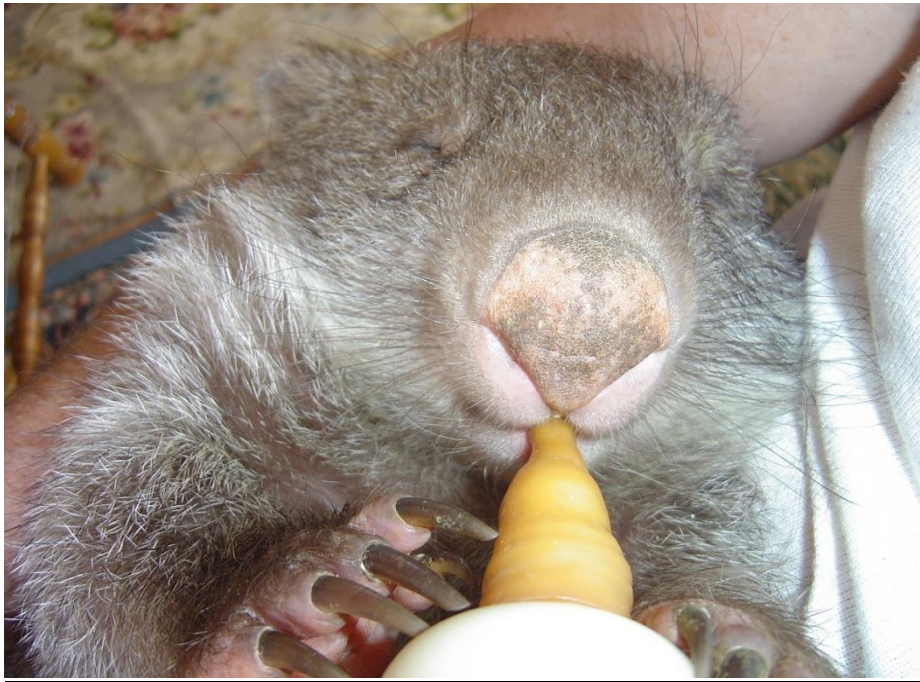
**Clean water should be made available at all times in a container that cannot be tipped over by the wombat.**

## **28. WEANING THE WOMBAT**

**Weaning a juvenile wombat should not be a stressful experience for the animal. Some wombats will wean at an early age, but others are very happy to take a bottle for many months longer than the carer would like. Let the wombat decide when they are ready to wean.**

**The average weight of the weaned wombat should be between 8 to 11 kilos. If the wombat seems to be weaning around 5 kilos try to persevere with the bottle until they are around 8 kilos. Wombats weaned too early lose body condition. Instead of thriving their weight tends to stagnate as they are not taking in enough food for the energy they require.**

**If the wombat is not ready to wean at 11 kilos give them a bit longer on the bottle. If they are eating plenty of grass and are happy in their burrow the wombat will wean without stress.**





**THIS FREE LIVING WOMBAT IS STILL TRYING TO GET MUM TO GIVE HIM A DRINK. IN THE END MUM WINS AND THE JOEY STARTS TO EAT GRASS. PHOTO BY LYN OBERN**

## **29. THE AGGRESSIVE WOMBAT**

**If you are a dedicated wombat carer, at some stage you take into care a wombat which has ADHD. This wombat will insist on biting the hand (and legs and every other part of the body they can reach) that feeds them.**

**These wombats – while not common – will always be remembered by the carer. Other wombats which are more placid may be forgotten.**

**They will often have names like Satan, Agro, Monster, etc.**

**These wombats (always males) cannot easily be buddied with other wombats because of their temperament and aggression.**

**I have never been able to change the temperament of these wombats or stop them from biting.**

**I feel that part of the behaviour is stress and sometimes this stress can be controlled by medication, but only under the supervision of a vet.**

**Once these wombats are released and settled into new surroundings where they feel secure, they often have a change in temperament and live a social life with other wombats.**



**THIS SWEET LITTLE MAN TRYING TO RIP OFF MY SLIPPER IS BLACKY,  
WEIGHING 5 KILOS**



**THIS FAMILY PET  
WAS ATTACKED BY  
A WILD WOMBAT**



## **31. HYGIENE**



**Regardless of the size of the compound they all need to be cleaned and a “Poo Patrol” carried out every day. All feeding and water dishes need to be cleaned also. Always remember that healthy wombats and well washed hands go together.**

