

# Business Paper

## LATE REPORTS ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

**ALBY SCHULTZ MEETING CENTRE,  
COOTAMUNDRA**

**6:00PM, TUESDAY 27th AUGUST, 2019**

**Administration Centres: 1300 459 689**



# LATE REPORTS

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**8 GENERAL MANAGER’S REPORT**

**8.5 REGULATORY SERVICES**

**8.5.1 COOTAMUNDRA CBD PIGEON STRATEGY REPORT**

DOCUMENT NUMBER	306736
REPORTING OFFICER	Glen McAtear, Manager Regulatory Services
AUTHORISING OFFICER	Phil McMurray, Acting General Manager
RELEVANCE TO COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN	<b>3. Sustainable natural and built environments: we connect with the places and spaces around us</b>  3.2 Our built environments support and enhance liveability
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	There are no Financial implications associated with this report.
LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS	There are no Legislative implications associated with this report.
POLICY IMPLICATIONS	There are no Policy implications associated with this report.
ATTACHMENTS	1. Correspondence - Belmont Pest Management

**RECOMMENDATION**

- 1. Council prepare a fact sheet to distribute to residents and local businesses providing information on pigeon control.**
- 2. Council undertake pigeon proofing on Council assets where roosting pigeons congregate.**

Introduction

This report was prepared and submitted to the July, 2019 Ordinary Meeting, however, as Glen McAtear, Manager Regulatory Services was an apology at that meeting it was deferred to the August, 2019 meeting.

At the Ordinary Meeting held on Tuesday, 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2019 Mr Allan Mitchell and Ms Jenna Reid both addressed Council during the Open Forum in relation to the mess created by pigeons nesting in their business’ buildings.

Discussion

Council in previous years, in conjunction with business owners, has undertaken many techniques with the objective of eradicating pigeons from the CBD of Cootamundra. As stated in the attached report pigeon control is a complex issue where many factors must be considered.

Of the methods Council has previously undertaken none have been absolutely successful in eradicating the birds from the infested areas. After recently researching the eradication of pigeons

Council staff met on site with Jamie Grentell, consultant of Belmont Pest Management, and author of the attached report, to discuss pigeon control. It is worth noting that as recently 2018 Council contracted the services of a local contractor to eradicate the birds.

The identified problems and health risks posed by roosting pigeons are that they:

- Attract cockroaches and rats.
- Damage buildings and monuments due to the corrosive nature of their droppings.
- Cause damage to buildings by roosting and breeding in roof spaces.
- Create a build up of debris which in turn causes drains and gutters to block creating potential fire hazards.
- Cause extensive damage to air-conditioning units and other roof top machinery.
- Create hygiene concerns by increasing the risk of parasites and diseases in domestic and other wild bird populations.
- Impose escalating costs of public liability insurance due to slips on droppings.
- Increase costs to Council with the cleaning footpaths.
- Provide a vector for the spread of disease and weeds from outer areas.

#### Control Techniques

Research indicates that utilising lethal control techniques is not an effective measure for the long term reduction of the problem birds. Lethal techniques, such as shooting, trapping and poisoning have only proven to achieve short term reductions with most instances just four (4) to six (6) weeks of respite from the birds. The reduced numbers of the culled pigeons can be quickly revived with juvenile birds and the flocks may reach their initial numbers, or be even larger, after a few weeks.

When shooting the birds it is important to realise that if birds are shot in inaccessible locations the birds cannot be retrieved creating other health concerns. Further, when killing adult birds it may leave juvenile flightless birds in nests to die of starvation.

Other issues when using lethal techniques, particularly when trapping, are that it is essential for the food supply of the birds to be removed otherwise the flocks can quickly return to pre cull numbers.

Some licenced pest control operators utilise a chemical where the theory is that the birds go to sleep and die. Unfortunately, in many instances, the birds feed fly away and die an inhumane death which can lead to other animals ingesting the birds and, therefore, ingesting the poison also. Large numbers of native wild birds would also be exposed to the poison.

#### Food reduction

It is particularly important in all instances to remove any alternate food and water sources and ensure that refuse, particularly from food premises, is stored securely and ensure any spillage is kept to a minimum.

#### Destruction of nesting sites

Pigeon nests are very simple structures and commonly found along building ledges, air-conditioning units and window sills. Pigeons are very persistent and removal of the nests would be an ongoing task and to be used in conjunction with other bird control methods.

#### Proofing and deterrents

It is important to prevent pigeons from gaining access to nesting the above mentioned nesting sites by sealing windows, doors and open eaves. This could create extensive renovations or be as simple as closing a window or sealing a crack or crevice.

Products such as netting, wire coils or spikes prevent pigeons from landing and gaining access to nesting sites. Other methods include scare devices, either audio or visual, or the application of gel products that make it uncomfortable for the birds to stand in the affected areas.

