

Media Release

Calls for a National Rabbit Action Plan

A ‘whole of government’ response, including conservation, agriculture and science portfolios at federal and state levels is need to combat rabbits, and a National Rabbit Action Plan could be a step toward that according to Foundation for Rabbit-Free Australia.

Feral animal control, and rabbit control in particular, is a priority for healthy Australian landscapes. It is fundamental to sustainable primary production, to nature conservation, and hence to the maintenance of regional communities.

Decades of research to develop rabbit bio-controls and the efforts of land managers, community groups and government organisations have combined to significantly reduce the number of wild European rabbits in Australia – but still they persist and continue to cause harm. Dealing with the problem requires investment in science and technology, collaboration and coordination, and support for land managers, especially at critical times.

A ‘whole of government’ approach is needed because rabbits affect such a wide range of interests.

‘We hear stories of rabbits not being a top priority for government conservation agencies or for agriculture agencies, so rabbit control programs don’t get properly funded. It results in knee-jerk reactions once rabbits are a real problem – and then it’s too late’, said Professor Wayne Meyer, Chair of Rabbit-Free Australia.

‘If different agencies looked at issues collectively pests like rabbits would be given the attention they warrant, and comprehensive programs would be put in place to stop them becoming major issues rather than throwing resources at them once they have bred up’.

The Foundation has released a policy statement urging governments to:

- Fund a national Rabbit Biocontrol Research and Innovation Plan as a whole, including monitoring,
- Fund and support the development of a National Action Plan for rabbits and the appointment of a national rabbit management coordinator, and
- Develop proactive programs that support the control of rabbits and other feral animals when they are vulnerable at times of exceptional events such as drought and bushfire.

Further information is available in Latest News at the Foundation’s website.

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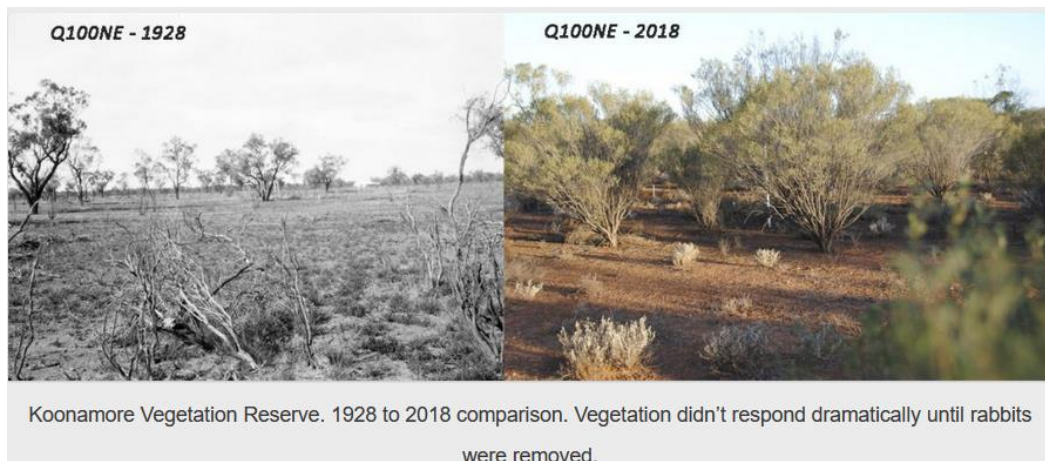


Image from rabbit-free Koonamore Vegetation Reserve, SA