

Welcome to Bulletin 23.

In this Bulletin

State of the Wombat – our annual letter to Premiers' Australia wide asks them to tell us what their State is doing to help wombats, and particularly, what their State is doing to assist help prevent and control mange. All States and Territories managed an initial reply indicating they had received their letter and 2 months on A.C.T. , Queensland, and Victoria have replied. Full reading and comprehension marks are yet to be awarded to a State that manages to respond to each question asked, in full. Victoria came close and A.C.T., though in denial both about wombats in their territory (you need only look at the number of road kill as you head into A.C.T. via the Monaro Highway) and the impact of mange on them; but that Territory at least does not licence any culling. Queensland, as would be expected given the very few wombats it cares for, is more focused and as these wombats are highly endangered it of course does not allow them to be culled. As mange is not yet known in the Northern Hairy Nosed Wombats, Queensland had the easiest job of reply.

Grab a T- Shirt – if you haven't got one of the Society's great T-shirts, now is the time to get one. If you already have, now is the time to get another! Not only are we selling out last years' stock but we will take orders for special sizes or numbers for 2009. We have a collection of children's sizes in stock. These great, Australian made fully embroidered T-shirts wash well, don't shrink and seem to be lasting without fading very well. Kids white T-shirts are \$20.00 and Maroon \$25.00. Adult white T-shirts are \$30.00 and Maroon \$35.00 . We can usually send out two T-shirts stuffed in a bag for \$5.50 postage, sadly one alone costs the same!

Member Contact- the Society is still working to develop an on site forum through which members can communicate about all things wombat and through which members of the public can ask questions of you experts out there. This is taking a little longer than anticipated so we are offering members who are bursting to communicate with one another the opportunity to be on a members' mail list. We would also like short profiles from members and your reasons for being involved with wombats. Send a photo of yourself or a wombat that you have been involved with and we will make his a regular feature.

Ethics in Wombat Welfare- there was a great deal of comment recently when members involved in Native Wildlife Rehabilitation read a proposal that native animals unsuited to release have a "right to euthanasia" .Some members would be aware that the Society is developing an Ethics committee and Prof. Steve Garlick has offered to chair this committee. The short essay "Ethics In Wombat Welfare" is an introduction to the topic from a committee member and one we are sure will interest many members, whether you rehabilitate native animals or or not. If you are interested in this area contact the Society so you too can be involved in helping look at existing policy and developing alternatives where policies related to native animals fail them.

STATE OF THE WOMBAT

The State of the Wombat letter was sent to the N.S.W., A.C.T.,
Victorian, South Australian and Tasmanian Premiers. Replies to date
follow.

Wombat Protection Society



The Hon. Morris Iemma B.Ec., LLB, M.P.
Level 40, Gov. Macquarie Tower,
1 Farrer Place,
Sydney

Dear Sir,

Each year our Society produces a paper which is published
on our website to advise people on "The State of the
Wombat" in each respective State and Territory.

This year we would like to hear of any proactive research or
programs being conducted in your State/Territory, to assist
wombats, so we can highlight these on our site. In
particular, we would like you to address the following:

1. Mange is a deadly disease caused by a mite called *Sarcoptes Scabiei* which results in a long and drawn out death for the wombat. What is your government doing to combat mange?
2. How many wombats do you estimate to have Mange in your State/Territory? What programs, policies and procedures does your State/Territory have in place to deal with this problem in your wombat population?
3. Does your State/Territory issue licenses for the culling of wombats? How many of these licenses have been issued and how many wombats were culled under such permits/licences? What programs, policies and procedures cover these licenses?
4. Were any people or persons charged with illegal culling, cruelty or habitat destruction affecting wombats in your State/Territory in the past year?

of Australia Ltd. www.wombatprotection.org.au

A.C.N. 122 449 665 A.B.N. 33 122 449 665

Telephone: 02 64 938 245 Mail P.O. Box 6045 Quama 2550 N.S.W. Australia

E-Mail: info@wombatprotection.org.au

Wombat Protection Society

5. Would you please explain your State/Territory licensing procedures for the rescue and rehabilitation of wombats.
6. How many facilities of this nature exist in your State/Territory for the care and rehabilitation of wombats.

We look forward to your earliest response.

