

Lower Plenty Rabbit Action 2008



Community rabbit action program

Last summer residents of Lower Plenty reported significant damage to vegetation both in gardens and bushland. Last summer was very dry reducing plant growth and providing rabbits with less to eat. Bunny Sheriff Bob O'Brien suspects that rabbit numbers were actually down but because of the lack of fresh green grass more damage was done to the remaining plants.

Little alternate feed meant that we had a good opportunity to get the rabbits to take the Pindone soaked carrots. Despite the baiting efforts, rabbits are of course back this summer, highlighting the need for ongoing and integrated control techniques. We will never eradicate rabbits but we can control them.

To achieve effective control, land managers need to:

- Monitor
- Remove harbour
- Destroy warrens
- Bait when needed
- Work together



Community Pest Management Meeting

The meeting to be held at Amberley on November 1 was cancelled after only 3 residents RSVP-ed that they would come. Hopefully this newsletter will answer your questions about rabbit control in your area but if you need more information please call Banyule's Land Care officer on 9457 9821 Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays.

Would you like to co-ordinate a Rabbit Action Group?

Having a local person to contact neighbours and liaise with the contractor can help communities achieve better rabbit control. To volunteer contact Belinda Moody, Banyule's Land Care Officer on 9457 9821.

Why control rabbits?

- They damage our local vegetation
- They cause erosion and soil loss

It is the responsibility of every landowner to control noxious pests on their own land.

More information about these regulations can be found at DPI web site:

<http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au>

River Restoration Project - Odyssey House and Yarra River Corridor, Lower Plenty

In late 2006, as part of the larger Yarra River Recovery project, Greening Australia Victoria (GAV) approached Odyssey House to discuss working together on an environmental restoration project along the Yarra River in Lower Plenty. With success in securing a \$20 000 grant through Melbourne Water's "Corridors of Green" project – Odyssey House with GAV support have removed woody weeds, prepared an area and planted over 2000 indigenous plants this year. An environmental management plan is also being prepared to guide the future management of the Odyssey property and river corridor. It is intended that this be the start of an ongoing project that will see Odyssey House residents regularly participating in environmental works along the river. Odyssey House runs an 85 bed drug and alcohol rehabilitation program and is one of the most well-known and successful residential programs in the state. Up to 40 residents from Odyssey have enthusiastically taken part in the restoration project to date.

Restoration activities

Some of the activities the Odyssey crew have been undertaking include meeting with Parks Victoria rangers upstream at Westerfolds Park to hear about the management of this large park and participating in a morning training session in plant propagation run by GAV. On ground works have included removal of woody weeds, in particular sweet pittosporum, destroying rabbit burrows, laying jute mat to control weeds and protect banks from erosion and planting and guarding indigenous tubestock. The tubestock for this project has been supplied by the Friends of Yarra Valley Parklands nursery at Westerfolds Park and a commercial nursery. In the future, it is intended that Odyssey House will incorporate growing indigenous plants for these restoration works, into their horticultural therapy program.

Rabbit control

One of the major issues has been to address the huge rabbit problem that exists along this part of the Yarra. Odyssey House has had an annual baiting program in place for the last 7 years. Odyssey House have re-commenced work to remove harbour such as gorse and blackberry and have been locating and destroying warrens. The nature of this part of the Yarra is such that there is a lot of public and private land to manage with scarce resources. GAV has been liaising with Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water and the City of Banyule to gain support for a greater and more coordinated effort to control rabbits. As part of this restoration project, it is planned that rabbit control will be a major priority with activities such as monitoring, harbour destruction, baiting, fencing and revegetation being stepped up. Plans are being developed to extend rabbit control works in the Cox's property, east of Bonds Rd and Melbourne Water will be commencing weed control works in the Montpelier Billa-bong soon.

Successful Community Water Grant

To follow on from the rabbit control works, GAV with the support of Odyssey House has been successful in gaining a grant through Round 3 of the Federal Government's Community Water grants. This grant will enable further revegetation to stabilise river banks and increase biodiversity values, with participation from Odyssey House residents.

For further information, call Anne Fitzpatrick -

Project Officer Greening Australia Victoria - 9450 5308 afitzpatrick@gavic.org.au





Banyule
CITY COUNCIL

Banyule Council's Rabbit control works 2008

In accordance with requirements set out by the Department of Sustainability and Environment, Banyule City Council is hereby given of our intention to use carrot bait containing Pindone on bait trails and in bait stations on the undermentioned reserves for the purpose of destroying rabbits.

