

Mildura Rural City Council Roadside Weeds & Pests Program Control Plan 2019 - 2020

Municipality Details

Council Name

Key Contact Name: Mark Jenkins

Position: Manager Community Futures

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Regional Context of Noxious Weed and Pest Animal Management

Situated in North West Victoria, Mildura Rural City Council (MRCC) covers almost ten per cent of the State. See Figure 1. The region's landscape includes unique Mallee vegetation, broad acre grain and livestock properties and extensive horticultural properties

With over 5,100 kilometres of road, the Mildura municipality is located within the boundaries of the Mallee Catchment Management Authority. Of this total, approximately 1,000 kilometres of road is classified as sealed, 4,100 kilometres of road is unsealed. See Figure 2

The Mildura municipality is a predominantly rural region, but has substantial residential areas, particularly in the city of Mildura itself. Much of the rural land is used for agricultural and horticultural purposes, including wool, wheat, maize, citrus fruits and grapes. Tourism is also considered to be an important industry

Weed and rabbit species pose a serious threat to primary production and biodiversity in the region. Weeds and rabbits can reduce farm productivity, disturb native species habitats and food sources and contribute to land degradation. There is a significant financial cost to farming communities in particular through lost production and the cost of control measures. The cost to the environment is immeasurable

Council recognises the need to control weeds and rabbits across the land it owns and manages within the municipality. Council owned and managed land is defined as: parks, gardens, Council buildings and grounds, sporting grounds and municipal roadsides

It is important to note that whilst every effort is made by Council to undertake effective weed and rabbit management, budget constraints require external funding to be sourced for all projects. Where possible, Council does provide an 'in-kind' component by contributing staff labour and the use of Council vehicles and equipment

This Control Plan provides a strategic framework for Council to work with land managers and/or landowners, including State Government agencies to mitigate the ongoing impacts of weed and rabbits on municipal roadsides. The establishment of partnerships with community groups, land managers and/or landowners and stakeholders will ensure that desired outcomes are achieved

Through the past five years of State Government funding initiatives, Council has treated roadsides for Regionally Controlled Weeds and Established Pest Animals. Please refer to Table 1 for a list of current target species.

