



Victorian  
Rabbit Action  
Network

# Annual Report 2021/22



# Victorian Rabbit Action Network

## **Victorian Rabbit Action Network Inc. Annual Report 2021/22**

### **Acknowledgement of Country**

The authors acknowledge the Aboriginal Traditional Owners within Victoria, their rich culture and their spiritual connection to Country. We also recognise and acknowledge the contribution and interest of Aboriginal people and organisations in the management of natural resources.

### **Acknowledgement**

This report has been written by the Victorian Rabbit Action Network (VRAN) Incorporated with sponsorship from Agriculture Victoria. VRAN would like to thank all those who supported VRAN and participated in their programs.

### **Disclaimer**

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this report is accurate. The Victorian Rabbit Action Network does not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind and therefore disclaims all liability for error, loss or other consequence that may arise from relying on any information in this report.

Design: Heidi Kleinert

Thank you to all the photographers who donated their images.

Kearney et al. (2018). The threats to Australia's imperilled species and implications for a national conservation response. *Pacific Conservation Biology* 25(3):231–244.



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# About Us

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The primary aim of VRAN is to see feral rabbits gone from the Victorian landscape. The way we do that is to provide the tools and networks to enable community, industry and government to implement best practice management in the control of feral rabbits.

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## Goal of VRAN

The Victorian Rabbit Action Network (VRAN) will be a catalyst for change in how rabbit management occurs in Victoria.

By 'helping people, help the land', VRAN aims to create a strong collaborative culture in Victoria whereby local communities are able to successfully manage rabbits in their area through partnerships with land managers, industry and institutions.

To achieve this goal, VRAN is focused on identifying and responding to opportunities to support communities and institutions to be knowledgeable and capable to deal with rabbits wherever they occur across Victoria.

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## Our Five Key Goals

- To **Support** collaborative, community led action for more effective and sustainable rabbit control in Victoria.
- To **Increase** land managers awareness and use of best practice rabbit management.
- To **Increase** community participation & effectiveness in on-ground rabbit control.
- To **Establish** a state-wide network of rabbit management experts across community, industry, science and government.
- To **Extend** reach and build state-wide leadership and expertise in sustained rabbit management.

# Our Focus

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To improve the rabbit system, VRAN's main focus has been to direct funding to the implementation of training courses and learning networks, to boost rabbit control expertise in Victoria.

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VRAN provide support to people and organisations to collaborate on rabbit action and they have also provided the occasional funding grants to support community learning, innovation, and rabbit management.

Through these programs, VRAN has provided communities and government the platform to collectively plan, resource and implement their efforts for more effective rabbit management.

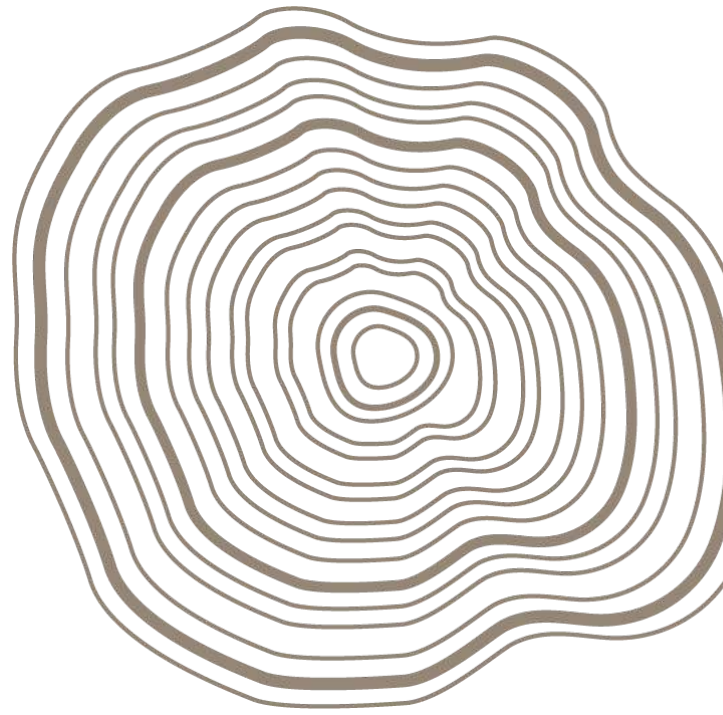
Importantly, the shift is resulting in reduced rabbit impacts through strengthened relationships and partnerships and changed management practices for better co-ordination of local control activities.

