

Project helping to reduce pest impacts

The Southern Murray Mallee weed and pest management project is helping landholders to decrease substantial impacts from pest plants and animals on agriculture, productivity, and the natural environment.

This 18 month project is led by the Karoonda East Murray and Southern Mallee District Councils with the support of the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board. This project was made possible through funding from the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment.

The Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board Senior District Officer Russell Norman who is overseeing the on-ground works said, the knock-on effects of damage from pest plants and animals are significantly more complex during dry conditions.

"So far, two contractors have ripped more than 21,000 rabbit warrens," he said.

"One local contractor has been working since September 2020. The other contractor was engaged recently and is making great headway with rabbit control in the Karoonda Council area.

"Rabbit warrens have been treated or ripped across 32 roads throughout the two council areas, many, many kilometres of roadsides," Mr Norman said.

"We have been carefully treating sites to minimise disturbance of native vegetation while working with landholders where possible to gain better control of feral rabbits.

"Spraying contractors have conducted weed control works and made good progress with a focus on African lovegrass, lincoln weed and silverleaf nightshade to date.

"We are waiting for rain in the area to freshen up focus weeds, including African boxthorn, which will be the target of 1,200 km of roadside control for this declared species over the coming months.

"Weed spraying is best carried out when the plants are green and growing, and because it is so dry the weeds are not active, this is slowing us up a bit at the moment.

"If there is no substantial rain soon, we may have to pull up and wait, but not much we can do about it. We will more than make up for it later.

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The project is being administered by the District Council of Karoonda East Murray and overseen by a steering group consisting of representatives from both councils and the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board.

For more information or assistance with pest plant and animal issues, please contact the local Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board office at Murray Bridge phone: 8532 9100.

Photo caption: The Southern Murray Mallee weed and pest management project is providing some relief to landholders taking on what can be a difficult and costly task of managing pest plants and animals, especially on roadsides.