



Controlling Foxes and Rabbits in Urban Areas

Helping to protect our environment

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

Foxes are a serious threat to native animals, livestock, and in urban areas, domestic animals. Rabbits cause ecological and agricultural damage through overgrazing. Both 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



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.

- 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
- For known dens, check your local business guide for accredited businesses specialising in den fumigation



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. One pair of rabbits can become 184 rabbits in just 18 months

Controlling Rabbits

Rabbit control is achieved through a combination of control measures. There is no quick fix method -persistence is the key!

- 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 use weed species to harbour, such as blackberries and gorse. Controlling these plants on your property will remove potential habitat for rabbits and other pests
- Mesh tree guards are effective protection against rabbits
- For known warrens, check your local business guide for accredited businesses specialising in warren ripping and fumigation.

Poisoning/Baiting

There are poisoning and baiting options available for rabbit control; however, this runs the risk of secondary poisoning of off-target species such as native wildlife and domestic pets. Poisons must be supplied by a licensed contractor, and it is the individual's responsibility to ensure they are well informed before using baiting as a means of rabbit control.