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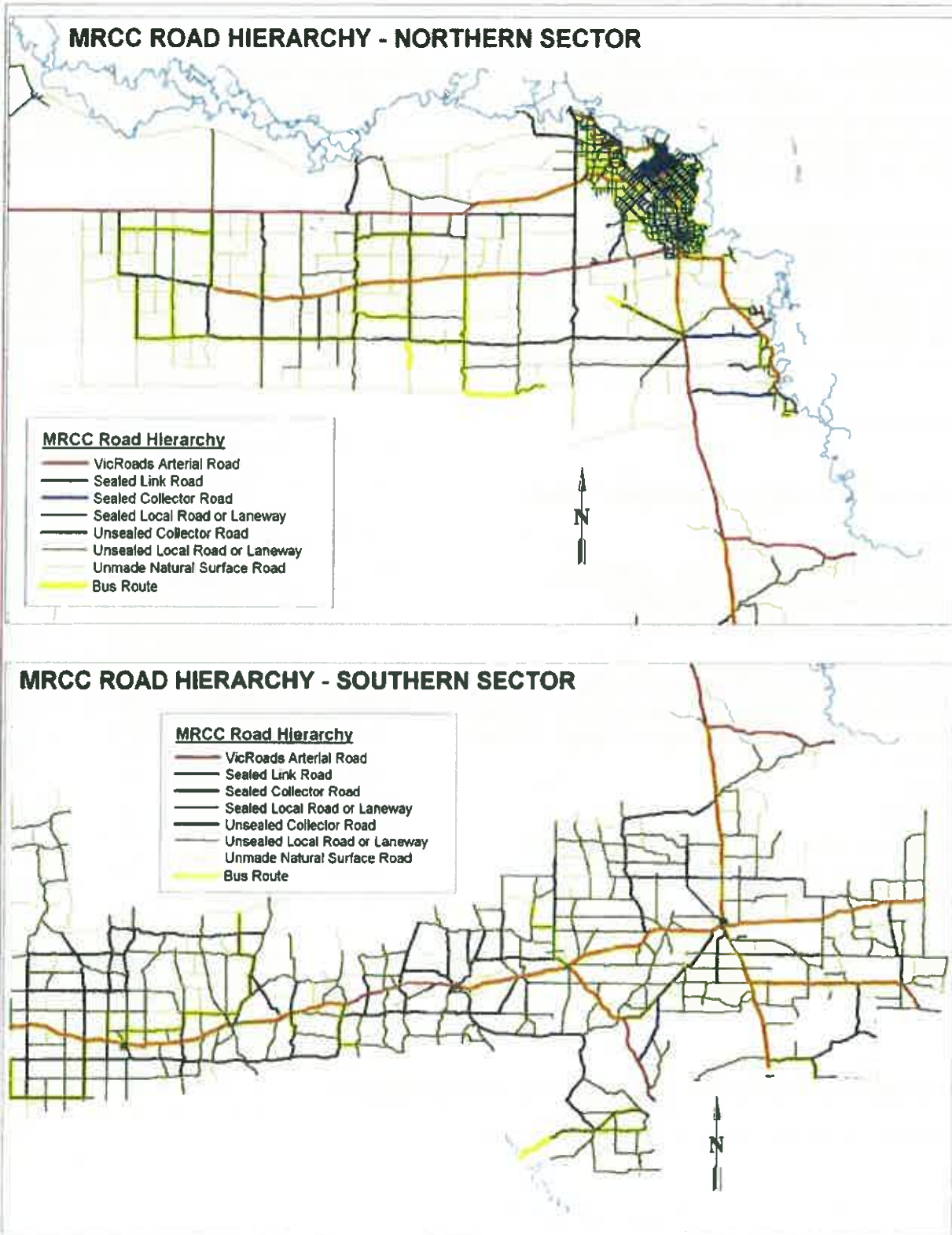


Figure 2: Mildura Rural City Council Road Hierarchy

Mildura Rural City Council Roadside Weeds & Pests Program Control Plan 2019 - 2020

- Land Act 1958
- Local Government Act 1989
- Planning and Environment Act 1987
- Conservation, Forest and Lands Act 1987
- Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988
- Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999
- National Weed Strategy 1997
- Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006
- Road Management Act 2004

Regional

- Mallee CMA Regional Catchment Strategy 2013-19

Local

- Mildura Rural City Council Plan 2017-2021 2.1 Environmental Sustainability
- Mildura Rural City Council Invasive Plants and Animals Plan 2015-2019
- Mildura Rural City Council Vegetation Plan 2015-2019
- Mildura Rural City Council Roadside Weed and Rabbit Control Plan 2015-2017 and 2017-2019

Submissions

Any submissions received by Council relating to Regionally Prohibited Weeds (RPWs) Regionally Controlled Weeds (RCWs) Established Pest Animals (EPAs) or Restricted Weeds

The RWPP Control Plan 2019-20 was sent to the MRCC Roadside Invasive Plants and Animals Working Group which is made up of Landcare Group representatives and crown land managers for review.

The only change recommended was to add Silver Leaf Nightshade *Solanum elaeagnifolium* listed as a Schedule 2-Regionally Controlled Weed which has been included in the Plan. (Table 1 and Table 2)

Objectives of the Plan

Provide a general overview of Council's objectives, activities, outputs and expected outcomes.

