

WILD DOGS IN PASTORAL AREAS — BARRIER FENCE EAST OF HYDEN

441. Mr M.P. Murray to the Minister for Agriculture and Food

- (1) Is the Minister aware the farming areas surrounding Esperance are experiencing heavy and costly losses of stock due to packs of dogs originating from the areas northeast of Esperance?
- (2) Is the Minister aware there has been a Cost-Benefit Analysis done regarding Dog Standard Barrier Fence to close in the pastoral areas around Esperance?
- (3) When will the results of this study be acted upon?
- (4) Why has this project been placed on hold when hundreds of sheep are being killed weekly by dogs?

Mr D.T. REDMAN replied:

- (1) It is true that wild dog activity has increased over recent years; however, there is now a coordinated approach by local farmers, Esperance Shire and the Departments of Agriculture and Food and Environment and Conservation. This coordination happens through the locally formed Northern Mallee Declared Species Group, chaired by local Cascades farmer Mr Scott Pickering. This group coordinates two major baiting programs a year, one in Spring and the second in Autumn, when some 15,000 baits are dropped. The group also employs two part time doggers who carry out on-ground control. While there are still some stock losses these have been greatly reduced by the activities undertaken by this local group.
- (2) I am aware that there have been two Cost-Benefit Analyses completed, one for a Pastoral Biosecurity Fence and a second for upgrading the existing State Barrier Fence to a wild dog standard and extending it so that would encompass the Esperance shire. The Pastoral Biosecurity Fence Analysis has only just been presented to the Agricultural Protection Board and I have not received their recommendations based on the findings of the report. I have also asked for a final report of the State Barrier Fence Cost-Benefit Analysis following a public versus private benefit assessment.
- (3) No decision will be made until after I receive the reports.
- (4) The project is progressing and I will make a decision when I have reviewed and considered the reports. Meanwhile wild dog management will continue under current arrangements, such as the activities of the Northern Mallee Declared Species Group.