



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, INDUSTRY & ENVIRONMENT

Wombat Rehabilitation Training Standards

for the Volunteer Wildlife Rehabilitation Sector



© 2021 State of NSW and Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

With the exception of photographs, the State of NSW and Department of Planning, Industry and Environment are pleased to allow this material to be reproduced in whole or in part for educational and non-commercial use, provided the meaning is unchanged and its source, publisher and authorship are acknowledged. Specific permission is required for the reproduction of photographs.

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) has compiled this report in good faith, exercising all due care and attention. No representation is made about the accuracy, completeness or suitability of the information in this publication for any particular purpose. DPIE shall not be liable for any damage which may occur to any person or organisation taking action or not on the basis of this publication. Readers should seek appropriate advice when applying the information to their specific needs.

All content in this publication is owned by DPIE and is protected by Crown Copyright, unless credited otherwise. It is licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International \(CC BY 4.0\)](#), subject to the exemptions contained in the licence. The legal code for the licence is available at [Creative Commons](#).

DPIE asserts the right to be attributed as author of the original material in the following manner: © State of New South Wales and Department of Planning, Industry and Environment 2020.

Cover photo: Bare-nosed wombat (*Vombatus ursinus*). Aditi Sriram/DPIE

Acknowledgments

We thank the following rehabilitation providers for their contribution to these standards:

NSW Wildlife Information, Rescue and Education Service Inc. (WIRES); Wildlife Rescue South Coast Inc. (WRSC); Native Animal Trust Fund Inc. (NATF); Looking After Our Kosciuszko Orphans Inc. (LAOKO); Saving Our Native Animals Inc. (SONA); Wildcare Queanbeyan Inc.; and Linda Dennis.

Published by:

Environment, Energy and Science
Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
Locked Bag 5022, Parramatta NSW 2124
Phone: +61 2 9995 5000 (switchboard)
Phone: 1300 361 967 (Environment, Energy and Science enquiries)
TTY users: phone 133 677, then ask for 1300 361 967
Speak and listen users: phone 1300 555 727, then ask for 1300 361 967
Email: info@environment.nsw.gov.au
Website: www.environment.nsw.gov.au

Report pollution and environmental incidents
Environment Line: 131 555 (NSW only) or info@environment.nsw.gov.au
See also www.environment.nsw.gov.au

ISBN 978-1-922558-69-5
EES 2021/0182
May 2021

Find out more about your environment at:

www.environment.nsw.gov.au

Contents

Introduction	1
Structure of the standards	2
Prerequisites	2
Definitions	2
Wombat rehabilitation standards: Core areas of training	3
Foundations of wombat rehabilitation	4
Standard 1: The framework for wombat rehabilitation in New South Wales	4
Standard 2: Work health and safety requirements of wombat rehabilitation	4
Standard 3: Record keeping	5
Standard 4: Biology and behaviour of wombats	5
Standard 5: Stress management in wombats	5
Rescue of wombats	6
Standard 6: Rescue of wombats	6
Standard 7: Transport of wombats	6
Standard 8: Assessment of wombats	7
Rehabilitation of wombats	7
Standard 9: Rehabilitation of subadult and adult wombats	7
Standard 10: Rehabilitation of wombat joeys	8
Standard 11: Release of wombats	9

Introduction

Wildlife rehabilitation organisations and their volunteers play a critical role in the rescue and rehabilitation of sick, injured and orphaned wombats in New South Wales. Each year about 980 wombats on average are rescued. Volunteers participating in their care are trained to ensure animals are managed humanely and have the best chance of rehabilitation and release back into the wild.

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), has collaborated with leading wombat rehabilitation providers to prepare these *Wombat Rehabilitation Training Standards* for use by trainers in the NSW wildlife rehabilitation sector. These training standards build on the high level of expertise within the sector, and have been designed as a guide to evaluate, develop and support new and existing training. The intended outcome is to ensure minimum training standards are in place for volunteers across the sector, as recommended in the NSW Volunteer Wildlife Rehabilitation Sector Strategy (DPIE 2020). This will give greater certainty about the quality of care afforded to wombats in rehabilitation.

These standards must be used for delivering introductory training for wombat rehabilitation. They describe the skills and knowledge that such training must include to ensure volunteers meet the NSW Code of Practice for Injured, Sick and Orphaned Wombats requirements. Any person with an authority to rescue and rehabilitate wombats in New South Wales must be trained to these standards and be assessed as competent.

