



Controlling rabbits and foxes in urban areas

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Helping to keep our environment sustainable

Foxes and rabbits were both introduced to Australia in the 1800's. As introduced species, they can cause a lot of damage to the Australian landscape.

Foxes are also a serious threat to native animals, and in urban areas to domestic animals and pets. Foxes and rabbits are declared pest species under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* and as such, landholders have a responsibility to control them.

Fox Biology and Behaviour

- Foxes eat native animals such as small mammals, possums, birds and reptiles
- Foxes feed on blackberry and can spread the seed in their droppings
- In an urban landscape foxes feed on food scraps, compost heaps and domestic fowl, livestock and small pets such as rabbits and guinea pigs
- Foxes produce one litter per year ranging from three to six cubs



Controlling Foxes

In an urban landscape, shooting and poisoning are not options for fox control. It is therefore important to eliminate the things which attract foxes and to check your local business guide for den fumigation options.

Quick Facts

- Foxes and rabbits were both introduced to Australia in the 1800's
- Foxes are also a serious threat to native animals and in urban areas
- Foxes and rabbits are declared pest species under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*

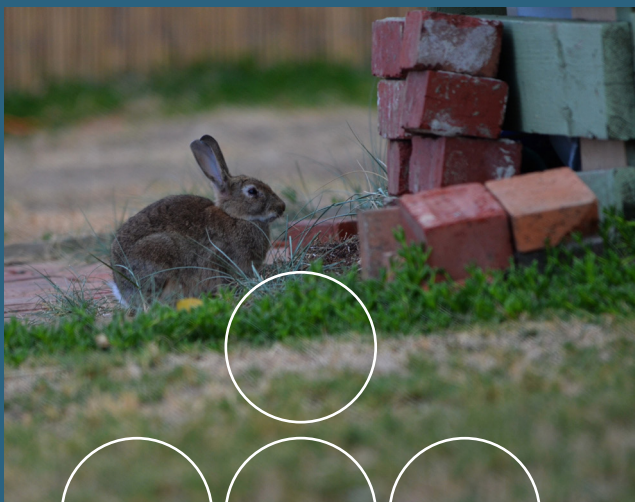
- Lock up chickens, ducks, guinea pigs and pet rabbits in a roofed and secure enclosure at night
- Invest in fox proof fencing, particularly around chicken coops and domestic animals
- Clean up food scraps, cover compost heaps or use a compost bin and remove excess fruit dropped by fruit trees
- Remove blackberry and weed thickets which provide cover and food for foxes

Rabbit Biology and Behaviour

- Rabbits are territorial and tend to feed close to their warren
- Rabbits are extremely productive breeders, producing multiple litters a year

Controlling Rabbits

Rabbit control is achieved through a combination of control measures. There is no quick fix method-persistence is the key! Check your local business guide for warren fumigation options.



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- Work with neighbours to ensure rabbits are not re-colonising in surrounding areas
- Rabbit proof fencing will stop rabbits from damaging valuable plants and causing erosion damage on your property
- Rabbits are associated with introduced plant species and environmental weeds such as blackberries and gorse. Controlling these plants on your property will remove potential habitat for rabbits and foxes
- Mesh tree guards are effective protection against rabbits
- Ripping warrens should be done after fumigation or poisoning

Poisoning/Baiting

There are poisoning and baiting options available for rabbit control, however Mitchell Shire Council considers this to be a high risk option. The risks relate to potential poisoning and secondary poisoning of off-target species such as native

wildlife and domestic pets. Poisons must be supplied by a licenced contractor and it is the individual's responsibility to ensure they are well informed before using baiting as a means of rabbit control.

Trapping

Trapping is not recommended as it can be time consuming and has variable results. The advantages of cage trapping is that non-target species can be released and it does not involve poison.

When controlling pest species always treat animals humanely and act in accordance with the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986*.

Contact Council

If you require any further information or to apply for a permit, contact the Mitchell Shire Council Parks and Assets Department on 5734 6200.

Mitchell Shire Council

t: (03) 5734 6200

f: (03) 5734 6222

e: mitchell@mitchellshire.vic.gov.au

w: www.mitchellshire.vic.gov.au

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