



Mildura Rural City Council

Rabbit Management Policy

Policy – CP002

Prepared	Reviewed	Approved	Date	Council Minute No.
Environmental Sustainability Biodiversity Officer	Environmental Sustainability Coordinator	Council	July 2025	2025/0094
Trim File: 18/02/01			To be reviewed: July 2030	
Document Owner: Manager Community Partnerships			Review Frequency: Every 5 years	

1. The purpose of this policy is

To outline Council's approach to European rabbit management on Council managed land.

2. Policy Statement

Mildura Rural City Council is responsible for rabbit management on both freehold council land and land under Council's Committee of Management. This includes municipal roadsides, the Murray River Permanent Reserve and various other parcels. Council recognises the impact of rabbits on the environment and is committed to managing rabbits in accordance with State Government regulations to protect native vegetation.

3. Principles

Feral or wild populations of European rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) are a declared established pest in Victoria under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* (CALP Act). Under the CALP Act all landowners have a responsibility to take all reasonable steps to prevent the spread of – and as far as possible eradicate – established pest animals from their land.

Rabbit management requires an integrated approach using a combination of methods across the landscape. Works should be undertaken in coordination and consultation with other land managers to produce a landscape scale approach to rabbit management.

Priority Areas

Council will maintain a register of identified rabbit hotspots which will be assessed for targeted works. Works will be prioritised based on a variety of factors including:

- Rabbit population density – areas of higher population density;
- Complimentary works – areas where other rabbit control is being undertaken by partners (such as Landcare groups and the Mallee Catchment Management Authority and Public Land Managers);
- Conservation value – areas of high-quality vegetation and those with threatened species or communities;
- Complementary to weed management – areas where corresponding weed management is occurring; and
- Waterways – areas along the banks of waterways. Rabbit warrens in these areas can destabilise the banks and contribute to erosion.

Management Techniques and Requirements

Management techniques approved by Agriculture Victoria include baiting, fumigation, ripping, biological control, shooting, implosion, fencing and above-ground harbour removal.

Works directly contracted by Council will preference techniques that do not disturb native vegetation or have potential to harm cultural heritage, including fumigation, baiting and biological control. Council will consider optimal timing of works in relation to seasonal conditions and adding value to other works.

Rabbit management works that may disturb native vegetation, culturally significant areas and waterways require approvals and consultation with the appropriate authorities. Responsible authorities may include the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, First Peoples - State Relations and Registered Aboriginal Parties.

Ripping 60 centimetres or greater in depth is classified as significant ground disturbance under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* and *Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018* and may require additional approvals.

Rabbit management works utilising chemicals must be in line with the *Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Control of Use) Act 1992* and *Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Control of Use) Regulations 2017*. All works must adhere to directions for use on the chemical label. Chemical use records must be kept and those undertaking works must hold required licences.

Works on Council land must have all relevant approvals and be undertaken by a Council Pre-Qualified Contractor, following all relevant Occupational Health and Safety regulations. Approvals may include:

- Infrastructure on the Road Reserve approval
- Cultural Heritage Assessment and Contingency Plan
- Permit to Take Protected Flora
- Pest Animal Burrow Native Vegetation Exemption.

Private Landowner Enforcement

Council does not have any regulatory powers to enforce landowners to fulfil their obligations under the CaLP Act regarding rabbit management. Council will, where appropriate, contact Agriculture Victoria, the agency responsible for regulating pest plant and animal management, and pass on details reported by the community.

4. Implementation

Manager Community Partnerships, Manager Facilities & Assets, Manager Parks & Recreation, Manager Works & Infrastructure.

5. Definitions

Baiting	Laying of poisoned oats or carrots. Approved poisons are Pindone and 1080.
Best practice rabbit management	The use of a variety of recognised techniques, in a coordinated manner, and implemented at the landscape scale which reflect humane treatment and limit impact on non-target species.
Fumigation	Introduction of toxic fumes into a warren where it is inhaled by rabbits.
Implosion	Targeted use of explosives to destroy/collapse rabbit warrens in areas inaccessible to or inappropriate for ripping.
Pindone	An anticoagulant causing fatal hemorrhages. Antidote is Vitamin K1. Given the availability of an antidote, Pindone is the preferred chemical for baiting on Council managed land.
Rabbit	Refers to feral or wild populations of European rabbits (<i>Orytolagus cuniculus</i>), a declared 'established pest animal' under the <i>Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994</i> .
Rabbit harbour	Shelter above-ground, usually prickly woody species, rock piles or logs.
Ripping	Destruction of warrens using machinery.
Warren	A collection of burrows.
1080	Poison compound sodium fluoroacetate. No antidote available.

6. Legislation and other references

6.1 Legislation

For further information related to this policy see:

- *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006;*
- *Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018;*
- *Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Control of Use) Act 1992;*
- *Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Control of Use) Regulations 2017;*
- *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994;*
- *Environment and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999;*
- *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988.*

6.2 Documents

This Policy is implemented in conjunction with the following documents:

- Native Vegetation and Pest Management Plan 2024-2028;
- Native Vegetation Policy – CP065;
- Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Policy – CP041;
- PestSmart Standard Operating Procedures;
 - RAB004: Ground baiting of rabbits with pindone
 - RAB005: Diffusion fumigation of rabbit warrens
 - RAB006: Rabbit warren destruction by ripping
 - RAB007: Rabbit warren destruction using explosives.

6.3 Risk Assessment Reference

Please tick the corporate governance risk(s) that this policy is addressing.

Risk Category	✓	Risk Category	✓
Asset Management	✓	Financial Sustainability	
Committees		Human Resource Management	
Compliance – Legal & Regulatory		Leadership & Organisational Culture	✓
Contract Management	✓	Occupational Health & Safety	✓
Contract Tendering & Procurement	✓	Organisational Risk Management	✓
Corporate Governance	✓	Project Management	✓
Environmental Sustainability	✓	Public Image and Reputation	✓