



Australian Government

Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

**CONDITIONS FOR THE
OVERSEAS TRANSFER OF WOMBATS**

March 2008

Contents	Page
Contents	2
Preamble	3
Selection of Export Stock	4
Pre Export Requirements	4
Transportation Requirements	5
Crates/Boxes	5
Acclimatisation	6
Recipient- Exhibit Requirements	6
Recipient- Feeding Regime	6
Recipient- Staffing	6
General Items	6
Appendix A- Checklist on Satisfying Conditions	8

PREAMBLE

There are three living species of wombat, which fall into two genera. The single species of *Vombatus* lives in the sclerophyll forests of south-eastern Australia and Tasmania. The hairy-nosed wombats of the genus *Lasiorhinus* live in areas of low rainfall, savannas and grasslands. The Northern Hairy-nosed Wombat (*Lasiorhinus kreftii*) is found in a single location in Queensland, while the Southern Hairy-nosed Wombat (*Lasiorhinus latifrons*) is found in southern South Australia, southwest New South Wales and southeast Western Australia.

The Common Wombat (*Vombatus ursinus*) has a solitary lifestyle with little overlap with other individuals while the two Hairy-nosed forms are more communal and live in colonies. As a result, in captivity, Southern Hairy-nosed Wombats can be kept in group situations whilst Common Wombats can not. Only the Common and the Southern Hairy-nosed Wombat are commonly kept in captivity.

While wombats are highly sought by international zoological organisations only the Common Wombat and the Southern Hairy-nosed Wombat will be considered for overseas export.

The following conditions have been formulated to ensure the welfare of wombats involved in overseas transfers and to maximise the chances of establishing sustainable wombat populations for permanent exhibition. The conditions provide the framework within which it is determined whether the statutory requirements of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)* have been met regarding transport accommodation and care en route to and from, and in, overseas facilities.

This document forms part of the process undertaken in the overseas transfer of wombats. In addition to meeting the terms of these conditions, the overseas transfer of wombats involves the assessment of an export permit application; facility assessments of individual receiving institutions to meet best practice management standards; and the entering into of an Ambassador Agreement between the exporter, the importer and the Australian Government.

These conditions have been developed in consultation with a number of interested groups including the Australasian Regional Association of Zoological Parks and Aquaria (ARAZPA), in particular, the Monotreme and Marsupial Taxon Advisory Group. The Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) would like to thank the contributors for the work and effort they put into the compilation of this document. A list of contributors is available from DEWHA.

While DEWHA reserves the right to amend these conditions without prior notice to an affected person every reasonable effort will be made to discuss the amendment prior to its implementation. For further information, please contact Wildlife Trade Assessments, Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, GPO Box 787, Canberra ACT 2601 Australia, phone +61 2 6274 2343, fax +61 2 6274 1921, or email wta@environment.gov.au .

1. SELECTION OF EXPORT STOCK

1.1 (a) The optimum age for wombats for export is 18 months to ten years of age. This age range applies to all wombats, which includes male or female or of captive or wild origin of either species. Animals outside the optimum range may be approved for export if the applicant can demonstrate that the animal's health and behavioural characteristics are such that the risks to the animal are no greater than for optimum-age wombats.

(b) Captive-bred and socialised wombats should be preferentially chosen for export however orphaned hand raised and socialised wombats which are unable to be released would also be suitable candidates for export.

(c) In addition to condition 1.1 (b), if wombats of wild origin are to be transferred they must:

- i) have been in captivity for sufficient time to be well socialised; and
- ii) not have been removed from the wild for the purpose of export.

1.2 Female wombats (when) carrying pouch young cannot be exported. Female wombats with advanced young at heel can be safely exported.

2. PRE EXPORT REQUIREMENTS

2.1 Wombats to be exported from Australia must be isolated from other wombats not of the same health status for 30 days prior to export. Enclosures used to house animals during this period must comply with the guidelines set out by ARAZPA for the husbandry of wombats¹. If more than one animal is being exported, they should preferably be housed separately in a manner that would prevent transmission of pathogens between animals. The animals may be housed in a group, however should an animal fail pre-export health screening due to the detection of an infectious disease it may preclude the others from being exported.

2.2 Within the period of isolation, each wombat must be examined under anaesthesia by a veterinary surgeon experienced in the care and treatment of wombats. The examination should be conducted early in the isolation period to ensure that results are available well before the export date.

2.3 A Certificate of Health issued by the examining veterinary surgeon in respect of each wombat to be exported must be provided to DEWHA before the animal is exported².

2.4 The Certificate shall indicate:

- a) age (where age is known);

¹ ARAZPA PO Box 20 Mosman NSW 2088 Australia. Ph +61 2 9978 4797, Fax +61 2 9978 4761, email admin@arazpa.org.au

² It is the responsibility of the exporting institution to ensure that all aspects of the transaction are carefully planned and coordinated well in advance of the export.

- b) sex;
- c) a record of body weights during isolation and body condition (poor, fair, good, excellent);
- d) condition of the teeth;
- e) the results of ecto- and endo- parasite examination and the name and amount of antiparasitic drugs given if required;
- f) the results of a complete haematological and serum biochemical examination with comments on interpretation;
- g) that the wombat does not have any history of unresolved health problems (a medical record for the animal must be supplied to the receiving institution);
- h) that the wombat is free from clinical signs of disease or abnormalities that may have an impact on its ongoing health and well-being;
- i) that the wombat is not carrying young;
- j) transponder implant number and the details of other identification (e.g. tag number).