It would also assist in the reduction of pigeons if neighbouring businesses were to bird proof their buildings otherwise such efforts could just see the birds moving from one building to the next.

In summary, pigeons become problematic when they have easy access to roosting sites. To remove the birds building landlords and/or business proprietors are obligated to undertake methods to make their buildings uncomfortable sites for the birds to roost. The owners of buildings where the pigeons are congregating should engage the services of licenced pest control agents to undertake birds control programs. Neighbouring businesses should also be encouraged to participate in bird control programs.

Lethal techniques will only rid a site of the nuisance birds for a short period of time and have to be perpetually undertaken to ensure the birds do not return. The food and water source for the birds should also be reduced or removed where possible to discourage birds from roosting.



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16<sup>th</sup> July 2019

Glen McAtear  
Manager Regulatory Services  
Cootamundra-Gundagai Council  
81 Wallendoon St  
Cootamundra NSW 2590

Hi Glen,

Great to meet with you on Friday of last week to evaluate your pigeon problem in the town's main street. As discussed, I will be providing you with some solution options, primarily based around the property on the corner of Parker St and Wallendoon St, the pros and cons of each system and the outcomes we can expect from each one.

I have been a pest manager in the Wagga area since 1997. In that time, I have purchased and sold one business then after a couple of years break, and many clients asking when I will return, I started Belmont Pest in 2014. Whilst owning the original business I was contracted to many different organisations in the area including Australian Defence Force in Wagga and Wodonga, Defence Housing Australia, Department of Housing (and their contractors), Hungry Jacks, ATO, South West Community Housing, Sisters Housing, Moran Health, Wagga Wagga City Council and a myriad of others, many of these are again my clients. My experience with these organisations ranged from general pests' spiders, fleas, cockroaches, ants etc. to more in depth services like termite inspections and treatments and bird management.

My company and I won the Australian Pest Manager of the Year in 2007 and the NSW Pest Manager of the Year in 2010. These awards are judged by industry experts and business leaders that determine if a business is running efficiently and ethically. I have the experience and knowledge you require to achieve the results your council expects.

When visiting the site, I noted many birds on top of the hotel along with even more upon the ANZ bank building to the north east. While I can see the logic on the building owners coming to council for action, I believe it is each owners responsibility, and liability for costs, to make their building less attractive to the pigeon population. There are several techniques that can be implemented to achieve this.

**Trapping-** This method is very labour consuming as the traps must be checked and emptied daily. This method can have a short-term effect, but numbers will soon return if the breeding area is not altered.

**Poisoning-** Can be very effective method to reduce bird numbers quickly. Again, a very labour consuming method. Areas must be pre fed, birds are fed a bird seed free of any poisons to encourage feeding, before the active is added. The site must be monitored very regularly to ensure non target species are not near the feed. Community awareness of this method would also be a factor. Birds dropping dead in the main street, especially if non targets were affected, would almost be as bad as the birds themselves.

**Netting-** When installed correctly in the right areas is the most effective method to remove birds from areas. However, the 2 sites I visited were not suitable for this technique.

**Sound deterrents-** Very low success rate with this method. Also having these in a business district would not be suitable as more complaints would come in of the noise pollution.

**Light deterrents-** When installed correctly and in suitable positions can be very effective. The lights refract the sunlight at different angles that disorientate the birds and makes the area less appealing. These used with other methods can greatly reduce bird numbers. Downside to this method is it does not work when the sun is not out. The theory is that it has done its job well enough during sunny days that birds do not return anyway

**Spikes-** Great method for larger birds, like in this case the Rock Dove. The spikes do not allow the birds any access to ledges to roost or nest.

**Laser deterrents-** Relatively new technology that focuses laser beams at set spots in an area. The limitation with these systems are they cannot be used where people can come into contact with the beams, but could be useful in some situations.



As you can see in the above pictures the pigeons have many areas to roost during the day and foul the areas below. On this building I would propose to spike the top 2 ledges along the outer wall of the hotel, then install at least 2 ideally 3 Eagle-Eye bird deterrents.

When looking at the impact the birds are having on the streetscape it should be noted the less noticeable effects they are having on the area. These birds' droppings can carry fungal and bacterial diseases along with viral, protozoal and rickettsial diseases. They can introduce parasites and insects into the area such as fleas and lice, mealworms and beetles. The health impacts cannot be understated.

Each site would be different so we cannot take a holistic approach to this problem. Building owners would be required to contact me for assessment of their property. Keep in mind if all the business has something done the birds will not just disappear. They will still be present in the area, but our main goal is to reduce the numbers in the main street that in turn will reduce the numbers of complaints.

Again, great to meet you Glen and if you require any more information just give me a call.

Regards,

Jamie Grentell