# Our Pathway

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To create a strong collaborative culture in Victoria, whereby local communities are able to successfully manage rabbits in their area through partnerships with land managers, industry and institutions.

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## **ENGAGE**

Engage people to care about the rabbit problem and motivate them to act in an effective and sustainable way.

## **COLLABORATE**

Encourage collaboration with others to create a ripple effect and broaden effectiveness.

## **INFORM**

Inform and educate people how to take best practice rabbit action.

## **EMPOWER**

Empower everyone we work with to take coordinated, community led action.

# Chair's Report

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Our contribution to  
community led action

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## Welcome Everyone

This is the third Annual report of the Victorian Rabbit Action Network since becoming an incorporated association on 4 June 2020.

Since the last AGM the composition of the Board has been expanded by the addition of Lisa Adams and Simon McGuinness. I thank them, as well as Lyn Coulston, Neil Devanny and Geoff McFarlane for their time and spirited enthusiasm in ensuring that VRAN continues to operate strategically at the high level to which we have become accustomed.

Thank you also for the ongoing support from our government representatives Chelsea Vercoe (Agriculture Victoria), Mel Corry (Dept Environment, Land Water and Planning) and Tina Konstantinidis (Parks Victoria).

I wish to acknowledge the VRAN Mentors, Tim Bloomfield, Brad Spear, Neil Devanny, Geoff McFarlane, and Tom Miller, who help members and stakeholders from across community, industry and government with a wide range of enquiries on best practice and collaboration.



Peter Barnes and John Matthews have taken some personal leave this year. We wish both of them and their families well and if their circumstances change and they see fit, they will be most welcome back into the fold.

Special thanks to Heidi Kleinert, Jason Wishart and Nigel Roberts at Agriculture Victoria for the support to the learning network program. Heidi is also Executive Officer, and I thank her for the wonderful work she continues to do on behalf of VRAN. I also thank the executive team at Agriculture Victoria, Sharyn Williams and Katherine Clift for their continuous support to VRAN.

Also, it is important to acknowledge friends of VRAN, Ted Alter, Andrew Woolnough, Michael Reid, Lauren Hull and Katie Eldridge who continue to advocate for democratic practice and a community-led approach to managing rabbits.

# Chair's Report

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## New partnerships & looking ahead

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VRAN held its 5th annual Bootcamp in Macedon, increasing best practice knowledge of participants from across community and government.

To help support self determination, a new partnership was formed between VRAN and Biik Environmental, a Taungurung Land and Waters Council enterprise.

The VRAN Mentors co-designed and delivered a Bootcamp with the Biik Environmental team and I look forward to reporting on the outcomes next year.

VRAN also continues to support five Learning Networks with eighty two members and I thank all the participants who are involved in the initiative as well as all the natural resource management groups, Traditional Owner groups and government agencies we work with to improve our natural environment.



### Looking Ahead

The VRAN Rabbit Strategy will guide our work over the next year, with the main goal being to secure our future with ongoing funding to enable VRAN to continue to deliver programs that support community capacity, collaboration and effective rabbit management, which will help people help the land.

Along with other Community Pest Management Groups (CPMG's), Victorian Blackberry Taskforce, Victorian Gorse Taskforce and the Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party, we have been involved in the Future Directions Report for community led management of established pests in Victoria.

