

BushBroker[®]

Standards for management - Rabbits

Information sheet No. 7

Rabbits pose a major threat to native vegetation, in particular to the recruitment of young plants. Under BushBroker there are minimum standards for rabbit control that are outlined here.

An integrated approach to rabbit management is recommended. Employing a combination of complementary control techniques will achieve the best outcomes, because different methods will pick up different sections of the rabbit population at different times of the year.

The most appropriate control technique for your site will depend on the vegetation type, soil, steepness of the land, rabbit numbers and existing programs within your area. Rabbit control should aim to effectively control rabbits as well as protect the native vegetation within the site.

Burrow fumigation and hand collapse

- Collapse burrows by hand following fumigation.
- Mechanical ripping of burrows is generally not permitted within native vegetation under BushBroker. This is to minimise damage to native understorey and prevent further soil disturbance.
- As far as possible, avoid disturbance to native vegetation when hand collapsing burrows.
- Refer to www.dpi.vic.gov.au for details on methods of burrow fumigation. In particular, refer to the Landcare Note, *Methods for fumigating rabbit burrows*, on the DPI website.

Shooting

- Shooting is appropriate, as part of an integrated approach to control, where rabbit numbers are low.
- Shooting can be carried out year round.

Rabbit-proof fencing

- In native vegetation, that is highly sensitive to grazing by rabbits and where there is a high risk of rabbit invasion from areas adjoining the BushBroker site, you may choose to build a rabbit-proof fence.

- The minimum standard for rabbit-proof fences is 1,050mm width, 40mm mesh diameter, 1.4mm wire diameter rabbit-proof netting.
- Rabbit netting should be fixed so that it reaches at least 900mm above the ground and is either buried (to 150mm depth) or laid down and secured with pegs, rocks or timber.
- Support the fence to withstand stock or native animal forces.

For more information on fencing please refer to the BushBroker Information Sheet No. 12 - *Standards for management - Fencing*

Removal of harbour

- Remove harbour provided by rubbish dumped on site and weeds (e.g. Blackberries, Gorse etc.), where access is available.
- Ensure any harbour to be removed is not providing habitat for native animals (e.g. ground-dwelling mammals or reptiles and small birds). If necessary, discuss options for providing supplementary habitat using native species with the BushBroker Project Officer.
- Removal of native vegetation to reduce rabbit harbour is generally not allowed under BushBroker.

Baiting

- If chemicals are being used, you are required to comply with the current legislation (*Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Code Act 1994*).
- Free-feed first to determine whether the rabbits are feeding in the paddock or native vegetation.
- Use only hand-trail baiting, with due care taken to minimise impacts on non-target species.
- Take appropriate precautions to minimise risk to the user and others (including notification to neighbours, warning signage, minimum distances to dwellings and waterways, etc.).
- Where predatory birds are using the area, monitor for and dispose of rabbit carcasses after baiting to reduce the risk of poisoning.

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Health and safety

You are responsible for ensuring all works required in implementing the management actions are conducted in a safe manner and comply with the lawful requirements of any Authority, and with all Acts, regulations and other laws which may be applicable to the BushBroker Landowner Agreement.

To determine whether there are any underground pipes or cables on your property, you may wish to consider calling 1100 - "Dial before you dig". This is a free referral service from anywhere in Australia.

Further information

For further information on rabbit control visit the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) website (www.dpi.vic.gov.au).

For further information on BushBroker, please contact the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) Customer Service Centre on **136 186** or visit the DSE website at: www.dse.vic.gov.au/nativevegetation. All BushBroker Information Sheets are available on the website.

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For more information contact the DSE Customer Service Centre 136 186

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