

# Gumnut Gazette

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## A Wombats Christmas

### What is a Wombat?

Wombats are native to Australia. They are marsupials, which means they have a pouch for their young.

They can be a variety of colours depending on where they live. Although they seem small, they are mighty!

Wombats are expert diggers, with their short muscular legs and sharp claws.

They generally waddle to get around but don't be fooled, wombats can be fast when they want to be!

We have some wonderful wombats here at Cleland Wildlife Park. Keep reading for some fun wombat Christmas cheer!

### Acknowledgement to country

The Department for Environment and Water acknowledges Aboriginal people as the First Peoples and Nations of the lands and waters we live and work upon and we pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge and respect the deep

spiritual connection and the relationship that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have to Country.

The Department works in partnership with the First Peoples of South Australia and supports their Nations to take a leading role in caring for their Country.

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#### FUN FACT

Wombats can run up to 40km per hour!



## Where's the Wombat?

Find-a-word



A	S	M	U	N	H	S	N	N	R	A	G	T	M
G	T	T	M	R	U	E	N	O	R	N	I	O	R
Y	R	A	R	O	M	J	M	N	M	A	W	B	P
E	O	B	H	R	A	C	S	H	C	M	U	E	N
A	N	M	Y	C	R	W	O	O	N	E	O	N	H
D	G	O	M	A	S	R	U	A	O	R	B	C	H
C	R	W	U	M	U	A	T	W	C	O	U	U	R
H	A	I	R	Y	P	S	H	B	T	V	R	B	E
A	L	S	A	V	I	J	E	E	U	I	R	E	E
C	C	U	A	B	A	O	R	E	R	B	O	D	O
R	O	C	W	R	L	E	N	U	N	R	W	R	R
U	N	M	W	E	N	Y	W	C	A	E	V	R	E
U	N	O	R	T	H	E	R	N	L	H	M	I	B
O	U	B	N	I	E	T	E	I	A	E	R	H	U

- |           |          |
|-----------|----------|
| WOMBAT    | BURROW   |
| NOCTURNAL | COMMON   |
| HAIRY     | JOEY     |
| HERBIVORE | STRONG   |
| SOUTHERN  | CUBED    |
| MARSUPIAL | NORTHERN |

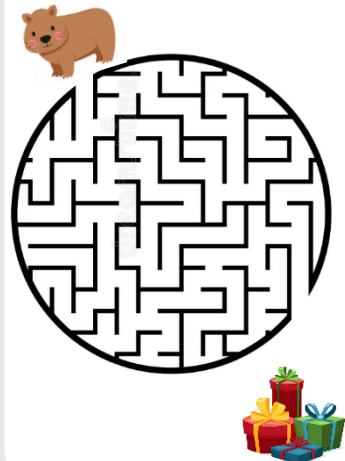
### Quiz Time!

What shape is a wombat poo?

- A. CIRCLE
- B. SQUARE
- C. TRIANGLE

### Maze

Help! The wombat is trying to find her Christmas presents!



### Jumble Word

R E R Y M

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T H A S I S R C M

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Maze generator credit: [www.dreamstime.com](http://www.dreamstime.com)



Wombat Poop  
Credit to: Laurel Hamers,  
sciencenews.org

**Fun Fact!**  
Wombats are nocturnal. This means they sleep during the day and are awake and active at nighttime!

# Square What?

Square poo, it's what wombats do!

Wombats have cubed shaped poo, how odd! This is because wombats have very long digestive tracks and it takes around 14-18 days for food to pass through. By the time all the nutrients and water have been absorbed by the wombat, the poo becomes extremely dry and compacted.

Like many animals, wombats use poo to mark their territory. Their homes are underground though, so having square poo is quite useful. Luckily, because of the cube shape, nothing stinky is going to roll inside of a wombat's home!

**Wombat pouches face backwards! This protects wombat joeys from being covered in dirt when mum is digging.**

## Terrific Teeth

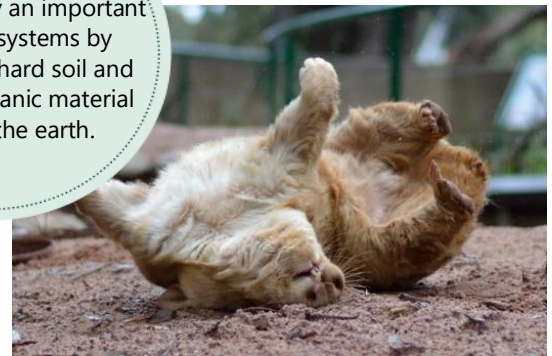
Wombats have two incisor teeth in their upper jaw, kind of like a built-in pair of scissors. These teeth continue to grow throughout a wombat's life, meaning they never stop growing!

