

Termites

Council does not treat termites that are found on private property. Please seek assistance from a registered pest control company.

Council does not removal termite mounds. Termite mounds are known to provide Heath Goanna (*Varanus rosenbergi*) an ideal place to lay its eggs during the breeding season, where the mound incubate the eggs. The goanna is listed as vulnerable in South Australia and Critically Endangered in the Mt Lofty Ranges.

If termite activity or a nest is located on Council land, please contact the council with a location and details. Staff will inspect the reported nest or activity and determine if it requires treatment.

Not all termites are destructive

Termites are similar in size to black ants but are pale in colour – sometimes known as white ants.

Out of the approximate 350 termite species in Australia, only a handful of wood-damaging species are problematic (see below for further information). The majority of termites are of great benefit to ecosystems through recycling dead and rotten timber and other plant matter and as a source of food to many animals.

Signs that there are destructive termites in the home

- Visible 'mud tubes' – Destructive termites often build mud shelter tubes for their protection which can sometimes be seen on hard surfaces/foundations or on the surface of timber walls
- Noises in the walls
- Discarded wings: flying termites or 'swarmers' lose their wings shortly after finding a mate
- Hollow Timber/Tunnels in the wood
- Frass (termite droppings): Drywood termites push their droppings outside the tunnels they create. This leaves black marks and dark powdery substances near areas of infestation
- Cracked paint, wood or plaster on walls
- Noticeable floor or ceiling damage
- Power repeatedly short circuits in your house

If termites have eaten away at timber it will be hollow-sounding when tapped and there may be fine wood dust observed coming out of a thin crack in the wood.

Destructive Termites:

The known destructive termites in South Australia are:

- ***Coptotermes acinaciformis*** -this species is believed to be the most widely distributed and destructive timber pest in Australia, accounting for more than 70% of the serious damage to buildings in Australia. They will attack all timber structures and damage forest and ornamental trees as well as fruit trees. They generally do not build mounds and mostly nest in trees, stumps, poles, or filled-in verandahs where timber has been buried. Favoured trees for nesting are English oaks, various eucalypts and peppercorns. The colony is mostly found in the root crown or the lower part of the trunk.
- ***Coptotermes frenchii*** is commonly found in urban areas, where buildings are constructed of softwood or Oregon timber framing. It is known to devour timber framing leaving only a thin

veneer and is responsible for most of the timber pest damage to buildings in the South Australia region. Their nests are often built in the root crown or lower trunk area of living trees, particularly eucalypts. They may also build their nest as a mound in the dryer areas of SA.

- ***Nasutitermes exitiosus*** - are not as common as the other species listed above, however they can be destructive to buildings and other timber structures. They build a low dome shaped mounds, particularly near eucalypt gum trees, which protrudes 30cm to 75cm above the ground and will travel up to 50 metres from their nest for food. This species is not regarded as a serious pest although they will cause considerable damage if they go unnoticed for a long time.
- ***Heterotermes ferox*** are known across Australia and are known to be destructive to damp and rotting timbers, often associated with fences, poles and other timber structures subject to wood decay from weathering or from being in contact with the soil. They mainly build their colonies next to stumps, logs, or other timber in direct contact with the soil.