General overview of Council's objectives, activities, outputs and expected outcomes

The aim of the MRCC Roadside Weeds and Pests Program Control Plan is to provide a framework under which Council may approach and manage weeds and rabbits in a strategic and sustainable manner. The central objective of the plan is to combat the environmental, economic and social impacts of weeds and rabbits by preventing the spread and introduction of weeds and rabbits across the Municipality and the region as a whole

Council will meet this objective by providing support to build on community and landowner investment in weed and rabbit control projects

Mildura Rural City Council

Roadside Weeds & Pests Program

Control Plan 2019 - 2020

to Rapidly Assess a Rabbit Problem and Take Action by Brian Cooke

Best Practice Procedures:

- Undertake weed and rabbit control programs in partnership with land managers and/or landholders and Landcare groups
- Use the most appropriate control methods and best practice procedures to be implemented
- Maintain a OH&S compliant contractor/area list for use by all land managers
- Consider revegetation programs or allow regeneration of native plant species to prevent competition of other weed species
- All land managers to work in the same location of project at the same time for a greater impact in controlling the pest. See *Appendix 1 Integrated Management Plan*

Best Practice Guidelines:

- Treatment of small outbreaks and isolated patches on the periphery initially, then isolate the major infestation and work towards the centre
- Work practices should at all times conserve areas of indigenous vegetation
- Removed weed species are to be disposed of to a disposal site designated by Council or in accordance with best practice procedures
- Weeds in seed should not be removed from an infested site – transport of weed species with seeds capable of germination is an offence under the CaLP Act 1994. A permit must be granted from Agriculture Victoria, DJPR prior to any transport or disposal.
- When planning for pest control, project approval will be required by the First Peoples of the project area to determine pest control methods in order to avoid any Aboriginal Sensitive Areas.

Other activities that could be undertaken

Eligible activities are listed below in order of priority:

- Treating Regionally Prohibited Weeds on municipal roadsides
- Controlling and preventing the spread of Regionally Controlled Weeds and the control of rabbits on municipal roadsides that align with Agriculture Victoria, Department of Jobs, Precinct and Regions (DJPR) compliance project areas and/or support community led weed and rabbit activities
- Control activities for Regionally Controlled weeds and rabbits on municipal roadsides that support other investment for integrated landscape protection projects or address particular community concerns
- Reporting and controlling new and emerging weed species (eg. Buffel Grass)
- Mapping infestations of Regionally Controlled Weeds on municipal roadsides in line with the National Core Attributes for weed mapping
- Consultation activities to establish community priorities for inclusion in controlling Regionally Controlled weeds and rabbits

Term of the Plan

Outline the term for which the plan is to operate.

The plan will run for a **one year period** from 1 July 2019 (date of commencement) to 30 June 2020

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Table 1: Target Species

Common Name	Scientific Name	CaLP classification	PRIORITY RATING (1 highest – 4 lowest)	Reasons for Management
Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>	Established Animal Pest	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Severe economic and environmental consequences if insufficient control - Landcare communities highly active in control efforts
African Boxthorn	<i>Lycium ferocissimum</i>	Regionally Controlled Weed of National Significance	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Established, abundant and invasive species. Presents significant detrimental effects to the environment
Prickly Pear species and Hudsons Pear	<i>Opuntia monacantha</i> <i>Opuntia stricta</i> <i>Opuntia robusta</i> <i>Cylindropuntia pallida</i> and <i>tunicata</i>	Regionally Controlled Weed and/or Weed of National Significance	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In response to frequent ratepayer requests, support community and stakeholder action.
Boneseed	<i>Chrysanthemoides monilifera</i>	Regionally Controlled Weed	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highly invasive species. Boneseed is established in the Red Cliffs area - Management will be targeted towards containment within infested localities
Athel Pine	<i>Tamarix aphylla</i>	Weed of National Significance (not listed under the CaLP Act)	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In response to frequent ratepayer requests, support community and stakeholder action.
Silverleaf Nightshade	<i>Solanum elaeagnifolium</i>	Regionally Controlled Weed	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In response to frequent ratepayer requests, support community and stakeholder action.

