



Snowy Mountains Wildlife Rescue (LAOKO) Mange treatment program overview



Elena Guarracino
LAOKO mange
team co-ordinator

LAOKO Inc. Looking After Our Kosciuszko Orphans - Snowy Mountains Wildlife Rescue is based in the Snowy Mountains / Monaro about 100 kilometres south of Canberra. The LAOKO boundary starts at Bredbo in the north ending at the Victorian border in the south. Bordering LAOKO is Wildcare Queanbeyan, Far South Coast Wildlife Rescue and SONA.

LAOKO was formed in 1988 and covers an area of 15,162 square kilometres with a population of 20,218.



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The LAOKO mange treatment team co-ordinator is Elena Guarracino who joined the Wombat Protection Society of Australia at its inaugural meeting in 2006. She has been treating wombats with mange on her 600 acre property on the Snowy River since 2006 and has attended WPSA mange hub meetings as they arise.

A former LAOKO president, Elena is on the current committee, and undertakes rescues, euthanasia, media and caring for LAOKO. She has been a representative on the NSW Wildlife Council as revenue officer and media officer.

Previously mange treatment in LAOKO was done on a very limited basis with a couple of LAOKO members responding to calls for help for wombats with mange, providing a small bottle of Cydectin® with little or no other support or follow up. Euthanasia was the usual outcome.

Elena **established the LAOKO mange team in April 2019** in response to a strong community demand for help with wombats with mange, and co-ordinates the mange treatment team - 19 members as at September 2019, along with landholders treating wombats with mange on their own properties.

An initial mange team meeting was held in April 2019 to discuss mange treatment protocols and reporting procedures. Marie Wynan from the Wombat Protection Society of Australia attended the meeting to provide guidelines and protocols for treatment. Elena also networks and shares information with other groups treating mange at Bundanoon and Far South Coast Wildlife Rescue.

Mange treatment team members have been recruited from the community and have become LAOKO members. They are given individual training by the mange team co-ordinator, provided with written instructions, a kit: extendable painter's pole and chemical container, 1 L of cattle pour-on and burrow flaps.

Elena works with LAOKO's social media administrator to maintain an active social media presence on the LAOKO Facebook page, Instagram and a number of community noticeboards, as well as print media and radio to continue to raise awareness of mange and treatment options in the community.

This social media presence has been a key tool in reporting mange, recruitment of volunteers to assist in treating wombats with mange and gaining support from the community to help with the mange treatment effort - making burrow flaps etc.

LAOKO has a **sub permit through Mange Inc.** to use Cydectin®. However LAOKO uses other cattle pour-on brands that contain Moxidectin 5g /L and does not follow the label dose rate due to field experience that it is ineffective / too slow. Experience treating in the field has provided evidence that a higher dose rate is required to treat a heavy mange infestation and necessary to counteract the inhibiting effects of wombats' thick fur and dermis, dirt and mud, run off and shaking off the chemical. LAOKO does not adhere to the prophylactic label rate intended for cattle.

Elena regularly documents case studies of wombats being treated for mange and has found great success in using high dose rates - 100 - 120 ml every 4 - 7 days. Elena is in regular contact with WPSA regarding mange treatment options.

Protocol / direct application: dose rate 100 - 120 ml, every 4 - 7 days over 4 - 6 weeks or until the wombat is no longer seen out in the daytime or able to provide a direct application.

Burrow flaps: containers (small tuna and pet food tins used) filled to about 50 ml each - 12 week program. Used when the wombat is not able to be treated through direct application.

Delegation: most landholders reporting mange have taken responsibility to treat the wombats with mange on their own property and the mange team co-ordinator maintains regular contact to check on progress. The co-ordinator visits the landholder, provides training, printed instructions, a kit: extendable painter's pole and chemical container, 1 L of cattle pour-on, wire and burrow flaps - provided free of charge but the expense is discussed and a donation is encouraged.

Funding: has not been addressed by the co-ordinator yet. As at September 2019 the mange treatment co-ordinator has funded the mange treatment program personally.

However, two grants have been applied for and some donations have been made by the community. The LAOKO website has mange treatment donation options.

Future program: A burrow flap program will be rolled out on private property, with participating landholders, particularly in areas where wombats with mange have been reported and treated previously.

The program will commence once funding for chemical has been found. This is the major limiting factor at the moment as much more chemical is needed for a burrow flap program rather than direct application