Yours faithfully

Ms. Jan Smith
Director

of Australia Ltd. www.wombatprotection.org.au

A.C.N. 122 449 665 A.B.N. 33 122 449 665

Telephone: 02 64 938 245 Mail P.O. Box 6045 Quaama 2550 N.S.W. Australia

E-Mail: info@wombatprotection.org.au



Queensland
Government

Ref: BNE4781-2
BNE2008/11730
SU/08/4355

Office of the
Minister for Sustainability,
Climate Change and Innovation

Ms Jan Smith
Director
Wombat Protection Society of Australia Ltd
PO Box 6045
QUAAMA NSW 2550

Dear Ms Smith

I refer to your letter of 28 August 2008 addressed to the Honourable Anna Bligh MP, Premier of Queensland, seeking information on proactive research or programs to assist wombats in Queensland. The Premier has referred the issue to the Honourable Andrew McNamara MP, Minister for Sustainability, Climate Change and Innovation for response.

Wombats are of limited extent in Queensland. The distribution of the common wombat just extends into the elevated New England Tableland region near Stanthorpe. Significantly, Queensland has the only natural surviving population of the northern hairy-nosed wombat at Epping Forest National Park in central Queensland. This species, which is listed as endangered, formerly occurred within inland Queensland and New South Wales, but declined after the introduction of cattle and sheep grazing.

Epping Forest National Park was a former grazing property and was reserved specifically to conserve northern hairy-nosed wombats in 1988. At last census, the population was about 115 individuals. An aim of the recovery of the species has been to establish a second remote colony to minimise the risk of extinction from chance natural disasters or disease. This objective is currently being addressed through a \$3 million sponsorship from mining firm Xstrata that will enable the Environmental Protection Agency to secure a second site, establish support infrastructure and relocate a number of animals. The site will be fully enclosed by a predator proof fence and the release of animals sourced from Epping Forest is planned for winter 2009.

The Minister thanks you for your interest in wombats in Queensland and hopes this information is of assistance. Should you wish to discuss the matter further, please contact Tim Holmes of the Environmental Protection Agency on telephone (07) 3202 0230

Yours sincerely

David Shankey
Senior Policy Advisor

Level 12
140 Ann Street, Brisbane QLD
PO Box 3226, St. Leonards
Queensland 4070, Australia
Telephone +61 7 3336 8032
Facsimile +61 7 3271 6319
Email communications@emissions.qld.gov.au
ANZBN 950 016 015



Jon Stanhope MLA

CHIEF MINISTER

TREASURER MINISTER FOR BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
MINISTER FOR INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, WATER AND CLIMATE
CHANGE MINISTER FOR THE ARTS

MEMBER FOR GINNINDERRA

Ms Jan Smith
Director
PO Box 6045
QUAAMA NSW 2550

Dear Ms Smith

Thank you for your letter received in my office on 28 August 2008 seeking information about wombat research programs in the ACT for the Wombat Protection Society's website publication.

The common wombat *Vombatus ursinus* is widespread and abundant in the ACT. Its habitat is protected in Namadgi National Park and various nature reserves, which together comprise over 50 per cent of the land area of the ACT, although wombats also occur on rural properties. Common wombats are protected under the *Nature Conservation Act 1980* and licenses are not issued to cull them in the ACT. I have also been advised that in the last financial year the Licensing and Compliance Unit has not commenced a prosecution against any person relative to any offence involving mistreatment of Wombats or Wombat habitat.

The ACT Government is not conducting research on wombats at present, although an ecologist in the Research and Planning section published the following scientific paper last week (from his previous PhD work on wombats): *Evans, M. C. 2008. Home range, burrow-use and activity patterns in common wombats (Vombatus ursinus). Wildlife Research, 35: 455-462.* The Australian National University and the University of Canberra both conduct ecological research, although I am not aware of any current research on wombats in the ACT by these local institutions.

As in other parts of Australia, sarcoptic mange is present in wombat populations in the ACT. Observations by researchers and rangers suggest the incidence of wombats with obvious signs of mange is lower in the ACT than in some other areas. Severely infested wombats that are brought to the attention of rangers are euthanased. Whilst medications are available to kill sarcoptic mites, the experience of rangers is that wombats given such medications (such as Ivermectin) recover from mange in the short-term but subsequently become reinfested.

ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

London Circuit, Canberra ACT 2601 GPO Box 1020, Canberra ACT 2601
Phone (02) 6205 0104 Fax (02) 6205 0433 Email stanhope@act.gov.au

With respect to rescue and rehabilitation of wombats, certain organisations are licensed under the *Nature Conservation Act 1980* to undertake this work, such as the RSPCA and wildlife carer groups.

I trust that this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

Jon Stanhope MLA
Minister for the Environment, Water and Climate Change

23 October 2008



Department of
Sustainability and Environment

Our Ref: DSE056801
File: 87/19-1948(2)

8 Nicholson Street
PO Box 500 East Melbourne
Victoria 3002 Australia
Telephone: (03) 9637 8000
Facsimile: (03) 9650 8100
ABN 90 719 052 264
DN 210098



Ms Jan Smith
Director
Wombat Protection Society
PO Box 6045
QUAAMA NSW 2550

Dear Ms Smith

PROTECTION OF WOMBATS

Thank you for your letter of 28 August 2008 to the Premier, the Hon. John Brumby MLA, regarding the state of wombats in Victoria. As this matter falls within my responsibilities your correspondence has been forwarded to me for my consideration and response.

Sarcoptic mange

As you are aware, sarcoptic mange in wombats can create severe disease leading to a painful and slow death in susceptible individuals. While it may seem desirable to treat affected animals with long-lasting acaricides to kill the mites causing the disease, in practice this is not feasible. Furthermore treatment of a wombat to destroy the mange mites does not provide immunity from future infestation by mites.

The Red Fox may be a major vector for mange in wombats, through the sharing of burrows. Control of foxes may assist with reducing the incidence of mange to some extent and this will be an added benefit of existing fox control programs.

Periodic episodes of severe mange in wombats have been reported previously in Victoria. Wombat populations do recover from these outbreaks and it seems unlikely that mange is a serious threat to long-term survival.

Control of wombats

In Victoria all wildlife, including the Common Wombat, are protected under the *Wildlife Act 1975* and may not be destroyed, except with an authorisation issued by the Department of Sustainability and Environment. Such an authority will only be issued where it can be demonstrated that damage is being caused, and where non-lethal measures are inappropriate or have been unsuccessful. From 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008, 128 permits were issued in Victoria to control wombats. Each permit is subject to specific conditions and failure to comply with these conditions may result in prosecution.

Privacy Statement

Any personal information about you or a third party in your correspondence will be protected under the provisions of the Information Privacy Act 2000. It will only be used or disclosed to appropriate Ministerial, Statutory, Authority, or departmental staff in regard to the purpose for which it was provided, unless required or authorised by law. Enquiries about access to information about you held by the Department should be directed to the Manager Privacy, Department of Sustainability & Environment, PO Box 500 East Melbourne, 3002



In addition, in certain parts of eastern Victoria, the Common Wombat is declared "unprotected" and may be destroyed only by the occupiers of land who are engaged in rural production, their employees and families, and only on their properties. This does not give the right to members of the public to destroy wombats in the areas where they are declared unprotected. Penalties of more than \$5,000 and/or up to six months in jail exist for illegally destroying protected wildlife. Further information on the management of Common Wombats in Victoria is enclosed.

Rehabilitation of wombats

To legally care for wildlife in Victoria, including wombats, a Wildlife Shelter Authorisation is required. The Department of Sustainability and Environment authorises suitably qualified and experienced volunteers to care for and rehabilitate sick, injured or orphaned native wildlife for the purposes of releasing them back to the wild. Euthanasia is applied to animals that cannot be rehabilitated for successful release.

Wildlife rehabilitators are divided into two categories: (i) wildlife shelter operators and (ii) foster carers. The difference between the two is the relative level of expertise and experience in caring for wildlife which affects the level of responsibility they are given under the Wildlife Act.

There are approximately 300 wildlife shelter operators and 200 foster carers authorised to rehabilitate wildlife in Victoria. All are required to comply with the conditions of authorisation and with the Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals during Rehabilitation, under the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986*. A copy of the Code is enclosed for your information.

If you have any further questions regarding this matter, please contact Mr Ian Temby, Senior Biodiversity Officer on (03) 9296 4664.

