Feral Pigeons

Control Methods

The feral pigeon is a descendant of the domestic homing pigeon. The ability of this bird to easily adapt to urban environments has meant that their numbers have persisted and in some areas increased to pest proportions.

Being related to the rock dove, pigeons are able to roost on very narrow ledges, beams and roof lines. In the urban environment building facades, roofs, bridges and jetties provide plenty of roosting options and human activity provides a variety of food sources.

In the Council area uncontrolled pigeon flocks have become a health and safety issue for the export grain industry. Building owners and community members also complain about the mess and destruction these birds create.

Council prides itself on its history, historic and architecturally significant buildings, variety of museums, heritage, Kaurna culture and eco-tourism.

In large numbers, however, pigeons do a great deal of damage to buildings due to the acidic nature of their droppings. Feathers, eggs and dead birds also foul the environment and buildings, sometimes blocking gutters which can lead to flooding in rain events.

Consequently, just as we need to control the rat and mice numbers, it is equally important to control the feral pigeon population. No single method of control offers the ultimate solution, but rather a combination of methods, with the responsibility having to be shared by Council, industry, businesses and residents. In order to control pigeons the following needs to be employed:

- The reduction of food sources;
- The reduction of nesting and roosting sites;
- The pigeon proofing of buildings;
- Trapping, where appropriate, to remove small established pigeon populations;
- Controlled culling for large flocks congregating at a food source;
- Shooting and poisoning - undertaken by a licensed pest controller.

Some businesses in the area, as well as Council, have already undertaken extensive pigeon proofing of their buildings by using spikes and fine wires. These deterrents are effective in reducing the number of birds able to land and roost on building ledges, window sills and roof tops. Along with this, new building work should also look at designs that do not provide roosting points and ledges for the birds. It is unlikely we will ever be rid of pigeons, however, Council endeavours to keep the population under control. To achieve this, all sectors of the community must be willing to assist by limiting harbourage and/or food.

Further information

For further information in relation to this document or any associated matter, please contact Council’s Environmental Health Section on 8405 6832 or a reputable pest control company.