

Roadside Weed and Rabbit Control Plan	
Council Details	
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Regional Context of Noxious Weed and Rabbit Management

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

With over 5,100 kilometres of road, the Mildura municipality is within the boundaries of the Mallee Catchment Management Authority. Of this total, approximately 1000 kilometres of road is classified as sealed, 4,100 kilometres of road is unsealed.

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.

Invasive plant and animal species pose a serious threat to primary production and biodiversity in the region. Pest species 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 pest species 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 designated roadsides.

This Control Plan provides a strategic framework for Council to work with landowners to mitigate the ongoing impacts of invasive species on municipal roadsides. The establishment of partnerships with community groups, landowners and stakeholders will ensure that desired outcomes are achieved.

Please refer to Table 1 for a list of current target species.

Community and Stakeholder Consultation

Effective management of invasive pest species within the Mildura municipality relies on the involvement of the wider community. It is important that all stakeholders understand the significance of invasive species in the region, are aware of their responsibilities in managing them and have opportunities to participate as partners in all aspects of management. The goals of the Plan will be communicated to stakeholders, particularly those with responsibility for pest management.

Stakeholder Consultation

Stakeholders within the Mildura municipality include:

- Mildura Rural City Council
- Local Landcare groups
- Relevant community members
- Local landowners
- Local Aboriginal /Indigenous Groups
- Department of Environment & Primary Industries (DEPI)
- VicRoads
- Mallee Catchment Management Authority
- VicTrack and Pacific National
- Vline
- Victorian Farmers Federation
- Grampians Mallee Water
- Utility Agencies-Gas, Electricity and Telecommunications
- Lower Murray Water
- Parks Victoria
- Victorian State Government

Relevant Local and Regional Policies and Strategies

State

- Catchment and Land Protection Act (CaLP) 1994
- Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978
- 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. Mallee Invasive Plants and Animals Management Strategy, 2011-2016
- Mallee CMA Regional Catchment Strategy 2013-19

Local

- MRCC Roadside Management Plan 2010-2014
- MRCC Invasive Plants and Animals Management Plan (currently under development)
- MRCC Murray Riverfront Reserves Management Plan
- MRCC Vegetation Strategy 2010-2014
- Mildura Rural City Council Plan 2013-2017

Objectives of the Plan

The aim of the MRCC Roadside Weed and Rabbit Control Plan is to provide a framework under which Council may approach and manage pest species in a strategic and sustainable manner. The central objective of the plan is to combat the environmental, economic and social impacts of invasive species by preventing the spread and introduction of invasive plants and animals across the Municipality and the region as a whole.

Council hopes to meet this objective by providing support to build on community and landowner investment in weed and pest control projects.

Expected outcomes of the Plan are:

- To integrate and establish partnerships with community members and groups involved in invasive species management.
- To contain and reduce the impact of Regionally Controlled weed and established pest animal species.
- To achieve a reduction in the impact of existing pest species infestations.
- To prevent the introduction and establishment of new and emerging invasive species.
- To provide a basis on which to apply for funding for regional investment in pest species management.

Prevention principles:

- Minimise physical, hydrological and chemical disturbance to soils and vegetation.
- Employ responsible management when slashing, mowing, roadside grading, soil removal and roadside stockpiling.
- Employ responsible vehicle and machinery hygiene practices when moving through infested land to clean areas.

Intervention principles:

- Detection and treatment of new infestations as early as possible. For weed species this would be before fruits and seed mature.
- Focus control measures in areas where there is a high potential for infestations to spread.

- Focus control measures on infestations that are small and can effectively be treated and eradicated.
- Large infestations to be managed with the short-term goal of preventing infestation spread and with the long term goal of eventual eradication.

Best practice procedures:

- Undertake pest species control programs in partnership with Landcare groups, adjacent landholders and other public land managers.
- Consult with DEPI staff for most appropriate control methods and best practice procedures to be implemented.
- Plan control programs to be implemented at optimal treatment time. For weed species, during non-flowering or non-seeding times. For pest animals this would be prior to breeding season.
- Consider revegetation programs to prevent infestation of other pest species.

Best practice guidelines:

- Treatment of small outbreaks and isolated patches on the periphery initially, then isolate the major infestation and work towards the centre.
- Areas of indigenous vegetation should be avoided, unless this presents a conflict with Municipal Fire Plans.
- Removed pest plant species are to be disposed of to a disposal site designated by Council.
- Pest plants in seed should not be removed from an infested site - transport of pest plants with seeds capable of germination is an offence under the CaLP Act 1994. A permit must be granted from the DEPI prior to any transport or disposal.

