



## **Media Release:**

### **Vets urge people to protect their pets and wildlife by making better rat poison choices**

With experts warning of a resurgence of last year's mouse plague, Australian vets are joining wildlife advocates in urging consumers to avoid certain rat and mice poisons that are killing pets, birds, and wildlife across the country.

According to a survey of Australian vets, more than nine in ten have treated pets for poisoning from anti-coagulant rodenticide products that are commonly available on supermarket shelves.

The survey<sup>i1</sup> of domestic pet and wildlife vets found that one in five were treating household pets at least once per week for poisoning from rodenticides.

"The most-deadly rodent poisons are known as Second-generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides and are easily purchased from supermarkets and hardware stores like Bunnings," said BirdLife Australia Urban Birds Program Manager Dr Holly Parsons.

"These products work by causing internal bleeding and are very harmful for pets if they are accidentally eaten.

Cowra Vet Peter Launders saw terrible consequences on both pets and wildlife during the mouse plague in 2021.

"With more people buying and using mouse poison we saw huge numbers of rodenticide poisoning cases," said Dr Launders.

"It got so bad that we had to ration the use of the antidote and we ran out of dog blood donors and had to put a call out to the community to volunteer their pets.

"Many people didn't realise that their pet might have eaten a number of poisoned rodents over time, with the impact accumulating until the animal showed outward signs of internal bleeding."

Dr Parsons urged people to think carefully about their choices when managing rodents.

"While we do our best to ensure baits are placed out of the reach of pets, many people may not realise that some rodent poisons also have a terrible impact on native wildlife," said Dr Parsons.

"These products can kill not only the rats and mice they are targeting, but any bird or animal that might eat a dead or dying rodent. Slow-moving poisoned rodents can take several days to die – making them easy prey for other animals that will in turn be poisoned.

"BirdLife Australia is campaigning for second generation anticoagulant rodenticides to be federally regulated to be banned from domestic sale and made available for use only by licenced professionals.

"In the meantime, we are calling for retailers like Bunnings to voluntarily take these products off their shelves.

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<sup>1</sup> Survey of 62 Australian vets taken between September 2021 and January 2022. Survey was developed by BirdLife Australia and circulated via the Australian Veterinary Association and on professional veterinary social media accounts.



“For consumers seeking to make better choices, try old-fashioned snap traps first, they are the more humane option. If you must use a poison, try a first-generation product that uses the active ingredients **warfarin, coumatetralyl** or **diphacinone**.

“These products are effective and have fewer consequences for your pets and our beautiful wildlife.”

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