

Protection for wombat burrows

In 2023, State Parliament amended the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* (NPW Act) to create new protections for wombat burrows. This created a new offence for destroying, damaging or disturbing wombat burrows without a permit. Previously, the legislation protected wombats themselves and not their burrows.

The department is responsible for administering the NPW Act and is now working to determine how to best implement and enforce these amendments.

We intend to implement the new requirements of the Bill in a manner that protects the wombat species' conservation status and welfare of individual wombats, while also taking into consideration the potential impacts of wombat burrows and warrens on human safety, agriculture, industry and infrastructure.



Southern hairy-nosed wombat (Photo Martin Stokes)

What has changed?

In June 2023, the NPW Act was amended to create new protections for wombat burrows.

This amendment created a new offence for destroying, damaging or disturbing wombat burrows without a permit, in relevant circumstances.

Previously, the legislation protected wombats themselves and not their burrows.

What are the new requirements?

It is now an offence to destroy, damage or disturb wombat burrows without a permit, except in the following scenarios.

You are permitted to destroy, damage or disturb a wombat burrow without a permit where:

- you are the owner of the land where the burrow is located; or
- you are authorised to destroy, damage or disturb the burrow by the owner of the land where the burrow is located; and
 - the burrow is located outside of a Wombat Burrow Protection Zone; and
 - the burrow is causing, or is likely to cause, damage to crops, stock, machinery or infrastructure (including tracks and built structures) or may constitute a safety risk or hazard to people.

Put simply, if a burrow is located within a declared Wombat Burrow Protection Zone

(see below) a person must not, without a permit, destroy, damage or disturb the burrow.

When does the new Bill take effect?

The Bill came into effect when passed by State Parliament on 21 June 2023.

What is a Wombat Burrow Protection Zone?

A Wombat Burrow Protection Zone (WBPZ) is a declared area where a person must not – without a permit – destroy, damage or disturb a wombat burrow.

No WBPZs currently exist. The department will undertake consultation with relevant stakeholder groups, including primary producers and animal welfare groups, regarding the process for creating (declaring) WBPZs.

How will the new requirements be implemented and enforced?

The department is responsible for administering the NPW Act and is now working to determine how to best implement and enforce these amendments. More information will be made available on this webpage once known.

What other protections exist for wombats?

Wombats, like most native species, are protected under the NPW Act. That protection means that it is illegal to kill, catch, restrain, or injure a wombat without a permit. Under the *Animal Welfare Act 1985*, it is also an offence to 'ill-treat' any animal.

How do I apply for a permit for a wombat burrow protection zone?

No WBPZs have been declared / created, so you do not currently need a permit to destroy, damage or disturb a wombat burrow, providing you satisfy the criteria outlined in Q1.

Please email wildlife@sa.gov.au if you do not meet the criteria.

What information is available on managing wombats and their burrows?

Before collapsing a burrow or warren, you must ensure it is empty of animals. It's recommended to keep evidence like photos to show it was unoccupied. It is important to collapse burrows gradually and then compact the area to discourage another wombat from moving in.

Remember, wombats are protected under the NPW Act, and it is an offence to harm them, or attempt to do so, without a permit.

For more information and factsheets on how to live harmoniously with, and manage wombats causing impacts visit www.environment.sa.gov.au.

More information

Related factsheets: Living with wombats, Managing impact causing wildlife on your property.

Visit: www.environment.sa.gov.au

Email: Wildlife@sa.gov.au

