

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD — DECLARED PEST RATE

1421. Hon Rick Mazza to the Minister for Agriculture and Food:

I refer to Budget Paper No. 3, Economic and Fiscal Outlook, page 104, “Jobs and Economic Development” Line Item 11, Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act – Declared Pest Control Activities, regarding a flat rate (fixed sum) of \$30 on land in the local government districts of Harvey, Mandurah, Murray, Serpentine–Jarrahdale and Waroona under consideration for the Declared Pest Rate (DPR), and I ask:

- (a) why is the DPR being extended to these districts in 2018–2019;
- (b) is data available on the effectiveness of 2016–2017’s DPR operations in other shires;
- (c) can funds collected by groups be diverted to other department priorities unrelated to pest control;
- (d) how will public comment on the declared pest rate proposal, which closes 24 June 2018, be used;
- (e) is there a strategic plan to co-ordinate targeting specific pest plants and animals and, if so, is this publically available;
- (f) is this a temporary measure:
 - (i) if yes to (f), what is the timeframe; and
 - (ii) if no to (f), is it an ongoing tax; and
- (g) what criteria is required to establish a Recognised Biosecurity Group?

Hon Alannah MacTiernan

- (a) The Peel Harvey Biosecurity Group (PHBG), which has been operating since 2014 and recognised in 2017, has requested the rate be determined for these areas. A Declared Pest Rate (DPR) has been applied to its operational area for the first time in 2018/19 to enable funding of priority declared pest species activities.
- (b) Yes, in some instances. Individual groups maintain records of control effort and change in reports and distribution of pests. For example, recognised biosecurity group annual reports indicate DPR-funded control efforts by Recognised Biosecurity Groups have resulted in decreased wild dog attacks in some areas.
- (c) No. Funds are collected by the Office of State Revenue and transferred to the declared pest account held by the Director General, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development. Funds are then matched dollar for dollar by State Government, and the funds are made available to respective groups in order for them to carry out their operational plans in areas from where the rates were collected.
- (d) The public submissions have been collated with key themes documented and provided to me as part of the rate determination process. This information will also be provided to each group to inform its operations.
- (e) Yes. Both the “WA State Biosecurity Strategy” and the “Invasive Species Plan for Western Australia 2015–2019” are publically available documents at <https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/biosecurity/western-australian-biosecurity-strategy> and <https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/invasive-species/invasive-species-plan-western-australia-2015-2019> respectively.
- (f) No.
 - (i) Not Applicable.
 - (ii) Rates are determined each year based on proposals from biosecurity groups in accordance with section 130 of the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007*. Biosecurity groups determine the rate quantum through consultation with the community based on what is required to implement their operational plan.
- (g) To become recognised, Biosecurity Groups work through a specified process to ensure they have strong governance, community support, and community and landholder engagement strategies to determine local priorities on behalf of their communities.

Biosecurity groups in the south west have been provided with initial funding to develop their governance structures and begin on-ground management activities. This provides the foundation for recognition and future DPR implementation.

A biosecurity group seeking recognition from the Minister must give its consent to be recognised to the Minister and provide information demonstrating that it:

- (1) will undertake activities consistent with the Act;
- (2) can operate at a sufficient scale to control declared pests at a landscape scale;
- (3) has the capacity and appropriate governance arrangements to manage any public funds it receives, including that the group is incorporated, or sits within an existing entity that is incorporated; and
- (4) has legitimacy within its community to decide how to allocate these funds.