These training standards have been ordered into three suggested core areas of training. Training programs can be structured in their entirety to replicate the standards, or can be broken down to cover individual or multiple standards, or can be based on certain roles within wombat rehabilitation. Irrespective of the structure used, all training must include the standards relevant to a role and must cover the duties this role would be expected to perform upon completing the training.

All training must be compliant with the *Code of Practice for Injured, Sick and Orphaned Wombats*. It must have a written assessment component, be competency-based, and be accompanied by ongoing in-field support from experienced wildlife rehabilitators.

Once a person is trained to these standards, they can undertake advanced refresher training and professional development opportunities as determined by their licensed wildlife rehabilitation organisation.

Additional information on training to these standards can be found in the companion Wombat Rehabilitation Training Standards for the Volunteer Wildlife Rehabilitation Sector: Trainers' Guide (DPIE 2021). The trainers' guide has been designed to support the sector develop their training in line with these standards.

Structure of the standards

There are 11 wombat rehabilitation training standards, organised into the following structure:

- **Objective** is the aim of each standard.
- **Learning outcomes** are the knowledge and skills a learner will have obtained and be able to demonstrate upon completion of training.
- **Sections in the Code** identify sections in the *Code of Practice for Injured, Sick and Orphaned Wombats* that apply to each standard.

Prerequisites

As required by the *Code of Practice for Injured, Sick and Orphaned Wombats* (the Wombat Code), new wildlife rehabilitators must undertake an introductory training course. For generalist groups this could be in their induction training. For wombat-specific groups, this can be completed as separate induction training or incorporated into Standard 1: The framework for wombat rehabilitation in New South Wales.

Definitions

Advanced refresher training: a standard in each Code of Practice requires wildlife rehabilitators to complete additional training every three or four years, depending on the species. In the *Code of Practice for Injured, Sick and Orphaned Wombats* refresher training must be completed every three years.

Code of Practice: specifies the minimum standards of care needed to protect the welfare of animals in rehabilitation. There is a general code and species-specific codes. The Code of Practice for Injured, Sick and Orphaned Wombats is the relevant code for wombats.

Competency: is defined by the Australian Skills Quality Authority as the consistent application of knowledge and skill to the standard of performance required in the workplace. It embodies the ability to transfer and apply skills and knowledge to new situations and environments.

Learning outcomes: a clear statement of what a learner is expected to be able to do, know about and value at the completion of a unit of study, and how well they should be expected to achieve those outcomes.

Objective: the aim of each standard.

Prerequisites: require something to happen or be completed before the other; for example, some advanced courses require a prior subject or course to be completed before a learner can enrol in them.

Professional development: activities that develop or maintain skills or knowledge. Examples could include workshops, conferences, mentoring, independent research and courses.

Standards: are a level of accepted quality.

Wombats: are nocturnal, burrowing, herbivorous marsupials that belong to the family Vombatidae which has three extant species in the genus *Vombatus* and genus *Lasiiorhinus*. While originally all three species were found in New South Wales, the northern hairy-nosed wombat is now extinct in New South Wales.

Wombat rehabilitation standards:

Core areas of training

There are 11 wombat rehabilitation standards organised into three core training areas.

Core training area	Relevant standard
Foundations of wombat rehabilitation	Standard 1: The framework for wombat rehabilitation in New South Wales
	Standard 2: Work health and safety (WHS) requirements of wombat rehabilitation
	Standard 3: Record keeping
	Standard 4: Biology and behaviour of wombats
	Standard 5: Stress management in wombats
Rescue of wombats	Standard 6: Rescue of wombats
	Standard 7: Transport of wombats
	Standard 8: Assessment of wombats
Rehabilitation of wombats	Standard 9: Rehabilitation of subadult and adult wombats
	Standard 10: Rehabilitation of wombat joeys
	Standard 11: Release of wombats

Foundations of wombat rehabilitation

Standard 1: The framework for wombat rehabilitation in New South Wales

Objective: To familiarise learners with the relevant policies and procedures of wombat rehabilitation and provide them with an understanding of the framework that exists to support and regulate wombat rehabilitation in New South Wales. Learners must be aware of and understand the NSW Code of Practice for Injured, Sick and Orphaned Wombats (the Wombat Code).

To comply with this standard, a rehabilitation organisation must:

- 1.1 Discuss the Wombat Code.
- 1.2 Ensure organisational policies and procedures applicable to wombat rehabilitation are defined and understood by learners.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the Code
Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and demonstrate understanding of the Wombat Code • identify organisational policies and procedures for wombat rehabilitation • recognise the objectives of wombat rehabilitation. 	All

Standard 2: Work health and safety requirements of wombat rehabilitation

Objective: To ensure that learners are able to prioritise their safety and that of the people around them when undertaking wombat rescue and rehabilitation.