The vermin control works will be overseen by the Banyule Bushland Management Unit and undertaken by "Outfoxed Licensed Pest Controllers". While every effort will be made to remove rabbit carcasses and remaining bait material, dogs and cats should not be allowed unrestricted access on the targeted properties during the control period from February to April 2008.

If you have any further inquires in relation to this matter please do not hesitate in contacting **Michael Holmes, Bushland Management Coordinator** on 9490 4222

- **Glenauburn Park through to Longs Road Reserve Lower Plenty** , Melway Map 20 K 8 and K 7
- **Cleveland Estate** Lakeside Dr, Lower Plenty, Melway Map 20 K 11
- **Banyule Flats Reserve** Viewbank, Melway Map 32 F2
- **Amberley Way** Melway Map 21 B11
- **Bicton and Rand** St Greensborough Melway Map 21 A2



Parks Victoria's Rabbit control works for 2008

Parks Victoria has recently acquired the Corry's property at the end of bonds road there will be a significant amount of work being completed there over the next few months including pine tree removal, woody weed removal, gorse removal rabbit warren ripping, rabbit poisoning and house demolition. Greening Australia have been successful with a grant to complete rabbit and weed control along with revegetation on the Montpellier and Odyssey property. Parks Victoria will be complementing this work by doing additional rabbit poisoning in this area.

Action on Cox Property

Cox Property lies at the southern end of Bonds Road extending west to the Rosanna Golf Club. It is home to hoards of rabbits and weeds, including Blackberry, Gorse and Hawthorn. Fortunately the Friends of Yarra Valley Parklands have recently won a grant to begin the restoration and protection of Cox Property.

The grant, offered by Melbourne Water can help fund protection of beautiful remnant River Red Gums, removal of weeds and control of rabbits and the destruction and erosion they cause. Rehabilitation of the Cox Property and surrounds will help to increase the quality of the Yarra River and therefore benefits some of the rare fauna that inhabits it, such as the Platypus.

Friends Groups are a fantastic resource in our community, often tackling projects that would otherwise struggle for resources. The actions of Friends of Yarra Valley Parklands will also benefit the immediate neighbours by reducing the spread of pests out of Cox Property. Joining in working bees is a wonderful way to make a difference at a local level. If you would like to participate please contact Andrew Lucas andrew.lucas@clevelandavenue.com.au

What to do:

Monitoring

It is important that land managers, including residents, monitor rabbits on their property so they know if their control techniques are effective.

Parks Victoria conducts spotlight counts before and after baiting each year along a transect or route through the rabbit infested area but for residential properties, monitoring can be simplified.

1. Count the number of active burrow entrances you can find
2. Count the number of rabbits you see from a fixed point on your block at dusk on the same dates each year. One date before baiting and one date after baiting.
3. Walk a line across your property that you can repeat each year. Count the number of dropping piles you pass within 1m on either side.

Record your findings and repeat them each year. Try to find a relationship between your findings and management techniques used that year.

Harbour Removal

Harbour is any structure or clump of vegetation that rabbits can use to protect themselves from predators and bad weather. Removal of harbour has been shown to result **death of more than half of rabbits** under 1 year old by the Department of Primary Industries. Rabbits often find harbour under blackberry and gorse bushes, under wood heaps or under piles of rubbish waiting to go to the tip.

Destroying Warrens

You too can destroy a rabbit warren. Many people are reluctant to dig up a rabbit warren but it can be done by hand. As long as you are more persistent than the rabbits you'll win.

1. Identify all entrances to the warrens
2. Dig from the entrance following the tunnel. Use a pick, mattock or straight crow bar.
3. Collapse the tunnel until it dips down. You do not have to collapse the entire warren
4. Compact the earth as best you can
5. Repeat with other entrances
6. Monitor the entrances, you will often need to collapse them again a few times.

Baiting

Banyule City Council offers a **\$30 subsidy** to the first 50 Lower Plenty residents who choose to bait using one of the participating contractors **and** bait during February and March 2008. Register for the subsidy with Belinda Moody (9457 9821).

Tips for baiting:

- Bait when there is little other vegetation available
- Bait in conjunction with your neighbours— Council can help coordinate baiting works so they coincide. This year we recommend late February
- Protect pets and wildlife by using bait stations where appropriate and removing rabbit carcasses.
- Spread the bait yourself to save money.

Below are some contractors who work locally. Please note this list is not exhaustive.

The Bunny Sheriff; Mr Bob O'Brien; 3 Sturt Road; MELTON SOUTH VIC 3338; 0428 170 647

Vernox Pest Control; Mr Kevin Chandler; PO Box 1036; MITCHAM NORTH; 0418 565 456

Weeds Needs; Mr Andrew Douglas; PO Box 268; ELTHAM 3095; 0418 538 421