The proposals from the Future Directions Report provides both opportunities and challenges. I recognise that not everyone shares the same level of optimism about the potential outcomes, but it is important that we have a collective view with which we can all be comfortable.

*G.W. Leach*

**GERALD LEACH**  
CHAIR



# Treasurer's Report

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We want to extend  
our reach and  
increase our impact

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For the period ending 30 June 2022:

- Revenue received \$66,693.00
- Total Expenditure \$22,356.00

The financial report of the Victorian Rabbit Action Network Incorporated has been audited by Surfcoast Taxation Services Pty Ltd, ACN 097 406 472. The full audit report is available on request.

VRAN has secured investment funding and Executive Officer support from Agriculture Victoria to continue building on the legacy of projects. We look forward to this partnership continuing in 2022/23.

VRAN are currently focusing on securing investment for the following programs:

- Leadership in Rabbit Management – Rabbit Bootcamp
- Learning Network
- Mentoring Program
- Educational Resources
- Community Grants



The goal of 2022–23 will be to continue to boost the investment stream from new partners to continue the implementation of the VRAN Rabbit Strategy, to extend our reach and increase our impact.

*Geoff McFarlane*

**GEOFF MCFARLANE**  
TREASURER

# Financial Statement



## Balance sheet report

31 Mar 2022

	Actual	Total Last Year	Variance \$	Variance %
<b>1-0000 Assets</b>				
1-1110 Bendigo Acc - 0950	90,732.56	149,481.14	(58,748.58)	-65
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>90,732.56</b>	<b>149,481.14</b>	<b>(58,748.58)</b>	<b>-64.75%</b>
<b>2-0000 Liabilities</b>				
2-3001 GST Balance	5,731.99	(7,578.38)	13,310.37	232
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>5,731.99</b>	<b>(7,578.38)</b>	<b>13,310.37</b>	<b>232.21%</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>85,000.57</b>	<b>157,059.52</b>	<b>(72,058.95)</b>	<b>-85</b>
<b>3-0000 Equity</b>				
3-8000 Retained Earnings	26,843.35	232,798.00	(205,954.65)	-767
3-9000 Current Year Earnings	58,157.22	(75,738.48)	133,895.70	230
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>85,000.57</b>	<b>157,059.52</b>	<b>(72,058.95)</b>	<b>-84.77%</b>

Margaret Leigh  
STS Accounting Group  
22 Willis Street  
Winchelsea Vic 3241

# Financial Statement



## Profit and loss report

Cash mode

01 Jul 2021 - 30 Jun 2022

	Total
<b>4-0000 Income</b>	
4-1000 Grants Received	62,400.00
4-1100 Grants Reimbursed	4,293.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>66,693.00</b>
<b>Gross Profit</b>	<b>66,693.00</b>
<b>6-0000 Expenses</b>	
6-1100 Accounting/Bookkeeping Fees	1,350.00
6-1200 Advertising & Marketing	636.36
6-1210 Contractor Fees	1,330.00
6-1700 Meeting Expenses	2,219.66
6-2200 Printing	656.86
6-2600 Training Material/Workshops	11,763.63
6-2700 Office Expenses	304.40
6-3100 Catering, Travel, Accommodation	96.36
6-4800 Website Expenses	3,999.33
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>22,356.60</b>
<b>Operating Profit</b>	<b>44,336.40</b>
<b>8-0000 Other Income</b>	
8-1000 Interest Income	3.98
<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b>3.98</b>
<b>Net Profit</b>	<b>44,340.38</b>

Margaret Leigh  
STS Accounting Group  
22 Willis Street  
Winchelsea Vic 3241

# Last Year's Projects

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Our contribution for a better landscape

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## Community Led Action

VRAN Mentors and Board members have been working across the state supporting community groups and agencies to build their knowledge on effective and sustainable rabbit management.