To comply with this standard, a rehabilitation organisation must:

- 2.1 Explain the work health and safety (WHS) risks associated with the site, equipment or activity and how they can be minimised.
- 2.2 Explain the WHS risks associated with handling and restraining wombats and how they can be minimised.
- 2.3 Discuss the WHS risks associated with zoonotic diseases relevant to wombats and how they can be minimised.
- 2.4 Discuss rehabilitator wellbeing and the potential mental health impacts of wildlife rehabilitation.

Learning outcomes	Section in the Code
Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify WHS risks associated with wombat rehabilitation • employ techniques to minimise the WHS risks to themselves and other people. 	3. Rescue 5. Euthanasia 6. Care procedures 7. Husbandry

Standard 3: Record keeping

Objective: To explain the record keeping requirements for wombat rehabilitation.

To comply with this standard, rehabilitation organisations must:

- 3.1 Explain the NPWS reporting requirements.
- 3.2 Explain organisational reporting requirements.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the Code
Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• keep records in accordance with NPWS and organisational requirements.	12. Record keeping

Standard 4: Biology and behaviour of wombats

Objective: To ensure detailed knowledge of wombats is taught to learners. This is done by providing learners with the foundational tools to understand wombat biology and behaviour and how these aspects inform interactions with wombats undergoing rehabilitation.

To comply with this standard, a rehabilitation organisation must:

- 4.1 Explain features of wombat biology, including anatomy, physiology, social structure, stages of development and habitat and relate them to wombat rehabilitation.
- 4.2 Provide the tools and understanding required to identify different species of wombats recorded in New South Wales.
- 4.3 Provide the tools and understanding required to identify normal behaviours in wombats.
- 4.4 Provide the tools and understanding required to recognise signs of abnormal behaviour in wombats.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the Code
Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• relate wombat biology and behaviour to wombat rehabilitation• recognise signs of normal behaviour in wombats• recognise signs of abnormal behaviour in wombats.	All

Standard 5: Stress management in wombats

Objective: To communicate the importance of managing stress in wombats and to provide mechanisms for minimising this stress.

To comply with this standard, rehabilitation organisations must:

- 5.1 Explain the effects of stress on a wombat at various stages of rescue and rehabilitation.
- 5.2 Provide the tools and understanding required to recognise signs of stress in a wombat.
- 5.3 Discuss methods for minimising stress on a wombat at various stages of rescue and rehabilitation.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the Code
<p>Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognise signs of stress in wombats and its impact apply methods for minimising stress on a wombat. 	<p>3. Rescue 4. Transport 5. Euthanasia 6. Care procedures 7. Husbandry 8. Housing 10. Release considerations</p>

Rescue of wombats

Standard 6: Rescue of wombats

Objective: To ensure learners have the skills to safely, efficiently and humanely rescue a wombat.

To comply with this standard, a rehabilitation organisation must:

- 6.1 Outline common reasons for wombat rescue.
- 6.2 Detail how to perform a situational assessment, including the use of the decision tree in the Wombat Code, to establish the appropriate course of action.
- 6.3 Detail the correct method and equipment required to capture, handle and rescue a wombat, as suitable to common rescue situations, conditions and ages of a wombat.
- 6.4 Detail how to rescue a wombat to humanely minimise pain, stress and potential injury.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the Code
<p>Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> list the common reasons why wombats require rescue assess a rescue situation and plan the rescue of a wombat safely rescue a wombat using correct equipment determine the type of intervention required at a rescue site. 	<p>2. Case assessment 3. Rescue 4. Transport 5. Euthanasia</p>

Standard 7: Transport of wombats

Objective: To ensure learners have the skills to safely, efficiently and humanely transport a wombat.

To comply with this standard, a rehabilitation organisation must:

- 7.1 Demonstrate how to appropriately contain a wombat for transport based on different sizes, ages and conditions.
- 7.2 Outline how to secure the transport container to prevent escape and further injury.
- 7.3 Detail suitable transport conditions, including ambient temperature, to safely transport a wombat.
- 7.4 Discuss the most suitable person or location that a wombat should be transported to, based on different ages, conditions and organisational policies.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the Code
<p>Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prepare a carrier for transport • outline the transport conditions required to safely transport a wombat • understand the appropriate person or location to transport a wombat to, based on different ages, conditions and organisational policies. 	<p>2. Case assessment 3. Rescue 4. Transport 5. Euthanasia</p>

Standard 8: Assessment of wombats

Objective: To equip learners with the skills necessary to assess the health status of a wombat.

