



## **Update on the 2010 Ainslie/Majura Rabbit Control Program**

The ACT Government wishes to thank all the volunteers involved in the mapping of warrens on Mt Majura and Mt Ainslie Nature Reserves, Watson Woodlands and the surrounding Hackett Horse Paddocks. Volunteers spent over 1,000 hours mapping the warrens on this land and this data has been used by Parks, Conservation and Lands (PCL) to develop the control program. This significant effort has been crucial to the success of the program.

### **What works have been undertaken to date?**

In Autumn 2010, PCL employed contractors to gas and poison the rabbits on the nature reserves and surrounding horse paddocks. These contractors have used the data collected by the volunteers to locate the warrens. The accessible warrens were gassed using phosphine, and within the inaccessible areas, pindone carrot bait has been laid under bait stations.

The bait stations used are small cages that are designed to restrict access by animals such as kangaroos and other native animals while at the same time allow rabbits access to the carrot bait. Prior to laying any poisoned bait, a number of free feeds (non poisoned carrot) were undertaken to condition rabbits to eating the bait and determine the best location for bait stations.

### **What has the program achieved?**

Spotlight monitoring shows that the program is achieving good results. The program in Autumn 2009 achieved control of approximately 85% of the rabbit population present. Spotlight monitoring to date suggests that the combined Autumn 2009 & Autumn 2010 programs have achieved around 90% control of the population present across the area before management began.

Some of the reserves neighbours have undertaken large scale control programs that have also been successful. PCL is still working with adjoining landholders to encourage cooperative rabbit management.

### **Rabbits can still be seen in some areas**

PCL is aware that there are still some rabbits present across the reserves and ongoing management will be required.

Monitoring suggests that the area of most concern is within Mt Ainslie Nature Reserve immediately adjacent to the suburbs of Ainslie and Campbell. Prior to commencing the program this year, PCL staff were aware that this area presented a real challenge for control as many of the remaining rabbits in this section are finding

suitable harbour in the adjoining backyards. The current program has aimed to poison these rabbits using bait stations within the reserve; however, this was not as successful as hoped. The grass growth that was seen during autumn, as a result of the rainfall received, did not help with the bait uptake in this area. PCL is currently considering what control options should be deployed at this site in the future.

### **What if I have feral rabbits living in my yard?**

PCL is interested in hearing from anyone who has feral rabbits living on their property. Controlling these rabbits is seen as a priority, as if left uncontrolled; they could potentially become a source of reinvasion for the surrounding area.

If you have feral rabbits living in your yard or amongst vegetation on your boundary please send an email with your residential address and phone number to: [CNPNorth@act.gov.au](mailto:CNPNorth@act.gov.au)

This information will be used when deciding on future control programs within the nature reserve. The timing of a future control program is yet to be finalised, however it may not occur for some months. Seasonal conditions will be considered when planning for future programs.

### **More information**

For further information please contact Canberra Connect on 13 22 81.



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