In 2021/22 the VRAN Board & Mentors have:

- Supported 82 Learning Network members
- Supported over 20 community-led capacity building events
- Contributed to several journal papers, Landcare articles, action plans and video productions
- Presented at various conferences, workshops and forums
- Contributed to the Agriculture Victoria Future Directions Program through membership of the Community Pest Management Group.



## Biosecurity Matters

On 3-5 May 2022, the VRAN Executive Officer, Heidi Kleinert, presented at the 2nd Australian Biosecurity Symposium on the Gold Coast on VRAN's capacity building model.

This was a great opportunity to share the VRAN story with over 400 delegates from across Australia and network with others working in the industry.

It was also a pleasure to talk with Costa Georgiadis, MC of Australian Biosecurity Symposium, Junior Landcare ambassador, environmental educator and television presenter about the VRAN initiatives, who was equally excited about the VRAN collaboration work.

# Last Year's Projects

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Our contribution for a better landscape

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## 5th Leadership in Rabbit Management Course

This year VRAN held the 5th Leadership in Rabbit Management course – Rabbit Bootcamp, in Macedon, Central Victoria.

Despite the added complexities of Covid-19, we were able to build the knowledge of 12 participants in sustainable and effective rabbit management through seminars and in-field demonstrations.

We had participants from:

- Individual Community members
- Arthurs Creek District Landcare Group
- Hughes Creek Catchment Collaborative
- Moorabool Catchment Landcare Group
- Nulla Vale Pyalong West Landcare Group
- Trust for Nature

We also worked with the following Government agencies:

- Dept of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
- Melbourne Water
- Parks Victoria

### SHORT TERM

In the short-term, VRAN are seeking to build capacity among landowners, land managers, government and industry to undertake effective rabbit control.

### MEDIUM TERM

In the medium to long term, the Rabbit Bootcamp's are a key step to increasing land managers' adoption of best practice rabbit management, and increasing the overall level of participation in on-ground rabbit control.

### PARTNERSHIPS

We are looking for partners to support these programs to extend our reach and impact.

Contact us if you'd like to be part of the community led action movement.

# Walking Together

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Our contribution to self-determination

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## Leadership in Rabbit Management Course for Traditional Owners

Enabling Traditional Owners to practice land management activities plays a key role in supporting self-determination.

VRAN aims to work more in collaboration with Registered Aboriginal Parties across Victoria.

To start this journey, in 2022 a partnership was formed between VRAN and Biik Environmental, a Taungurung Land and Waters Council enterprise.

VRAN and Biik are co-designing a training program to facilitate the exchange of traditional knowledge and contemporary methods to help bring back Country.

The program will build the knowledge of eight participants in sustainable and effective rabbit management through multiple seminars, in-field demonstrations and hands on experience.

The learning program will be delivered throughout 2022/23 and is supported with funding from Agriculture Victoria's Strengthening Victoria's Biosecurity System.

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Biik's Vision is that Taungurung people through Biik Environmental are self-determining in the management of healthy Country.

Biik Environmental's work is undertaken in accordance with the Taungurung Land and Waters Council's Cultural and Natural Resource Management principles of:

- Healing Country
- Reading Country
- Caring for Country.



# Our People

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VRAN is led by a group of community members, government representatives and industry leaders, who facilitate opportunities and strategies to support community-led rabbit action.

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## Board Members 2021/22

- Gerald Leach, Chair
- Neil Devanny, Vice Chair
- Lisa Adams, Secretary
- Geoff McFarlane, Treasurer
- Lyn Coulston, Ordinary Member
- Simon McGuinness, Ordinary Member

## Associate Members 2021/22

- Ben Fahey and Tina Konstantinidis Associate Member, Parks Victoria
- Chelsea Vercoe, Associate Member, Agriculture Victoria
- Mel Corry, Associate Member, Department Land, Water & Environment
- Heidi Kleinert, Executive Assistant, Agriculture Victoria

## Mentors 2021/22

- Tim Bloomfield
- Brad Spear
- Neil Devanny
- John Matthews
- Peter Barnes
- Geoff McFarlane
- Tom Miller

Our Mentors are industry professionals with experience in effective rabbit control. The mentoring program has been very successful and is growing over-time.

