

# Action Kit for Councils

Phasing out Second  
Generation Anticoagulant  
Rodenticides (SGARs).



Help save threatened birds like the Powerful Owl:  
[actforbirds.org/ratpoison](http://actforbirds.org/ratpoison)



**birdlife**  
AUSTRALIA

# Will you help BirdLife Australia get these bird-killing poisons out of our local communities across the country?

## Key problems with SGARs:

- SGARs don't kill instantly; poisoned rodents spread the threat around
- Rodents remain contaminated for many months, even after they die!
- Any animal that eats rodents is at risk – this includes owls and birds of prey, native mammals like quolls, reptiles like snakes and goannas, and even pet cats and dogs!



*SGARs are regulated in the USA, Canada, and the EU because of the risks*

## Ways councils can help:

1. Resident education
2. Change your pest management practices
3. Sharing the knowledge

Unwelcome visits from rats or mice can make us reach straight for the rodent bait. While we ensure baits are put out of reach of children, we rarely think about where rodents go after they have eaten baits.

The most commonly used rodent poisons are **anticoagulant rodenticides (ARs)**. Newer ARs, called **second generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs)**, are powerful enough that a single feed can be lethal.

But because of the **time lag** between taking a bait and feeling the effects, rodents can consume a more-than-lethal dose and still be wandering around - like **walking time bombs**.

Predators that naturally eat rodents, like owls and birds of prey, can then easily consume multiple poisoned rodents, in turn becoming poisoned themselves.

**SGARs work by causing internal bleeding**, but when rats and mice eat baits poisoned with SGARs, they become poisonous themselves, harming, and even killing other animals and birds that eat them.

**Studies in Australia have found harmful, and often fatal levels of SGARs in dead birds of prey, including Southern Boobooks, Wedge-tailed Eagles, and Powerful Owls.**

When we decide to use rodent baits around our homes and workplaces, **our choices can have a serious impact on the native wildlife around us.**





## Educating the Community

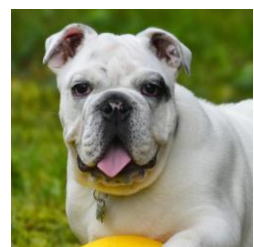
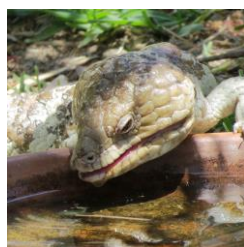
**SGAR poisons are so potent and damaging that they have been banned or heavily restricted across Europe, the UK and North America.**

But Australian regulations lag behind and SGARs are freely available to purchase from supermarkets and hardware shops throughout Australia.

As a consequence, **it's not just rodents being harmed by SGARs.**


Evidence is growing that shows rat poison is not only being eaten by the targeted rodents, but also

- **birds** – from carnivores like eagles, falcons, and owls, to omnivores like ducks, waterfowl, ravens, and currawongs;
- **native marsupials** like quolls and possums;
- **native reptiles** like lizards and snakes;
- **invertebrates** like slugs and insects;
- **domestic pets** such as cats and dogs.



You can help your residents protect themselves, their pets, and native wildlife by sharing the following information via your preferred channels.

## Make your house and garden less friendly for rodents



- tidy up garden waste (like brush piles),
- pick up any fallen fruit,
- ensure excess pet food isn't accessible,
- rodent-proof chook pens and aviaries,
- replace rat-friendly palms with owl-friendly natives,
- seal potential roof/wall cavity access points that rodents might be using
- ensure you immediately dispose of any rodent carcasses to prevent harm of pets or wildlife.

## Encourage native predators



- protect existing trees, especially those containing hollows that natural predators like birds of prey use for nesting
  - these hollows can take more than 150 years to develop, and are a rare and precious resource for the animals that need them
- plant native trees,
- install nest boxes for owls to breed in.

## Reduce dependence on poison baits



- consider other, non-poison pest control, like snap traps,
- only put out baits when you actually need to,
- if you do need to use poison leave SGARs on the shelf and instead choose "Natural" alternatives or First Generation products
- "Natural" alternatives: These usually use salt to dehydrate rodents until they die. These products have not been shown to impact native wildlife through secondary poisoning
- First Generation products: Check labels for Active Constituents like Warfarin and Coumatetralyl

### More information for residents:

Link your residents to <https://www.actforbirds.org/ratpoison>, where they can:

- Download bird- and pet-friendly rodent control brochures
- Learn about alternatives to SGARs
- Take the Owl-Friendly Pledge
- Find or start an action group
- Sign the petition urging Bunnings, Australia's largest retailer of SGARs, to take these harmful products off their shelves



## Change Council pest management practices

### **Council has a lot of influence over many properties and venues.**

Councils often manage a suite of properties (depots, council buildings, community venues etc.).

Taking the lead and employing wildlife-friendly rodent control on all council-managed properties will take measurable quantities of SGARs out of the environment, as well as modelling change for businesses and community.

#### **Your council can establish best practices such as:**

- If council manage pest control in-house, change policies to switch to safer rodent control such as First-Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (FGARs);
- If pest management is via an external provider, update your contract to include a clause that switches to safer rodent control;
- Ban use of SGARs in council-managed residential or domestic areas and restrict to within 100m of non-residential buildings;
- Only permit application of rodenticides in solid, non-pellet form in locked, tamper-resistant bait stations targeted to rodents only;
- Restrict permanent baiting and replace with pulsed baiting in areas where exposure to non-target wildlife is high.

#### **You can take action in your local government area by:**

- Specifying preferred rodenticide treatments in commercial pest operator contracts
- Investigating conditions that could be included to assist with rat control in demolition licences;
- Distributing information about the impacts of second-generation rodenticides on birds and other wildlife to your residents.

#### **Influence council property pest management**

- Provide information to tenants
- Make it a condition of leases that tenants use wildlife-safe pest control





## Spread the word

**Getting the word out there is the best way to drive nation-wide change, starting with our own local communities.**

Below are just a few ideas of ways your council can spread the message about the dangers of SGARs and ways we can protect ourselves and our native birds and animals from the threats they pose.

### **Environmental and Community health**

- Run custom training sessions for health inspectors so that they can educate food and beverage licensees.

### **Building, demolition and other services**

- Provide information as part of the process of demolition permit application, and to service providers.
- Create a list of wildlife friendly pest services for community and businesses.

### **Pass a motion at council**

- Highlight your council as a wildlife champion by passing a motion

### **Use existing resources to spread the word**

We've put together the following resources to help you get the message out about protecting pets and wildlife from the dangers of SGARs:

- Social media squares
- Pre-written text to use in your newsletters, social media, or other shared media



[Click here to access our suite of existing resources designed to help your council share the word about SGARs](#)