

ONE-WAY EXIT GATES

On occasions a wombat burrow may be discovered in an inappropriate place like a dam wall or edge of quiet dirt road or even under rail tracks. Burrows in these kinds of places can be unsafe and need to be removed. First reaction is to trap and relocate the wombat, but this then poses other problems. Firstly, how do you trap a wombat and then where do you release it?



Knowing wombat behaviour.

A wombat's territory can cover about 5-10ha and in that area it will have many burrows (perhaps 10). Therefore, it is possible to close a burrow off without disadvantaging the wombat. Wombats use burrows for bolt holes (to flee from predators); as sleeping quarters, and to be able to move around their territory to feed while never being far from a burrow.

When removing a wombat from a burrow it is important to make sure the burrow is empty. A wombat burrow can be closed by placing a one-way gate at the entrance. This will allow the wombat to leave but not re-enter. Keep the gate in place for at least a week to make sure the wombat has moved on. The burrow can then be collapsed and filled in by back filling with rocks and earth. Rocks are required to stop the wombat re-digging. This will need to be done immediately after the mesh is removed, to avoid the wombat re-entering the burrow. Burrow use can be checked by a motion activated camera.



At times WPSA and wildlife carers are contacted when a wombat burrow has been dug in an inappropriate place and needs to be removed. Faced with this dilemma, two of our long-time wombat carers have shown us how this can be done. Saying this, it doesn't mean it is a simple fix, or that it will work every time, but it is certainly a solution in some of these cases.

First, the situation needs to be assessed as this approach is best used on flat ground. The burrow in question had been dug on the very edge of a quiet dirt road. It is also important to check if there is an alternate burrow nearby, so the wombat has somewhere to move to when this burrow is blocked.



After looking around 3 other burrows were found in the vicinity, 2 were flooded and 1 looked fresh and dry - hopefully this was an alternative to the burrow in the road, so the culprit *wombat* has another option to take shelter.

The idea is to install an exit-only flat mesh gate which should work well on this road. They can also be used under houses and burrows built into banks. *ie. in dam walls.*



All the sticks and stones need to be removed and the soil raked flat, so the mesh exit flap can lie as flush as possible, once the big piece of mesh is pegged down securely.



In this case the exit flap wasn't flush with the big mesh, so a star picket was pegged along the exit, so a nose or claw couldn't lift the flap and allow the wombat to return to the burrow.



To warn drivers, star pickets were hammered into the ground around the site and tied with fluoro survey tape. Placing a few twigs on the flap makes it easy to see if the flap has been used.



No change for 5 nights.



Some attempt to re-enter on the 6th night.

The exit gate needs to be kept in place and monitored for a week or two to make sure the wombat has moved on. The burrow can then be collapsed and filled in. This will need to be done immediately after the mesh is removed, to avoid the wombat re-entering the burrow.

Thank you Danie and Jeff for sharing and showing how you were able to respond to this unwanted burrow.



This picture shows a large sheet of weldmesh laid over the top of a burrow with a larger sheet above the cut-out area allowing the wombat to push up but not return.