Yours sincerely

Kimberley J Dripps
Executive Director
Biodiversity & Ecosystem Services

... / ... / 2008

Flora and Fauna



Wombats may cause problems on farms by damaging rabbit-proof fencing, allowing entry by rabbits, kangaroos and wallabies. Wombat burrows in pastures can be hazardous to farm vehicles and stock, and burrowing may worsen soil instability problems along cleared creek banks and weaken dam walls. Wombats occasionally undermine the foundations of buildings by burrowing.

The past history of the Common Wombat as a vermin species, for which a bounty was payable, has influenced the way in which this species is regarded by some people, and the mere presence of wombats is equated with damage being caused. However, it is important to see whether actual damage is occurring, and its extent, so that the need for damage control can be judged from an economic viewpoint rather than an emotional one.

A survey by a group from Monash University indicated that many landholders' perceptions of damage by wombats were not borne out during on-ground inspections. Erosion, for example, was due to a number of factors, including past over-clearing of steep slopes, compaction of the soil by hard-hoofed animals, and over-grazing (for which rabbits would be partly responsible), leading to excessive runoff. The role of the wombat in this particular scenario is minor, and probably not relevant. There would be few instances where action against wombats for this reason could be justified.

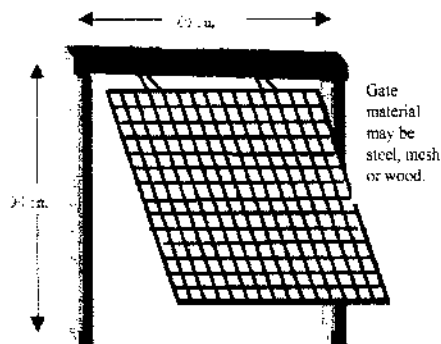
Female wombats are able to breed at two years, and can produce a maximum of one offspring per year. Wombats use as many as ten holes within their home range, although only two or three of these will be used regularly. A count of holes is not a reliable way of estimating wombat numbers in an area. A wombat's home range varies from 5 to 25 ha, depending upon habitat quality.

Killing wombats to reduce damage to boundary fences is not only futile, but may be counter-productive. The interface between pastures and adjacent bush is a highly productive habitat for wombats. High birth rates (most females capable of breeding, do so) and high survival are likely under these conditions. This ensures that there is a reservoir of young, transient wombats ready to replace any established animal that is removed. Because of this rapid replacement, destruction of wombats near bush boundaries is not likely to resolve a problem of damage to netting

fences (and subsequent entry of rabbits and kangaroos), initiated by wombats. Destruction may be effective and appropriate where, for example, an individual wombat is burrowing in pasture, dam walls or under buildings.

Common Wombats are declared unprotected in 193 parishes in eastern Victoria (see list below), where they may be destroyed only by centre-fire rifle of .222 calibre or larger. Fumigation of wombats is illegal and inhumane, and could leave the user liable to prosecution for cruelty and misuse of chemicals.

1. Erect a two-wire electric fence, 30 cm outside the existing boundary fence, with the wires at 15 and 30 cm above the ground. Both of the wires should be live, powered by a standard electric fence energiser. Observations at one site demonstrated that this fence configuration could keep a number of wombats from their traditional feeding area over a six-month period.
2. Install swing gates at regular wombat access points to relieve damage to netting fences (see design below). For these gates to work, two or three well-used holes must be chosen and all other holes within a few hundred metres must be repaired daily. After about a month, the wombats should be using only the selected holes. The frame for the gate is then erected around the hole and left for the wombats to become accustomed to it before the gate is hung. When the gate is in place, it should be left partly open so that wombats passing through must lift it slightly. After another week or two, the gate can be allowed to hang



Wombat Gate

vertically. Such a gate will exclude rabbits and kangaroos, and reduce greatly the incidence of fresh wombat holes being made in fences.

3. Place a post next to a burrow in pasture to mark its position, so that vehicles can avoid it. Alternatively, shoot the individual involved and fill in the burrow to remove hazard to stock and farm vehicles.
4. Prevent access to the spaces under buildings using heavy gauge reinforcing mesh or the two-wire electric fence described above. The mesh may also be used to prevent burrowing in dam walls.
5. Destroy the individual wombats responsible for burrowing in dam walls and around or under buildings by shooting.