Wombats eat coarse native grasses, roots and tubers, shrubs, and even vegetables.

Having strong ever-growing teeth helps wombats to bite and chew and ensuring their teeth don't grind away from all the munching they do.



**Did you know?**  
Wombats play an important role in ecosystems by breaking up hard soil and recycling organic material through the earth.



Fred the Wombat's teeth  
Credit to: Cleland Wildlife Park Employee

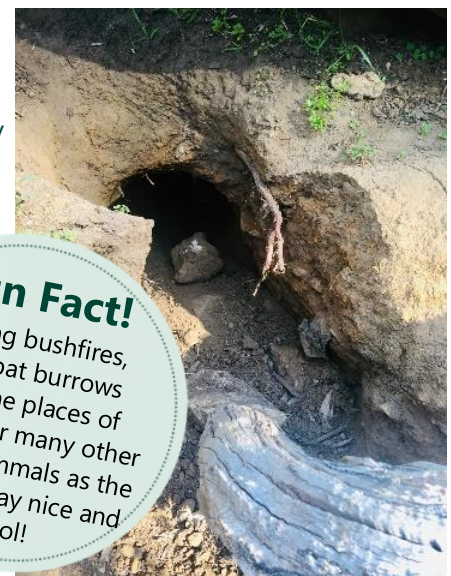
## Where do they live?

**Answer:** Burrows!

Wombats live underground in complex warren systems, usually made up of many interconnected burrows. These warrens can be huge; some tunnels can be over 200 metres long!

Wombats will move between warrens within their home range but they are solitary creatures, which means they like to live alone.

On a cold day, you may see a wombat come out of their burrow to sunbathe and warm up.

