# INFORMATION SHEET

Rat prevention and control

PORT ADELAIDE ENFIELD

Rats thrive with humans and are a common problem in all areas. We provide food, water and places where rats can nest in our homes, gardens, parks, drains and creeks. While rats are a common pest in the urban environment, there are some easy actions you can take to limit their ability to procreate in and around your residence.

Rats require food, water and shelter. They will eat practically anything including fruit, vegetables, nuts, flowers, snails and even faeces. While rats burrow, they much prefer ready-made habitats in roof spaces, under floors, in garden sheds, under wood heaps or in dry, restricted areas between fences and buildings where miscellaneous items may be stored. The presence of rats does not necessarily indicate nearby harbourage as rats can travel several house blocks, usually along fences and vegetation, to sources of food and water.

**Types of Rats**

- The Brown rat (Norway rat): is grey/brown with a large body and small tail, likes burrows.
- The Black rat (Roof rat): is black with a small body and large tail, likes roof space.
- The Native rat – being a protected species cannot be killed/trapped, can be found near bodies of water.

**Obvious indicators of rat infestation**

- Accumulation of droppings, black, thin and about 10mm in length.
- “Rat runs” formed when rats create a distinct path along walls, fences, or paths. Rats tend to leave greasy smears on walls or fences if they use that run for some time.
- Gnawing of wood, plastic, wiring or other items.
- Food scraps left e.g. empty almond and snail shells.

**What can you do?**

- If you feel there is a problem with rats in your area the first step is to communicate with your neighbours to identify the extent of the problem. Encourage neighbours to undertake baiting, as treating at the same time will be much more effective in controlling and eradicating rats.
- While trapping and baiting is recommended, other rats may move in if living conditions are favourable. For long-term protection against re-infestation, rats must be deprived of food and shelter.
- If you have fruit trees, vegetable gardens or poultry it is likely that you will attract rats on an ongoing basis. In these cases it is recommended that you undertake baiting yourself regularly (weekly or monthly). Rat Bait is inexpensive and available from supermarkets and hardware stores. Be sure to store rat bait in bait stations to prevent any unintended off target damage to natural wildlife and domestic pets.

**Remove food sources**

- Wrap food scraps before placing in the bin, and keep bin closed at all times.
- Ensure a compost heap is enclosed in a compost bin.
- Keep poultry yard and aviaries clear of all waste products.
- Store poultry and animal food in metal bins with tight fitting lids and remove left over animal food.
- Protect fruit/nut trees by fitting metal collars to trucks to prevent rats from climbing them.
- Harvest fruit and nuts, or gather windfalls and dispose of them correctly.

**Remove shelter**

- Stack wood/timber and iron sheets off the ground (at least 300mm) and away from fences/sheds. • Clear house, sheds and land of all rubbish and unused materials.
- If such items are wanted, regularly check for rats and bait the area.
- Most hard waste can be collected via Council's free Hard Refuse Service, bookings must be made prior to collection on 1800 777 844.
- Maintain roofing iron or tiles so rats cannot force access into roof space from guttering.
- Prune branches, vines or ivy which reach on, or near roofs, guttering, downpipes, or over-head electrical wiring.
- Quickly repair damage to wall linings, vents or tiles to prevent vermin access.
- Ensure all workmanship is correctly finished and rodent proof – such as water, gas and electrical conduits, flashing to chimneys, flues and air-conditioners.

**What can Council do?**

• Provide advice and information on pest control.
• Investigate infestations of rats and enforce remedial action where a significant source of attraction can be identified.
• Please note in order for Council to act under legislation the condition of the premises must be such that it is causing or has the potential to cause harm to public health.
• It is important to remember that Council can only enforce corrective action, such as a clean-up of harbourage sites, if there is evidence of an actual infestation or a real risk of infestation.

**Baiting stations**

Rat baits can be readily sourced from supermarkets or hardware stores. Security of baits in the garden can be achieved using a bait station. These stations are designed to keep the bait fresh and protected.

**Disposal of rat carcasses**

For disposal, bury the carcass in the ground or place in a domestic rubbish bin. Please be aware that if baiting occurs inside the house or roof cavity, temporary odour problems may result due to the rat carcasses being difficult to access and remove.