

Rabbit Free Australia is Wild about Rabbits

A unique new book about rabbits in Australia – ‘*Those Wild Rabbits – How They Shaped Australia*’, authored by writer and conservationist Bruce Munday - is about to be launched, and the Foundation for Rabbit Free Australia’s (RFA) is pleased to be a sponsor.

Those Wild Rabbits tells the tale of the European wild rabbit in Australia through the eyes of those associated with it - the people who brought it here, had fun shooting it, wept over its devastation of everything they valued, dreamt of controlling, searched for cures, and rejoiced when their efforts finally paid off. It is an internationally important story about the introduction of feral pests and the crucial research needed for their control.

Established in 1992, the Foundation for Rabbit Free Australia has a vision of Australian landscapes free of their most notorious vertebrate pest – the European wild rabbit. The Foundation has a catchcry of ‘Bilbies not Bunnies’ and its mascot, the Easter Bilby, leads its public campaign to rid the bush of wild rabbits and reclaim country for Australian plants and animals.

European wild rabbits are widespread in Australia and destructive to natural environments and primary production. Rabbits adversely affect over 150 threatened native species, change landscapes, and cause losses of over \$200 million a year to agricultural production.

For twenty-five years the Foundation has managed a single purpose fund to support research, raise awareness and encourage on-ground action, directed at eradicating wild rabbits from Australia. Much of its effort is focused on research for biological controls, and it is Australia’s only publicly-subscribed fund to focus on means to eradicate European wild rabbits.

It was research which provided the great Australian breakthroughs in rabbit control of *Myxomatosis* in 1950 and the *Calici* virus (RHDV) in 1995. Without those endeavours the nation would still be battling plagues of rabbits in farmlands and in nature parks. RFA is committed to supporting continuing research as the only way to sustain the benefits gained and deliver the next innovation.

‘In our 25th year we are proud to be a sponsor of this important and well researched book – *Those Wild Rabbits*’, said Peter Alexander, Chairman of The Foundation for Rabbit Free Australia.

‘The book highlights the damage that wild rabbits cause and celebrates the critical need for ongoing research to maintain control’, said Mr Alexander.

‘We urge anyone with an interest in the environment or agriculture to join the Foundation to help maintain the national research effort – and all members signed up as at June 30th will go into a draw to win one of three copies of *Those Wild Rabbits*’.

To join RFA, or for more information about *Those Wild Rabbits – How They Shaped Australia*, visit the Foundation’s website; www.rabbitfreeaustralia.com.au.