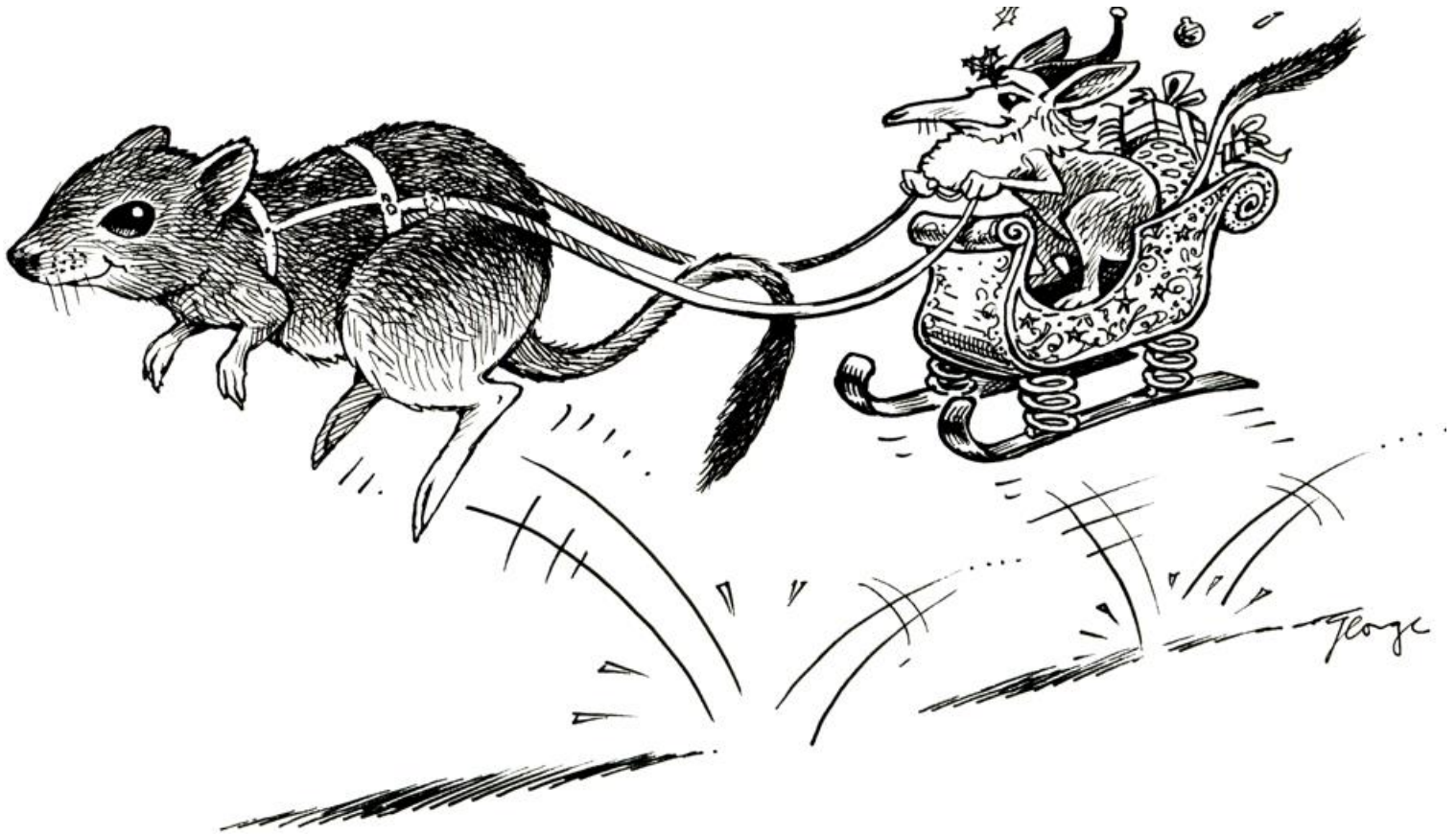


**Fun Fact!**  
During bushfires, wombat burrows become places of shelter for many other small mammals as the tunnels stay nice and cool!

Wombat Burrow at Cleland  
Credit to: Cleland Wildlife Park Employee



## Colouring in Page!



**Common wombat**

**Southern hairy-nose wombat**



Drawings credit to Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources (2013).



## 'Twas the night before Christmas

*'Twas the night before Christmas in the Australian scrub,*

not a creature was stirring, except the nocturnal club.

The lorikeets were nestled in their hollows with care,  
in hopes that St. Nicholas soon will be there.

The joey koalas were snug in their beds,  
while visions of eucalyptus danced in their heads.

The wombats were wandering all looking for grass,  
while the possums were looking for Santa through their spyglass.

Presents were left in their hollows with care,  
while others were placed outside their burrows unaware.

Up in the sky the bandicoots saw red,  
as Father Christmas flew past; he bellowed 'Merry Christmas' and waved from his sled.

The sun then rose up in the Aussie scrub,  
presents were found and enjoyed by all those in that Australian scrub club.

## Fun Feet

Wombat feet are strong and designed for digging those burrows. They have 5 toes on their front paw and their back paw has two toes fused together that they use for brushing their fur.



## Trace Your Own Hand!

Can you spot the differences between your hand and the wombat feet?

### 'Lofty the Koala'

Santa's helper will be here at Cleland the week before Christmas!



### Christmas Week at Cleland:

Keep your eye out for fun Christmas themed activities to do the week before Christmas:

- Christmas scavenger hunt.
- Bush Buddies
- Christmas Mayhem in Nature

Look on our website for more details.

### From our Cleland Family to yours!

On behalf of the amazing Cleland Wildlife Park Team, we wish you all a merry and safe Christmas!

## Hard Butts

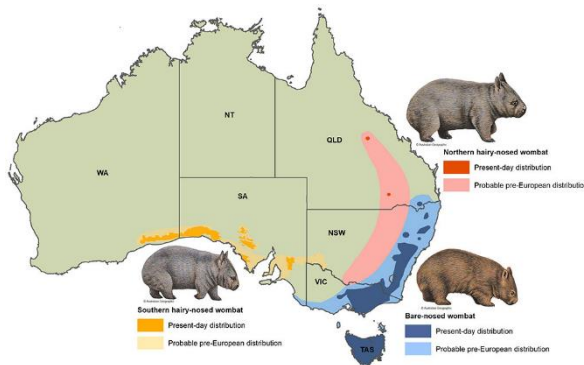
♪ They've got big butts and they cannot lie, those predators can't deny. That when a wombat burrows down into the ground with a round thing in your face you get crushed ♪

Sir Mix-a-Lot jokes aside, the wombat's rear end is really their main form of defence against predators.

When a predator is near, wombats will dive down into their burrows and block off the entrance with their bottoms. As their hard bums mainly consist of cartilage, they are very resistant to scratches and bites.

They can also crush predator's skulls with their behinds. Don't be fooled by wombats!

The closest living relative to the wombat is the koala.



Distribution of wombat species in Australia  
Image credit: Queensland Government

## Wombat species

There are three different species of wombat: Common (bare-nosed) wombat, Northern hairy-nosed wombat, and Southern hairy-nosed wombat.

## Wombats of Cleland

At Cleland Wildlife Park we currently have 4 wombats:

**Wattle** (Southern hairy-nose wombat)

**Polar** (Southern hairy-nose wombat)

**Billie** (Common wombat)

**Casanova** (Southern hairy-nose wombat)