To comply with this standard, a rehabilitation organisation must:

- 8.1 Explain how to conduct an initial assessment of a wombat.
- 8.2 Explain the requirements of a thorough assessment of a wombat.
- 8.3 Provide the tools and understanding required to identify developmental stages in wombat joeys.
- 8.4 Emphasise the need to seek prompt advice and assistance for a wombat from a coordinator, veterinarian or other relevant person, as appropriate to its condition.
- 8.5 Distinguish signs of and ways to determine common diseases and injuries affecting wombats.
- 8.6 Explain how to manage an injured or diseased wombat based on the severity of its condition.
- 8.7 Outline criteria and approved methods for humane euthanasia.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the Code
<p>Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conduct an initial assessment of a wombat • assess the health status of a wombat and recognise stages, symptoms and severity of common diseases and injuries • determine the appropriate course of action for a wombat based on its condition • outline criteria for and approved methods of euthanasia. 	<p>5. Euthanasia 6. Care procedures 7. Husbandry 8. Housing</p>

Rehabilitation of wombats

Standard 9: Rehabilitation of subadult and adult wombats

Objective: To provide learners with an understanding of the requirements for the rehabilitation of subadult and adult wombats, and equip learners with the skills to provide quality rehabilitative care at the relevant stages of rehabilitation.

Note: The rehabilitation of subadult and adult wombats is only advised where suitable facilities and access to veterinary consultation are available.

To comply with this standard, a rehabilitation organisation must:

- 9.1 Explain the importance of and process for quarantining individual wombats entering rehabilitation.
- 9.2 Discuss the effects of stress and the stress mitigation techniques required to safely rehabilitate subadult and adult wombats.
- 9.3 Detail the facilities required to safely rehabilitate subadult and adult wombats, relevant to stages of housing (intensive, intermediate and pre-release).
- 9.4 Describe appropriate equipment and furniture for stages of housing.
- 9.5 Illustrate disease control and hygiene practices appropriate to stages of housing.
- 9.6 Explain how to appropriately provide food and water based on the condition of a wombat.
- 9.7 Detail common conditions and diseases that affect wombats.
- 9.8 Discuss how to monitor a wombat in accordance with stages of housing and condition.
- 9.9 Demonstrate how to complete a husbandry plan.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the Code
Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • outline the requirements for subadult and adult wombat rehabilitation • demonstrate correct set-up for housing wombats • provide food and water appropriate to the age and condition of a wombat • monitor a wombat undergoing rehabilitation • apply hygiene and disease control processes to wombat rehabilitation • complete a husbandry plan for a wombat. 	2. Case assessment 5. Euthanasia 6. Care procedures 7. Husbandry 8. Housing

Standard 10: Rehabilitation of wombat joeys

Objective: To provide learners with the specialised knowledge required to rehabilitate a wombat joey.

To comply with this standard, a rehabilitation organisation must:

- 10.1 Specify key stages of joey development.
- 10.2 Describe appropriate housing for a wombat joey based on its stage of development.
- 10.3 Discuss appropriate food and feeding methods and monitoring protocols for a joey based on its stage of development.
- 10.4 Explain the importance of maintaining records on growth, behaviour, feeding and toileting of joeys throughout the rehabilitation process.
- 10.5 Detail common conditions and diseases that affect wombat joeys.
- 10.6 Illustrate disease control and hygiene practices appropriate to stages of housing.
- 10.7 Demonstrate how to complete a husbandry plan for a wombat joey.
- 10.8 Describe mechanisms to reduce stress and encourage natural behaviours in wombat joeys.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the Code
<p>Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • outline the requirements for wombat joey rehabilitation • identify stages of development for wombat joeys and relate these to rehabilitation • apply hygiene and disease control processes to wombat joey rehabilitation • reduce stress and encourage natural behaviours in wombat joeys • prepare a hand-raised wombat for release. 	<p>2. Case assessment 5. Euthanasia 6. Care procedures 7. Husbandry 8. Housing</p>

Standard 11: Release of wombats

Objective: To ensure learners understand suitability for release and criteria for releasing a wombat.

To comply with this standard, a rehabilitation organisation must:

- 11.1 Discuss release considerations for wombats, including timing and site selection.
- 11.2 Explain how to determine a wombat's suitability for release.
- 11.3 Detail the correct techniques and equipment for releasing a wombat.

Learning outcomes	Sections in the Code
<p>Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assess a wombat for release suitability • competently release a wombat. 	<p>9. Suitability for release 10. Release considerations</p>