



Media Release

20 June 2024

City of Cockburn first large Perth council to declare ‘owl friendly’ status to phase out deadly rodent control poison

Increased protection for native birds of prey, animals and domestic pets from serious illness and death due to eating commonly available rat poisons is the motivation for the City of Cockburn’s new ‘owl friendly’ status.

The City of Cockburn is Perth’s first large suburban local government to declare its owl friendly status, endorsing a BirdLife Australia Action Kit for Councils to phase out the use of deadly second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs).

The City began restricting the use of second-generation rodent baits in 2023, with the declaration enabling the City to formally improve rodent pest control, including specific actions in its Natural Area Management Strategy.

City of Cockburn Environmental Officer Lauren Andrews said the City would develop procedures requiring the use of safer rodent control products, such as rat and mouse traps and first-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (FGARs) which had lower concentrations of toxins.

“FGAR rat and mouse bait contains lower toxin levels which means when predatory animals, such as owls and other raptors eat rats and mice affected by these less toxic poisons, they have a lower risk of death,” Ms Andrews said.

“In comparison, SGARs only need to be eaten once by a rat or mouse to deliver a fatal dose and consumption of these dead rodents by other animals, including domestic cats and dogs, is often also fatal.”

The City will now ensure all commercial pest operators at its own facilities use safer rodent control practices. Lessees of City facilities will be provided advice about the dangers associated with the use of SGARs and will be encouraged to use safer products.

“The ‘owl friendly’ declaration is a recognition that native owls and other raptor species are a crucial part of our ecosystem and help to control pest species,” Ms Andrews said.



Media Release

“It’s important to know that the use of certain rodent baits around our workplaces, homes and businesses can have a serious impact on our native wildlife and its diversity. This includes marsupials, reptiles, slugs and insects and even our own pet cats and dogs.”

Becoming ‘owl friendly’ aligns with the City’s Climate Strategy which aims to conserve biodiversity by implementing the Natural Area Management Strategy.

Other councils such as the Shires of Augusta-Margaret River, Denmark, Nannup, and Mundaring have declared themselves ‘owl friendly’.

Caption: A Boobook Owl (*Ninox boobook*) pictured sitting in a tree at the City of Cockburn Operations Centre in Bibra Lake days after Cockburn Council endorsed the new ‘owl friendly’ status.

ENDS

For more information contact:
Media and Communications Officer
City of Cockburn
T: 08 9411 3551
E: media@cockburn.wa.gov.au