2.5 Each wombat to be exported must be implanted with a suitable microchip transponder identification system or similarly permanently identified using a passive integrated transponder tag inserted subcutaneously on the dorsal midline between the scapulae. The system used must be universally accepted and able to be read at sending and receiving institutions. The identification system must record, at a minimum, a unique identification number for the animal. Details of the data recorded on the implant must be supplied to DEWHA.

3. TRANSPORTATION REQUIREMENTS

3.1 All available medical and individual animal records documentation related to the exported individuals, must accompany the animals.

3.2 Both noise and the time from crating to destination must be kept to the absolute minimum.

3.3 The most direct route possible is to be taken when transferring animals.

4. CRATES/BOXES

4.1 Wombats must be transported individually in accordance with IATA regulations³.

³ International Air Transport Association (IATA) Live Animals Regulations (Edition current at time of publication- 33rd Edition 2006)

4.2 Wombats must not be subjected to temperatures greater than 25° Celsius or less than 5° Celsius during transport including plane changes and stopovers (i.e. if the airport conditions lie outside these temperatures the animal should be loaded directly from the plane to an air conditioned vehicle and either kept there or transferred to an air conditioned building until the next stage of the journey.)

5. ACCLIMATISATION

5.1 The receiving institution and the sending institution will remain in close contact (via telephone or email) while the animals are acclimatised for a period of at least one month.

6. RECIPIENT – EXHIBIT REQUIREMENTS

6.1 The recipient must have a suitable enclosure for the wombats, ensuring that the following parameters have been addressed:

- a) prevention of escape of wombats;
- b) protection of the wombats against interference from other animals and the public;
- c) shade for the wombats during the hot parts of the day;
- d) a nesting box or burrow to retreat to; and
- e) any additional requirements laid out in the relevant ARAZPA Accreditation Standards at time of export.

7. RECIPIENT-STAFFING

7.1 The recipient must demonstrate to the sending zoo access to a qualified veterinary surgeon sufficiently familiar with aspects of wombat management, husbandry and veterinary procedures.

7.2 If the recipient does not currently house wombats, it must send staff to another institution housing wombats for at least two weeks to gain the necessary experience. The keeping staff sent for training must be experienced keepers and the ones that will be caring for the animals at the receiving zoo.

8. GENERAL ITEMS

8.1 Arrangements must be made between the recipient and the exporting zoo to ensure the establishment and maintenance of a close liaison and regular communication on matters affecting the management and health of the wombats in the overseas recipient's facilities. This may consist of an exchange of telephone and email contact details between veterinarians and relevant husbandry staff to facilitate the provision of ongoing advice if required. Where there is no common language between keeping or veterinary staff at the recipient and exporting institutions, a translator with knowledge of animal

husbandry and veterinary specialist terminology should be available (at the recipients expense).

8.2 The overseas recipient institution is required to enter into an Ambassador Agreement. This document is a three-way agreement between the overseas recipient, the Australian exporter and DEWHA and stipulates a number of conditions that must be met and maintained for the duration of the lives of the wombats and any progeny. Note: the Ambassador Agreement also covers any wombats already held by the recipient.

Appendix A

Checklist for Satisfying Conditions

This checklist is designed for the use of applicants to ensure that all conditions have been met. Items in **bold** indicate where information must be supplied to DEWHA. An Ambassador Agreement will also need to be signed.

1. SELECTION OF EXPORT STOCK

- Wombats within optimum age range (1.1a)

OR

- Justification provided for selection outside optimum range.

- Captive bred wombats selected (1.1b)

OR

- Wild origin wombats selected (must be accompanied by 'exceptional case' justification and information on approximate age, time in captivity and circumstance of removal from the wild) (1.1 c)

- All wombats selected free from dependent or pouch young (1.2)

- Wombats not to form part of a breeding group

OR

- Wombats genetically unrelated to others in breeding group

- Information on age, origin, and breeding plans provided to DEWHA**
-

2. PRE EXPORT REQUIREMENTS

- Quarantine Conditions met (2.1)

- A veterinary examination has been performed (2.2)

- Certificate of Health, satisfying all relevant conditions, supplied to DEWHA (2.3 & 2.4)**

- Microchip implanted in each animal to be transferred and microchip data supplied to DEWHA (2.5)**

- Acclimatisation criteria agreed to by exporter and recipient and submitted to DEWHA (5.1)**

6. RECIPIENT – EXHIBIT

- Supplementary Form G Questions on Security, Facilities, Food and Management are completed and submitted to DEWHA, demonstrating the recipient's facilities are adequate.**

7. RECIPIENT – STAFFING

- Supplementary Form G Questions on Staffing completed and submitted to DEWHA, demonstrating that the recipient has:**
 - Access to 1 veterinarian with sufficient wombat experience or familiar with aspects of wombat management, husbandry and veterinary procedures (7.1)**
 - 2 Keepers on staff with sufficient wombat experience or with training at another institution (7.2)**

8. GENERAL ITEMS

- Liaison and communication arrangements made between recipient and exporter

- Ambassador Agreement signed by exporter, recipient and DEWHA**