



WEST WIMMERA SHIRE COUNCIL
CORELLA MANAGEMENT POLICY



2013-2017

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Introduction

West Wimmera Shire Council (WWSC) is located in the West of Victoria encompassing an area of 9200 square kilometers joining the South Australian Border to the West, along the Glenelg River to the South and the Big Desert to the North. The Council has a rural community of 4251 people centered in the townships of Edenhope, Kaniva, Apsley, Goroke and Harrow. The majority of the municipality consists of agriculture related industries, broad acre grazing and cropping rural farming properties and community services.

Over recent years WWSC has experienced problems with large numbers of Corella's (*Cacatua sanguinea*) congregating into towns.

Background of Corella Issue

Large numbers of Corellas are known to roost and feed in towns, farms and bush land across the West Wimmera Shire.

The Corella roosting period generally commences in October through to April depending on seasonal weather variations. During this time they migrate to townships where there they have access to water and feed. Corellas cause damage to trees, (native and ornamental street and park trees) create noise issues and anecdotally, damage to built infrastructure.

West Wimmera Council has conducted limited culls and other management approaches in past years.

Previous management has included,

- Authorized Officer shooting Corellas with live ammunition to deter them from roosting in parks and gardens.
This practice has limited effect and is still used.
- Use of 'Bird Frite'® shots to scare Corellas.
This practice has limited effect and is still used.
- Trap and gas program. Program conducted in Kaniva in 2009 – 2010.
This has proved ineffective and cost prohibitive.

In 2013, Council determined budget of \$80,000 for 2013-2014 (including officer salary) would be dedicated to managing corellas in townships. An officer was appointed 10 June 2013.

Correspondence on Corellas

WWSC receives numerous telephone complaint calls annually from residents, businesses and community groups about the Corellas

To complicate matters, Council receives conflicting views regarding Corellas:

1. requesting Council take action against the Corella flocks and their associated and problematic issues and;
2. opposing lethal action against the birds.

Issues listed:

- Noise associated with flocks of birds. This includes the inability of some residents to be able to relax at home due to the noise, and complaints from customers about bird noise to businesses mainly Edenhope Caravan Park.
- Damage to trees. This includes native trees and ornamental exotic trees.
- Damage to ovals and recreation areas.
- Litter such as pine cones, feathers and small branches on roads etc.
- Increased cost to Council, businesses, and residents of cleaning up after birds.
- Damage to buildings and infrastructure. Includes damage to TV antennas, window seals, vehicles, roof tiles, fencing.
- Impact on human health. May be in the form of depression, anxiety, health issues relating to pollution of water tanks, stress from noise and mess caused by birds.
- Opposition to activities that will be lethal to birds. Includes advice on non lethal options.

Summary of other organisations activities as investigated

1. Alexandrina Shire Council (SA)

Alexandrina has invested large amounts of Shire budget for over 5 years. One endeavour was \$20,000 to trap 1000 birds. During the Corella season, the Shire employs a full-time, dedicated officer to monitoring and control.

Feedback from the manager and the officer is that the efforts are minimising the impact, however they feel they are simply 'holding at bay' the problem. Alexandrina would be very keen for the SA State to be involved.

2. Horsham Rural City Council

Horsham has similar issues with the Corella populations located near public places along the river such as the caravan park. This obviously has an impact on their tourism and residents' use of their open space such as the botanical gardens.

Horsham has budgeted for two rangers who focus on the Corella issue during the problem season.

Horsham has used rifles in previous seasons at night time, with some success, however they have recently been advised this activity is not legal. Horsham are reviewing their policies.

The noise of the corellas and the noise of the operations is the main community balancing act that the Council has to manage.

3. DEPI

Current CEO of Wimmera Catchment Management Authority, Dave Brennan, was previously the DPI trapping program for this area. His advice is to tackle the scout birds to ensure relocation at the early onset of the season. He suggests that this approach would need several years of enforcement as the birds are highly intelligent and have long memories. They would persist with a 'safe' environment for several years, so Council would need to commit to three to five years of this approach for long-term reduction in numbers.

DSE met with Councillors and officers early 2013. Their advice was to explore multiple approaches.

Target of Corella Management Program

- Minimise noise nuisance from flocks of Corellas in WWSC towns.
- Minimise issues relating to Corella defecation on properties and infrastructure and possible health effects.
- Minimise damage to infrastructure and trees in the WWSC towns.
- Ensure community is informed and engaged in Corella management in WWSC.
- Evaluate management methods and refine program for future seasons.

Corella Management Options for West Wimmera Shire Council.

1. Do nothing

Council could decide not to undertake any management of Corellas on lands owned by Council.

TABLE 1: Positive verses Negative - Management of Corellas:

POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic saving to Council of reduced program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This option would cause significant concern in sections of the community affected by the birds. This could result in dissatisfaction with Council from sections the community.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This option could also result in an increase in damage to Council assets as flocks may become accustomed to moving temporarily off Council lands onto private lands then moving back once operations on Council land cease.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This option may also result in an increase in damage to public and private infrastructure including primary production infrastructure.

Strategic targeted control and management by Council in cooperation with community

Council leads and manages Corella management in the WWSC towns.

TABLE 2: Positive verses Negative – Strategic Targeted Control and Management by Council:

POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is an active management approach to the issue recognising that negative impacts on private lands also impact on the economic and social health of the WWSC towns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited flexibility for Council does not have the authority to issue permits for the destroying of flocking birds by trapping and gassing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council would be more focused and dedicated to a positive management outcome as it, and its communities, are directly affected by the problem. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only the State Government can issue these permits should the community decide to pursue such an option.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of improved information to property owners/managers could increase effectiveness of management program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If Council is the first point of contact for complaints then the State Government will not fully appreciate the emotion and frustration felt by WWSC locals.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council does not have the expertise and resources that the State Government has in Corella control.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training is required for Council staff to undertake some actions.