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	- Mechanical herbicide removal where appropriate herbicide application is inappropriate - Cut stump herbicide application	In areas that protect roadsides with a high conservation value status. In response to ratepayer requests with clear impact of roadside infestation spreading to private land, budget permitting.		Other times of year as required (seasonally adjusted)	
Prickly Pear	- Remove plant where possible - Spray or inject with herbicide	Areas that support DJPR Compliance programs and community programs. In areas that protect roadsides with a high conservation value status. In response to ratepayer requests with clear impact of roadside infestation spreading to private land, budget permitting.	25m	Primarily June-August. Other times of year as required (seasonally adjusted)	\$1,000
Boneseed	- Spot spray application of a registered herbicide in accordance with the product label - Cut-stump herbicide application - Manual removal of seedlings	Areas that support DJPR Compliance programs and community programs. In areas that protect roadsides with a high conservation value status. In response to ratepayer requests with clear impact of roadside infestation spreading to private land, budget permitting.	25m	Primarily June-August. Other times of year as required (seasonally adjusted)	\$1,000
Athel Pine	- Cut-stump herbicide application	Areas that support DJPR Compliance programs and community programs. In areas that protect roadsides with a high conservation value status. In response to ratepayer requests with clear impact of roadside infestation spreading to private land, budget permitting.	10m	Primarily June-August. Other times of year as required (seasonally adjusted)	\$1,000

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Maps

Map 1 Proposed location of control works.

Statement of Responsibilities

Council will:

- Coordinate the implementation of this plan on Council managed roadsides in accordance with the investment principles stated in this plan and the control measures specified in Table 2
- Implement best practice invasive plant hygiene principles and protocols
- Maintain accurate records sufficient to provide evidence that the plan has been carried out and provide these to DELWP on request
- Obtain approval from DJPR, DELWP and stakeholders before substantially modifying or varying the plan.
- Carefully consider any proposals from DJPR and DELWP to modify or vary the plan in response to changed circumstances
- Develop a Memorandum of Understanding with Landcare Groups and other State Public Land Managers to carry out pest control in a collaborative manner and at the same time for the best productive and environmental landscape benefit
- Organise ongoing meetings with Landcare Groups and State Public Land Managers in relation to controlling weeds and rabbits in the municipality landscape
- Where a rabbit hotspot has been identified the length of the road where this hotspot exists will be recorded
- Carry out distribution of funding conditions
- Funds acquired by Council are distributed equitably by assessing all expression of interests for funds by groups within the municipality.
- Funds acquired by Council will be used to support current works.

DJPR Endorsement

I declare that I am an authorised representative and that this plan has been reviewed and aligns with eligible activities.

DJPR Regional Manager - Plants, Chemicals & Invasive Species

Name: RAFAEL FABRIS

Signature: 

Date: 30/8/19

Declaration

I declare that I am an authorised representative and the information given on this form is complete and correct

Key Contact Name: Mark Jenkins
Manager Community Futures Department

Date: 21/8/2019

Signature: 