## **32. MANGE**



**THIS YOUNG WOMBAT HAD SEVERE MANGE WHEN SPOTTED A COUPLE OF WEEKS BEFORE THESE PHOTOS WERE TAKEN. THE CONDITION AT THAT TIME APPEARED TO BE SLIGHT. THIS "BLOOM" DEVELOPED AS THE WOMBAT HAD BEEN UNDER STRESS COPING IN THE WILD WITH NO SUPPORT.**

**MANGE CAN BE CAUGHT BY CONTACT WITH INFECTED WOMBATS. CAUTION SHOULD BE TAKEN, GLOVES WORN AND HIGH HYGIENE PROCEDURES FOLLOWED AT ALL TIMES.**

Throughout NSW mange continues to kill many wombats. This hideous mite – thought to be spread by foxes – can wipe out colonies of wombats within a few short years.

As I have treated many wombats with mange, I am convinced that a wombat with a strong immune system can be cured. A wombat with a depressed immune system will have recurring mange.

It is very difficult to determine which wombat should be treated and which should not. You will need to check:

- the extent of the mange
- if they have any hot spots or open sores
- if they have been fly blown

Treating wombats in the field can also be difficult as the treatment needs to be carried out over a period of 8 to 10 weeks. You may not see the wombat more than a couple of times over that time frame.

A young wombat in care with mange is easier to treat. However, that does not mean that they have a strong immune system and that the mange will not reoccur.

There are a couple of popular products that help fight mange:

- Ivomec – pour on, oral or injectable solution
- Cydectin – pour on for cattle and Red Deer.

Not all raised and released wombats survive, and you must learn to put it behind you.

You may never forget a particular wombat which did not make it, but do not let a bad experience stop you from learning more and trying harder.

Not all wombats in the wild survive and many die a sad death.

If a wombat dies while in your care at least they died well fed and much loved.

### **33. A FEW DON'TS**

- ❖ Don't be an "empty nester". You should not carry the wombat around all the time. Wombats do not need to be a showpiece or a pass the parcel. Sometimes a carer must take a joey with them to ensure that they are fed on time. However, it is best to leave the wombat at home in the surroundings they are comfortable with.
- ❖ Don't take your joey to bed – there is no reason to sleep with a wombat, no matter how tiny.

- ❖ **Don't be a "Doctor Shopper". You should not take the wombat to every vet in the district until you get the answer you are looking for. You should find a good vet who knows wombats and who you have confidence in, and stick with their advice.**
- ❖ **There are some wonderful vets around who do take an interest in wombats. However, they will not come knocking on your door. YOU will have to seek them out.**
- ❖ **Don't disregard the observations of other wombat carers – even carers with little experience can often spot problems that you may be too close to see.**
- ❖ **Don't ever stop learning. New techniques and methods are being formulated all the time.**
- ❖ **Don't be afraid to ask for help. No two wombats or problems are the same, but you may just find someone who has been through a similar situation.**
- ❖ **Do remember that a carer may do things differently – not incorrectly! Just like raising children we all do things a little differently. Don't be quick to criticise the efforts of other carers.**

### **34. LAST BUT NOT LEAST**

**Enjoy the experience of caring for wombats.**

**Nothing in this world can compare to the joy of seeing a wombat that you have raised and released find its niche in the big world of Mother Nature.**

**Laugh when your wombat does funny, strange wombat things.**

**Worry when they are not thriving or become ill.**

**Love them with all your heart.**

**Most importantly, raise them to be a wombat of which you are proud to say "that's one I raised", and it has survived to live a happy, contented life.**

### **35. SHAWNEE**

**Shawnee came into care at 2 kilos, she was very ill and one of the wombats that I thought would never survive. With the help of Dr Howard she was put on a drip and treated with an antibiotic. She made a slow recovery and was later released with a buddy at a friend's release property. Shawnee is only ever seen when she has a joey at foot as she likes a bit of support feed. She has been released for over 6 years.**



**SHAWNEE WITH  
HER 4<sup>TH</sup> JOEY, SEX  
UNKNOWN**