2. Ensure appropriate authority is responsible for action

The State Government could assume responsibility for the management of Corellas.

TABLE 3: Positive verses Negative - State Government verses Council Management of Corellas:

POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Government authorities and Departments are better resourced and more experienced in Corella control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council has a much better understanding of the distress and frustration this issue causes local communities as it is the first point of contact for locals. If the State Government accepts management of the issue locals may feel they are being ignored or abandoned by Council.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As the problem with Corellas is present in more than one local government area duplication of effort would be reduced. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The State Government may choose to do nothing which will not be acceptable to the community. The State Government would feel little impact of this action as residents would still likely to use the Council as the primary point of contact.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Government could provide a consistent approach across the entire state. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The State Government is the authority which issues permits for trap and gas programs, ensures condition compliance, and sets and administers relevant legislation. 	

Council Preferred Option

WWSC could conduct strategic targeted control and management by Council in cooperation with community, but also seek greater support and involvement from the Department of Environment and Primary Industries.

Proposed actions for 2013 – 2017:

- Council prepare a management plan describing actions.
- Council purchase new laser lights and visual deterrents to scare corellas. (This will be used by Council staff to scare birds from roosting sites).
- Council prepare an information brochure describing what actions private landholders can take on their own land. Landowners encouraged to actively manage Corellas on their own lands in conjunction with Council actions. These actions will be added to the management program to complement existing actions.
- Monitoring for scout corellas, movements, roosting areas and Corella habits.
- Using strobe lights to disturb and scare birds.
- Conduct meeting with DEPI and WCMA.
- Remove of some roosting trees within Edenhope Caravan Park.
- Investigate and trial scare technology as it becomes available.
- Investigate the use of Alpa-Chioralose.
- Conduct relocation program with multiple shooters using live ammunition.

Existing actions that will continue include

- Shooting with non-lethal bird frightening cartridges to scare corellas.
- Shooting with live ammunition to reduce Corella numbers.

TABLE 4: Timeline of Council's Corella Management - 2013-2017:

TIMING	Observed Corella Behaviour	Council Staff,	Volunteer Observers	Private Action
October -		Designate areas to be actively managed		
October - November		Information brochure on Corella management on private properties available for public. Counter staff briefed on brochure.	Volunteer observers briefed.	Landholders experiencing problems with Corellas collect brochure.
October - November	Scout birds seen near target areas	Commence deterrence actions. Monitor bird numbers and movement patterns. Commence record keeping for season.	Send reports of sightings to Council.	Private shooting commence where problems occur if they are taking this action. Strict adherence to Codes of Practice required.
Season determined	Irregular presence in townships including designated target zones. No regular daily pattern yet evident.	Begin deterrence activities and relocate birds out of townships. Note: Zero tolerance at inappropriate roosting sites. Continue recording Corella numbers and movements. Begin use of 'Bird Frite' and light deterrents at target zones. Record direction of birds fleeing actions.	Send reports of sightings to Council.	Private rural property owners continue shooting Corellas if they are taking this action. Strict adherence to Codes of Practice required. Begin other deterrence activities such as flashing lights at roosting points.

Season determined	Numbers of Corellas increases in target zones.	<p>Record bird reactions to deterrence actions.</p> <p>Continue deterrence activities.</p> <p>Note roosting and feeding areas.</p> <p>Continue recording Corella numbers and movements.</p> <p>Continue use of 'Bird Frite' and light deterrents at target zones.</p> <p>Commence multiple shooters shooting with live ammunition.</p> <p>Continue to record direction of birds fleeing actions.</p> <p>Undertake regular press release to inform community of Council action.</p> <p>Discuss with DEPI current program and possible alternatives.</p>	Send reports of sightings to Council	<p>Private rural property owners continue shooting Corellas if they are taking This action. Strict adherence to Codes of Practice required.</p> <p>Continue other deterrence activities such as flashing lights at roosting points.</p>
Following good rainfalls (autumn).	<p>Corellas disperse .</p> <p>Birds no longer affecting target zones.</p> <p>Damage and nuisance reports drop.</p>	Prepare report on season activities and results.		

Actions that were considered but not yet adopted.

In preparing for the oncoming Corella season Council has considered other options which due to various reasons were found to be unsuitable for the area.

In past years WWSC has organised a program of trapping and gassing Corellas. The issuing of permits to trap and gas is the responsibility of the Department of Environment and Primary Industries. This approach to managing the birds is expensive and does not stop the problem as those birds which escape the traps still visiting their regular stopping points making noise etc.

To date this method has proved ineffective at managing Corella numbers. Council will only consider introducing a trap and gas program if there is strong community support for such an approach.

Evaluation of Program

At the end of the Corella Roosting period a evaluation of the program will be undertaken to determine if,

- The targets set were achieved.
- The management program could be changed to improve success.
- Any additional actions are required for the following period.
- Other feedback and comments.
- Council will also investigate if changes need to be made to staffing and other resource commitments.
- The effectiveness of Corella management programs in other local government areas.
- Any new technologies or management methods that have become available for Corella management.

Review of Management Plan

A review of the management plan will be conducted at the end of each Corella roosting period. Based on these findings a new report will be prepared including Officer recommendations and budgetary planning for the upcoming corella season.