Any destruction of wombats in parishes where the Common Wombat is protected can only be done under the conditions of an Authority to Control Wildlife, issued by DSE. (for an application form contact the Customer Service Centre on 136 186).

Governor in Council Order declaring the Common Wombat to be unprotected.

Common Wombat

This species is declared to be unprotected wildlife in the Parishes listed in Schedule 1 (below) in the Governor in Council Order published in Victoria Government Gazette G22, 5 June 1997.

The Order states:

- (1) "Common Wombats may be taken or destroyed in the parishes listed in Schedule 1 by a landowner or occupier who is engaged in rural production and by the permanent employees of that landowner or occupier.
- (2) Common Wombats may be taken or destroyed by a person specified in Paragraph (1) only by the use of firearms conforming to the specifications in Paragraph (3).
- (3) Wombats may be destroyed only by a centre-fire rifle, fitted with a telescopic sight. The rifle must have centre-fire case capacity of at least .222 Remington. The ammunition must have an expanding projectile (soft or hollow point) of not less than 324 mg (50 grains) and provide a minimum muzzle energy of 1542 Joules (1137 footpounds). Note: .222 Remington with 50 grain projectile must be loaded to achieve a muzzle velocity of 975 m/sec. (3200 ft/sec.) to reach this minimum energy. Standard factory loads conform to this specification."

Schedule 1

Parishes in which the Common Wombat (*Vombatus ursinus*) is declared to be unprotected wildlife

Allambee	Harrietville	Stevenson
Angora	Hippo-Munjie	Stradbroke
Barwidgee	Holey Plains	Stratford
Belcka	Howqua	Suggan Buggan

Bendock	Jamieson	Tabbera
Bengworden	Jeeرالang	Tabberahbera
Berrmarr	Jeetho West	Taggerty
Bete Bolong South	Jilwain	Tallandoon
Bidwell	Jinderboine	Tambo
Bindi	Jingallala	Tamberaha
Binginwarri	Jirakee	Tangambalanga
Bingo-Munjie	Jirrah	Tarwin
Bingo-Munjie South	Kacrwut	Tarwin South
Bonang	Keelangie	Tatong
Boodyart	Kergunyah	Tawanga
Boonderoot	Kianeeek	Terlic-Munjie
Bow-Worrung	Kinglake	Tildesley East
Briagolong	Kirkenong	Timbarra
Bright	Kirrak	Tinanna
Buchar	Koorool	Tongio-Munjie East
Buckland	Korumburra	Tongio-Munjie West
Budgee Budgee	Lang Lang East	Tonimbuk
Bulga	Licola	Toombullup North
Bulhumwaal	Liccia North	Toongabbie North
Bumberrah	Lima	Toongabbie South
Bungamero	Linton	Toorourong
Cabanandra	Ludrik-Munjie	Towong
Callignee	Maffra	Tubbut
Carrajung	Magorra	Tyira
Changue	Marloch	Wa-de-lock
Chilpin	Matong	Wadhala
Cobungra	Matong North	Wallan Wailan
Colquhoun	Mellick-Munjie	Wanditigong
Colquhoun East	Mertzig	Wandin Yallock
Coolambooka	Mirboo	Waratah
Coongulmerang	Mitta Mitta	Waratah North
Coongulla	Moonip	Warrandyte
Cowa	Moornung	Waygara
Dargo	Moongag	Welshpool
Deddick	Mooroolbark	Werrmatong
Dederang	Morekana	Windarra
Devon	Mullagong	Wollonaby
Dondangadale	Mullindoolingong	Wonwren
Doomburrin	Murungowar	Wonnaggata
Dorchap	Myrtleford	Wonthaggi
Ensay	Nangana	Woolmeek
Eumana	Nappa	Woongulmerang East
		Woongulmerang West
Eurandelong	Narbethong	Wortwring
		Wuk Wuk
Freeburgh	Nariel	Wulla Wullock
Gelantipy East	Narrook	Wy-Yung
Gelantipy West	Narrook North	Wyceho
Gentbrook	Newmerulla	Yabba
Gibbo	Nindoo	Yackandandah
Gillard	Nimio	Yalmy
Gillingal	Noorungong	Yangoura
Gillum	Nowa Nowa	Yea
Glenaladale	Noyong	Yeerak
Glencoe South	Numbie-Munjie	Yerung
Glenmaggie	Nungatta	Yermy
Gonzaga	Omeo	
Goon Nure	Orbest	
Gracedale	Orbest East	

