



Castlereagh Macquarie County Council

MEDIA RELEASE

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ABC Western Plains
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Walgett Spectator
Coonamble Times
Gilgandra Weekly
Warren Weekly
Coonabarabran Times

DATE: 23 February 2023

EMBARGO: Nil

HUDSON PEAR CONTROL INITIATIVE

Castlereagh Macquarie County Council (CMCC) Chairman Councillor Doug Batten said he was delighted to hear of the NSW Government's new strategy to assist the local landowners with a program of select spraying to further support the highly effective bio control activity currently managed by the County Council. The County Council have for some time been advocating for additional resources to assist in the fight against Hudson Pear and this package will definitely go a long way to reduce numbers in the immediate Lightning Ridge area and contain the spread of this sinister pest onto adjoining lands. The County Council looks forward to working closely with the LLS, and landowners in delivering this important program.

General Manager Mike Urquhart said Council had now entered into a contract with North West Local Land Services to deliver the first element of the LLS Hudson Pear control program around Lightning Ridge and the opal fields at Grawin. This program is essentially a comprehensive aerial inspection and spray program aimed at supporting the bio control process that is already in operation and managed by CMCC on behalf of NSW Department of Primary Industries. In addition to engaging licensed spray contractors, Council will also have chemical packages that will be made available to landowners for their own Hudson Pear spray program.

Fundamentally, the program is directed toward the many isolated Hudson Pear infestations around the confines of each selected property to diminish the incidence of pear, to further reduce the likelihood of its spread. In the meantime, CMCC staff shall continue to produce the bio control agent that is best applied to the core infestations, that in time will see an increase in cochineal insect population and a destruction of the Hudson Pear plants.

Chairman Batten said Council was looking forward to rolling out this program in the coming month to assist landowners in the control of Hudson Pear, however he also pointed out that CMCC had an obligation under the Bio Security Act to ensure landowners made an effort to control and limit the spread of the plant. He said, we have an appalling situation in the Lightning Ridge area, so all parties need to stop the blame game and work collaboratively as a team if we are going to make this project work.

Michael Urquhart

General Manager

Castlereagh Macquarie County Council