

# WPSA WOMBAT SWING GATES

## help to solve farmer-wombat conflict

**Leading on from the successful Victorian Wombat Gate trial we are pleased to announce that wombat swing gates will now be available to landowners in NSW**

Many rural landholders struggle with fence damage caused by wombats. This is one of the reasons wombats are often not very popular with farmers and are sometimes persecuted. Wombats create holes in fences enabling farm animals such as farm dogs or lambs, to escape.

Wombats are an important part of the ecosystem and must be able to move freely throughout their territory or home range. They are often misunderstood and not appreciated for the role they play in the environment. Wombats are the largest burrowing animal in the world and are often called eco-engineers for the positive impact on the soils, plants, and general health of the Australian bush.

There are many adverse impacts on wombats from mange, vehicle strike, climate change disasters such as drought, bush fires and flooding, human development, land clearing and habitat destruction. Non-lethal solutions are needed to help wombats co-exist with people.

Since it was established almost 30 years ago, the WPSA has provided advice to landholders on how to 'live with wombats' and provide legal, compassionate, and practical animal welfare solutions to mitigate the impacts of wombats on properties. The WPSA website has a section dedicated to mitigation.

<https://www.wombatprotection.org.au/mitigation>

Concern about landholder-wombat conflict, led the Wombat Protection Society to reach out to the Akoonah Park Men's Shed in Berwick in Victoria to help address the problem and protect wombats.

Semi-retired engineer Jim Grills took charge of the project



Volunteers at the Akoonah Park Men's Shed, in Berwick Victoria, have set up a production line to produce the wombat gates very efficiently and to a high standard. Pictured are John Marshall, Graeme Adams, Noel Phelan, David Russell and Phil Watson, under the welding shield and sparks!

and designed a very robust, well-constructed, engineered metal gate that is placed over the hole in the fence on the regular path of the wombat. Wombats are creatures of habit and tend to use the same tracks in their territory. The gate allows a wombat to gain entry, but other animals are reluctant to push on the heavy gate, whereas wombats seem to have no trouble.

The wombat gates were successfully trialed in Victoria in 2022 with 130 landholders participating. Around 200 gates were made by the Akoonah Park Men's Shed.

The driving force behind the project was one of the WPSA's directors, who organised the funding for the Victoria project through the Victorian Government Community Support Fund, and has been involved every step of the way. WPSA are very grateful and appreciative of the huge commitment and enthusiasm of the Men's Shed for this ongoing wildlife conservation project.

The gates were provided free of charge to the Victorian landholders.

Building on the success of the Victorian wombat gate trial, a similar trial is planned for NSW. Until funding is secured for the wombat swing gates, they can be purchased from the WPSA for a nominal price to cover costs and postage. Generally, gates can be purchased for \$50 each and the cost of postage for two gates is approximately \$20.

**Please send inquiries to [info@wombatprotection.org.au](mailto:info@wombatprotection.org.au)**

**Instructions on how to install the gates will be provided.**



Wombat swing gates are easy to install and should be placed on well-used wombat tracks. Installation is simple and instructions are provided. Once installed, it is best to tie the gate up for a couple of weeks so the wombats slowly get used to the change in the fence. The gate is then lowered.



Some of the volunteers at the Akoonah Park Men's Shed with the gates they have made. Note there is a small container for holding Cydectin® making them dual purpose and capable of treating wombats with mange. Engineer, Jim Grills, far right.