The Ethics of Wombat Welfare

The Wombat Protection Society of Australia includes in its mission conserving and preserving wombats and advocating for them, both as individuals and as species, and educating people in this endeavour. This mission differs significantly from many conservation paradigms due to its emphasis on individual animals and the recognition that commonality should not preclude protection nor justify suffering and it should not diminish the most fundamental of all rights, the right to live both for an individual and the species. The dominant paradigm in native animal management in Australia today is the antithesis of this stated mission. The paradigm or belief that "There is no conservation value in rehabilitating common animals" can be argued to be the start of the slippery slope that justifies suffering. The unstated foundation of such a paradigm is that unless an animal faces extinction, it has no value, a commodification of life into an economic rationalist perspective. From this paradigm built on fallacies, equally unreasonable dictums flow, such as one adopted by rehabilitators almost without question; that "unreleasable" native animals have a "right" to "euthanasia". Apathy in the face of suffering as well as more overt forms of harm; commercialisation, hunting and culling and habitat destruction may all be argued to arise from the commodification of so called "common" native animals.

The idea that there is no conservation value in rehabilitating "common" native animals can be shown to lead to the very condition that conservation on any level and by any definition is meant to prevent, extinction. Extinction is the end of a slippery slope that begins with either a failure in genetic material or interference with an environment or both. Most extinctions in recent time are due to human interference. Extinction is however, a process that has been ongoing over millenium and will continue. Clive Marks put this well in his recent essay "Empathy for the Enemy" when he wrote "...extinction has become a heresy. Our present concerns for biodiversity and planetary ecology, are well placed, but the pursuit of an ideal with such singular focus should cause us to take stock, especially if we are prepared to subsume concerns for suffering and abandon empathy in its pursuit". Clive was referring to the ruthless cruelty inflicted on animals declared "vermin" and the inhumane means that have been and are used to kill them, pointing out that chloropicrin which has a corrosive impact on lung tissue is a "a crude means to a terrible end" and was used as a burrow "Fumigant", killing wombats and rabbits until relatively recently. According to Clive, steel jaw traps can still be used on Dingos and 1080, once claimed to be "humane" is now realised to cause unreasonable suffering prior to death. 1080 takes many collateral victims, yet it is still used widely by National Parks and Wildlie Service and Rural Lands Protection Boards. Focusing on extinction alone not only justifies the prolonged suffering deaths of animals deemed "vermin" but the corruption of the term to include any pest animal, native or otherwise.

When humans fail to acknowledge suffering in other species or see it as their mandate to dictate such suffering the incline becomes precipitous. Whatever initiates the extinction slide, numbers of a species become so pitifully low that individuals are able to be counted. Ironically, at that point every individual counts and conservation means saving every individual and ensuring each breeds and lives to its capacity. At this point "conservation" does a reversal and it becomes imperative to keep each individual alive. Extremes are sometimes undertaken to ensure that the individual continues to live, whether a wingless swift parrot still able to mate or a blind nail tailed wallaby because in a proper enclosure "they'll still be able to breed." There is now no "right" to "Euthanasia" because these individuals are "unreleasable." The "right to euthanasia" for an "unreleasable" animal applies only to those that have already been devalued by commodification by being considered "common".

These swings and roundabouts call into question the definitions that are used. "Common" and "Conservation" and "Right" are all defined differently in a temporal sense and by different political agendas. There is no standard definition of any of these words so easily co-opted by politicians, "experts" and occasionally researchers and educators. So when we hear that "conservationists" believe or state something, this is meaningless as conservationists are not a collective group holding to defined values and nor does conservation mean the same thing to those who call themselves conservationist. To make the statement that there is no conservation value in rehabilitating common animals defines the type of conservation the speaker believes in. This type of conservation devalues the individual by making its worth, like a commodity, proportional to its availability. Such a rational economic model to animal welfare can be argued to lead to both suffering and to extinction.