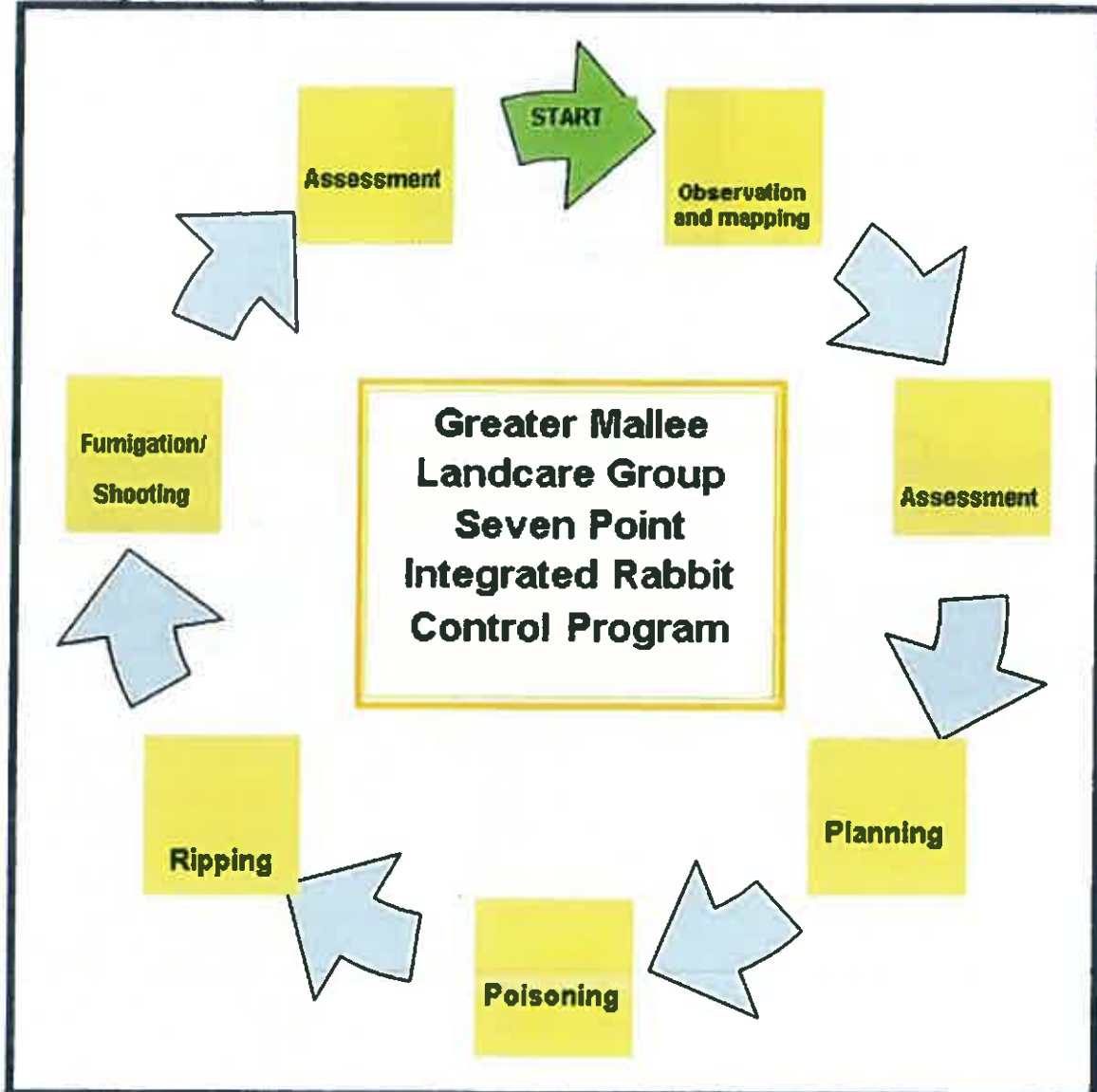
Council CEO Name: Sarah Philpott

Date: 23/8/2019

Signature: 

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Appendix 1: Integrated Management Plan



Climate variability needs to be strongly considered in the timing of the control technique used for maximum control benefit.



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1. Observation and mapping

Observation can be done by transects usually at night also the counting of single burrows separate to warrens which gives a greater understanding of rabbit population.

Mapping is required where the land manager is employing others to carry out any on ground works, it is also useful to retain records of work done particularly when using poisons and fumigants.

2. Assessment

This is done to quantify the amount of resources required to proceed with a plan.

3. Planning

To get a satisfactory result planning involves engaging with adjoining land managers and fitting in with existing work plans.

4. Poisoning

The most effective method of killing large numbers of rabbits. Most effective during the non-breeding season when rabbits are less territorial and less tied to warrens and feed is scarce. The best time is usually during mid to late summer.

5. Ripping

Crushes burrows and warrens and also kills residual rabbits not killed during poisoning, it should be noted that not all rabbits will take baits. Works best during the breeding season. Rainfall and the early growth of high protein plants primarily determine the main breeding season.

6. Fumigation and Shooting

Clean up burrows not ripped satisfactorily due to vegetation and infrastructure constraints, the use of dogs during this work is a very good tactic.

7. Assessment of Program

This needs to be done to evaluate the effectiveness of the work carried out. Counting open burrows and transects are the most accurate method to evaluate the work program.