MOUNT BARKER
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Rabbit Control
Fact Sheet

Wild rabbits: a short history

European rabbits were released into the wild on a private property in Victoria in 1859 so the owner could hunt them. Within 50 years, they'd spread to most parts of the country – faster than any other mammal on record anywhere in the world. Hundreds of millions of European rabbits are now estimated to live in the wild in Australia and there's been an unprecedented increase across Mount Barker district.

Why wild rabbits are a problem

Wild European rabbits cause environmental and economic harm. They compete with native wildlife, destroy valuable farming land and contribute to soil erosion. Burrowing is a public safety threat to because it creates trip hazards and can undermine buildings and infrastructure. Wild rabbits also spread diseases which can be fatal to pet rabbits.

Did you know?

Council is setting the benchmark for rabbit management. Government agencies are turning to us for advice while environmental groups are recognising Council's approach as a model for effective, on-ground control.

What Council is doing

Council didn't create the wild European rabbit problem but we'll keep managing it as best we can, with the resources we have, until a solution is found. We use a combined approach to manage rabbit numbers on Council-owned land that prioritises people's safety, protects infrastructure and safeguards areas important to native plants and animals. Our activities include:

- thermal-assisted ground shooting
- warren fumigation and destruction
- exclusion fencing in priority locations
- community education and engagement initiatives with Landscapes Hills and Fleurieu, Rabbit Free Australia and the Department of Primary Industries and Regions



We need your support

Council can't fix the wild rabbit problem alone. It's your responsibility to manage wild rabbits on land you own. Here's how you can help.

If you live on a rural property:

- remove overgrown vegetation or piles of debris from your property
- bait wild rabbits with Pindone-treated carrots or oats
- fumigate and destroy warrens
- record rabbit activity on RabbitScan at rabbitscan.org.au

Contact Landscape Hills and Fleurieu on 8391 7500 or visit hf.landscape.sa.gov.au for more information about rabbit control.

If you live in a residential area:

- remove overgrown vegetation or piles of debris from your backyard
- use guards or mesh around young plants
- install rabbit-proof fencing
- apply rabbit repellents to plants and reapply after rain

Rabbit control works best if you coordinate activities with your neighbours in summer.

If you see rabbits crossing from Council land to private property or come across a rabbit warren on Council-owned land:

- Let us know by phoning 8391 7200 or emailing council@mountbarker.sa.gov.au

One last thing

Reducing rabbit numbers is a shared challenge that requires action by communities and all levels of government.

Funding for rabbit control is allocated each year through our Annual Business Plan process. If you'd like more funding allocated to address the issue, we encourage you to have your say during the community consultation period as your feedback helps inform how and where Council allocates spending.

You can also consider contacting your state and federal representatives to discuss what support they can provide for ongoing rabbit control.

By working together, we can protect the landscape and support a healthier environment.

Questions?

Please phone Council on 8391 7200 and ask to speak with a member of our Environment and Natural Assets Team.