It is important to note that whilst every effort is made by Council to undertake effective pest 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.

What other activities can be undertaken with this funding?

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 DEPI compliance project areas and/or support community led weed and pest control activities.
- Control activities for “regionally controlled” weeds and rabbits on roadsides that support other investment for integrated landscape protection projects or address particular community concerns.
- Mapping infestations of “regionally controlled” weeds and pests on 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.

Timeframe

The plan will run from 1 March 2014 through to 30 June 2015 unless extended or replaced with Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) and

Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure (DTPLI) approval.

Table 1: List of target species for MRCC municipality

Common Name	Scientific Name	CALP classification	PRIORITY RATING (1 highest – 3 lowest)	Reasons for Management
(European) Rabbit	<i>Oryctoagus cuniculus</i>	Established Pest Animal	1	Severe economic and environmental consequences of insufficient control. Landcare communities highly active in control efforts.
Boneseed	<i>Chrysanthemoides monilifera</i>	Regionally controlled species *	2	Highly invasive species. Boneseed is established in the Red Cliffs area. Management will be targeted towards containment within infested localities.
Prickly Pear Species	<i>Opuntia monacantha</i> <i>Opuntia stricta</i> <i>Opuntia robusta</i>	Regionally controlled species *	2	Established, abundant and invasive species. Presents significant detrimental effects to the environment.
(African) Boxthorn	<i>Lycium ferocissimum</i>	Regionally controlled species *	2	Established, abundant and invasive species. Presents significant detrimental effects to the environment.

*Also Weed of National Significance

Table 2: Control measures and target roadsides for MRCC municipality

Common Name *	Scientific Name	Control Measures (to be based on accepted best practice management of the target species)	Location of where works will be done	Estimate of length of roadside to be treated annually over 2 years	Approximate Annual Timing of Treatment	Estimated Cost
(European) Rabbit	<i>Oryctoagus cuniculus</i>	<p>- Fumigation of re-opened burrows</p> <p>- Baiting control or ripping of burrows if fumigation is not feasible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) current Compliance Area. • Partnership projects with Landcare Groups/Land Managers located within the Mildura Rural City Council area • Mallee Landcare Group • Manangatang Landcare • Millewa Landcare • Murrayville Landcare • Kuyne Way/Carwarp Landcare • Red Cliffs Landcare • Robinvale Landcare • Yelta Landcare 	Estimated 350km (based on project approvals)	Primarily December – February.	\$41,000pa

Boneseed	<i>Chrysanthemoides monilifera</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spot spray application of a registered herbicide in accordance with the product label - Cut-stump herbicide application 	<p>Areas that support DEPI Compliance programs and community programs.</p> <p>In areas that protect roadsides with a high conservation vale/status</p> <p>In response to ratepayer requests with clear impact of roadside infestation spreading to private land, budget permitting.</p>	.5 km	Primarily June – October. Other times of the year as required.	\$3,000 pa
(African) Boxthorn	<i>Lycium ferocissimum</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spot spray application of a registered herbicide in accordance with the product label - Mechanical removal - Cut-stump herbicide application 	<p>Areas that support DEPI Compliance programs and community programs.</p> <p>In areas that protect roadsides with a high conservation vale/status</p> <p>In response to ratepayer requests with clear impact of roadside infestation spreading to private land, budget permitting.</p> <p>+</p>	0.5 km	Primarily Jun – August. Other times of year as required.	\$3,000 pa
Prickly Pear	<i>Opuntia monacantha</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spray with herbicide 	<p>Areas that support DEPI Compliance programs and</p>	0.5 km	Primarily Jun – August. Other times of	\$3,000 pa

species	<i>Opuntia stricta</i> <i>Opuntia robusta</i>	- Remove plant where possible	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.		year as required.	
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* Where multiple noxious weeds are to be treated simultaneously in the same locations, only the most common weed species needs to be listed.

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 weed hygiene principles and protocols.
- Maintain accurate records sufficient to provide evidence that the plan has been carried out and provide these to DEPI on request.
- Obtain approval from DEPI before substantially modifying or varying the plan.
- Carefully consider any proposals from DEPI to modify or vary the plan in response to changed circumstances.