VRAN aim to increase the geographic spread and diversity of our Board Members and Mentors.

# Our Partners

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VRAN works in collaboration with many organisations. We'd like to acknowledge and thank the following partners for their ongoing support:

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## Our Partners

- The three Victorian Community Pest Management Groups; Victorian Blackberry Taskforce, Victorian Gorse Taskforce and Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party
  - Biik Environmental
  - Landcare Victoria Inc
  - Rabbit Free Australia
  - Agriculture Victoria
  - Centre for Invasive Species Solutions
  - Department of Agriculture Water and the Environment
  - Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
  - Department of Primary Industries NSW
  - First Peoples – State Relations
  - Local Government partners
  - Parks Victoria
  - Victorian Traditional Owners
  - Friends of VRAN
  - Ashbourne Landcare Group
  - Arthurs Creek District Landcare Group
  - Bangambie Meredith & District Landcare
  - Bass Coast Landcare Network
  - Bellarine Landcare Group
  - Blampied-Kooroocheang Landcare Group
  - Buloke and Northern Grampians Landcare Network
  - City of Greater Geelong
  - East Gippsland Landcare Network
  - Geelong Landcare Network
  - Hughes Creek Catchment Collaborative
  - Hume City
  - Middle Yarra Landcare Network
  - Moorabool Catchment Landcare Group
  - Mornington Peninsula Shire
  - Murrayville Landcare Group
  - Nulla Vale Pyalong West Landcare Group
  - Surf Coast and Inland Plains Landcare Network
  - Upper Barwon Landcare Network
  - Warragul & District Urban Landcare Network
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# Rabbit Impacts

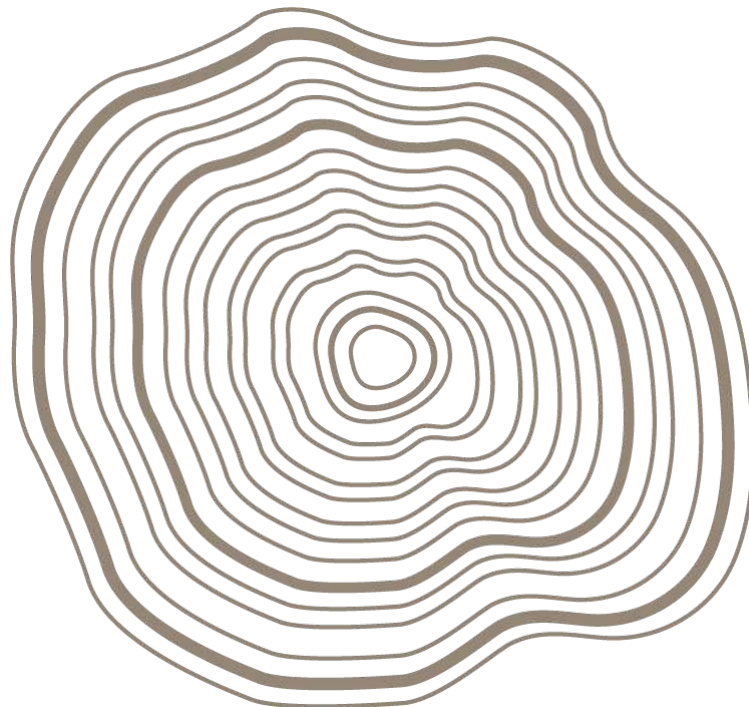
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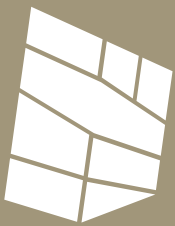


The most commonly cited invasive species affecting Australia's threatened species is the European rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*), which threatens 21% (322) of EPBC Act-listed species.

Kearney et al. 2018

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[www.vran.com.au](http://www.vran.com.au)