This type of "conservation" justifies the removal of "excess" "commodities" (common animals) and justifies the hunting of native animals and legal killing of them if they live on or travel through farms. It creates the indifference that leads to thousands losing habitat through landclearing, woodchipping and hundreds of thousands dying as road kill, and the mentality that because these animals are common, no efforts need to be made because they aren't going extinct. It creates the conditions where we fail to care appropriately for animals having decided the more there are the less we need to care. It leads to apathy in the face of extreme suffering as is the case with mange in wombats and was the case with the Tasmanian Devil's facial tumour.* It perpetuates the commodification of animals and creates the tendency towards extinction by creating the diminishing supply which increases an individual's worth.

Government and its policies are informed by the Science it funds and for which funds are available. Universities now compete with public for profit companies on the open market leading to a skewing in the type of research grant available and the type of projects which receive

funding. "Pure" science, the ideal espoused to use only evidence based criteria fails miserably to take into account the very basis from which science grew. It was the need to understand the amazing and intricately webbed inter-relationships between all things on this planet and seen from this planet that led to the development of science. And science includes mind sciences like psychology which are becoming clearer that there is more to planetary, human and other species health and well being than that which can be seen under a microscope.

It is a wonderfully circular argument that has been created by the misuse or political interpretation of science that leads to a right to death. A strange position exists if we can justify the continued degradation of natural habitat by then saying there is no where to release native animals and therefore conclude they are "unreleasable". This is done with joey Eastern Grey Kangaroos in most of the A.C.T. where their commonality and unreleasability leads to most being "euthanised". These are not sick or injured joeys, perfectly healthy ones are euthanised. Some groups do the same based on certain sizes and weights for joey wombats or where insufficient carers exist, develop this as a policy. Meanwhile myths abound that these animals can't be reared or are too small and the ability and knowledge to do so is lost to groups who then begin to believe that the status quo is the truth. We know so little about native animals yet we claim we can tell a releasable animal from an unreleasable animal. Watch any real free living group of native animals over a period of time and you will note all sorts of injuries and illnesses that they cope with and recover from and accommodate to. Yet humans can't give them space or time to make the transition to wellness and somehow justify this killing with a false science that somehow suggests this is in the animals' interest. We diminish ourselves when we know only too well, but for a little elbow grease and a small amount of money native animals could lead happy and healthy lives in cared for communities and small sanctuaries without having to meet some strange criteria for "release". It seems perverse that those who proclaim the death right of so called unreleasable animals accept animals such as wombats dying terrible deaths from preventable infestations such as mange, and would have an healthy unreleasable animal killed yet see no problem if they deemed the animal releasable setting it free into an area where a sure death from mange will result.

Wellness and wellbeing for most are not dictated by wealth and possessions, most of us list a very frugal set of absolutely vital ingredients for making us happy. These needs generally include good health, adequate food, a place to live and family and friends. It is a developed society that can go beyond these basic needs and supply the opportunity to care for the living organism we all cling onto and to appreciate and protect the other sentient beings that share it with us. Inherent in that wellbeing is of course the most basic and fundamental of all rights, the right to live, the commonality we as humans share with all living things. The difference is the overwhelming ability we have as humans to annihilate any other species (and at times our

own), and our equal ability to rise above this and truly protect and care for all life.

*The demise of the Tasmanian Devil shows this in action. Less than a decade ago this small, noisy carnivore was considered a pest in Tasmania and afforded little protection. A facial tumour caused by a contagious cancer has seen their population decimated and major efforts are now focusing on isolating some apparently immune individuals to save the species.

T-Shirts



T- Shirts are available in the following sizes;

White Children's Sizes – 8,10,12

White Adult M/L

Maroon Children's Sizes - 2,4,6,8,10,12

Maroon Adult S/L/XL

Kids white T-shirts are \$20.00 and Maroon \$25.00. Adult white T-shirts are \$30.00 and Maroon \$35.00 .

We can usually send out two T-shirts stuffed in a bag for \$5.50 postage, sadly one alone costs the same! Call 02 64938245 or email info@wombatprotection.org.au to order now for Christmas. Remember too that Ken's Valley, a great DVD made by the Wynan boys is available for \$20.00 and memberships make a great Christmas present, still \$5.00 for Children and \$10.00 for adults.