



Fact Sheet

Managing Wombats Under Houses

Wombats sometimes frequent under houses for a range of circumstances. Underneath houses provide warmth and shelter from harsh winter conditions. This can be the case if a burrow becomes flooded or disturbed and they are no longer able to dig a suitable burrow. In times of drought beneath houses are thought by some wombats to be a better alternative. Houses protect and provide shade where alternatives may no longer exist. This was certainly the case recently after bushfires had decimated bushland. Wombats were forced to find alternate shelter and moved down onto farmland. More frequently they use the underneath of houses as “sitting” or resting spots where they dig shallow “lies” or “sits” and may only use such places for a few weeks until conditions where their preferred burrows improves.

If you live or intend to live in wombat areas, or if under your house has been used by wombats in the past, you need to take precautions and properly block off your house. Local Councils should, but most often don't have the skills to give advice regarding wombats under homes. Removing a wombat is not the answer, if you have had a wombat visitor under your house once, no matter what happens to him or her, another one will eventually likely decide to visit. Trapping and moving them to another area will often see their demise, they will be attacked by the wombats in the new territory or die trying to locate “their” home burrow.

You should not expect wildlife groups or others to constantly trap and remove the wombats, you should ensure proper mechanical barriers are placed around your house or under your house to prevent problems.

Mechanical barriers are the only permanent solution and you as a homeowner in a wombat area must recognise and understand it is your responsibility to manage the problem- much as you do with rodent or leakage issues.

Wombats will try and use any dry, under cover place when they are evicted from their natural burrows. Creek or river flooding, road works and earth works on neighbouring properties done without regard for wombats and their burrows lead to them seeking dry, quiet, dark and protected places, such as underneath houses and

sheds. Sometimes the wombat using an unnatural hiding place, like under a house, can be unwell. If you can take a photograph and send it to your nearest wildlife group or to mange@wombatprotection.org.au the health of the wombat can be assessed.



This wombat above is suffering from mange, a debilitating infestation caused by mites, but curable with the correct treatment. The mite makes the wombat scratch incessantly and sometimes under houses provide easy scratching places, though this also means wires and other things left under houses are at risk and places the wombat at risk as well. Once properly treated this wombat will be off back to more natural burrows....in fact wildlife volunteers treating wombats for mange find it hard to track down their patients the moment they start to feel a bit better!

HOW TO

There is no point placing rocks, logs or other potentially moveable obstacles in the path of a wombat. They are digging machines and these obstacles only encourage greater effort. Wombats do not like and will not, or cannot, dig over wire, whether rabbit mesh or weldmesh, wire laid over the place where a wombat is digging soon stops them. If Councils advised people when building to lay a simple matrix of weldmesh under houses covering the house footprint there would never be wombats under the house problems. Retrofitting can be a nuisance, particularly when older houses have uneven ground or items stored underneath. This can make fitting a layer of wire mesh a major enterprise.

If you can't easily lay a wire matrix under your house and have a wombat you would like to evict, you will need to place weldmesh or rabbit wire down from your house base either into the ground by at least 600mm – 900mm or down and then out as a "skirt" by the same amount. This is a cheap, permanent solution.



This picture shows weldmesh placed over a hole being dug near a water pipe but the system for preventing digging in under houses is exactly the same. Light weldmesh is being used in this instance, but even lighter rabbit wire can be employed.

Where wombats are already using the underside of houses/sheds, this barrier needs to have an exit and no entrance flaps attached. This is a simple matter of cutting a hole out from the mesh that is perpendicular to the house and then attaching a bigger piece of wire, hinged to allow the wombat to get out but not back in. Hinges can be made from wire, wire staples or electrical cable.



While more elaborate than is generally needed, this picture shows a large sheet of weldmesh laid over the top of a burrow with a very large sheet above the cut-out area allowing the wombat to push up but not return. The flap to let the wombat out but not allow it to return, could be substantially smaller and just as effective.

Electric fences set at between 200mm and 400mm off the ground often serve the same purpose with regards to deterring wombats but may need persistence for efficacy.

Wombats in general have a number of burrows that they use depending on the time of year and water/food supplies, so a wombat let out from and prevented from returning to under a house usually has a place to go. Trapping and moving them to another area will often see their demise, they will be attacked by the wombats in the new territory or die trying to locate “their” burrow. Where a wombat has lost its burrows due to human intervention (roadworks, mining, land clearing) a more specialised approach to assisting the wombat relocate will be needed.

Should you need more advice or specifics for your situation please contact Wombat Protection Society of Australia info@wombatprotection.org.au

Remember it is illegal to harm or interfere with native animals or to allow other parties to do so- this includes trapping, shooting, burying burrows, poisoning or any other form of harm . Severe penalties of \$12,000 fines and or six-month jail are statutory.

ANOTHER USEFULL HINT TO DETER WOMBATS RESIDING UNDER YOUR HOUSE

Try setting up a light and a radio under the house when you go to bed. Usually by the time you retire the wombat will have left for a night of foraging. When the wombat returns in the early hours, the sounds of activity (radio) and light should be enough deterrent to make the wombat move on. You may have to do this for a few nights until the wombat gets the message.

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