



The Hon. Rick Mazza MLC
Member for the Agricultural Region
Parliament of Western Australia

Media Statement

September 1, 2020

Co-ordinated pest control management vital

Shooters, Fishers and Farmers MLC Rick Mazza says an appropriate and timely response to Western Australia's invasive plant and animal pests is required following the release of the Auditor General's *Managing the Impact of Plant and Animal Pests: Follow-up* report.

Mr Mazza said his *Game and Feral Animal Control Bill 2018*, which he read into the Legislative Council on October 16, 2019 to manage and regulate the hunting of game and feral animals, should be taken up by the State Government as a cost effective way to help better tackle the pest animal problem similar to Victoria and New South Wales.

"In her overview, the Auditor General said with the level of economic and natural heritage of WA at stake it is vital the most serious threats are met with an appropriate and timely response," Mr Mazza said.

"My Bill would allow hunters at their cost to control species such as wild dogs, pigs, foxes, goats and camels in State forest. The management of many of these pests require an enormous amount of time and patience that licenced game hunters could provide. As per the auditor general's report, it is apparent Registered Biosecurity Groups (RBG) are not addressing these threats to the extent required."

The auditor general's report noted the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) does not consider the threat of different pests and enforces compliance only where an active RBG is engaged and vocal on an issue.

"The auditor general reviewed RBG annual reports from 2014-15 to 2018-19 and found them to be of varying quality and unable to provide a sound performance assessment. In 2018-19, DPIRD paid out \$5.2 million from the Declared Pest Account to 11 RBGs, which is contributed to by ratepayers paying a Declared Pest Rate, however not all RBG annual reports acquitted this expenditure in a timely manner, if at all," Mr Mazza said.

Mr Mazza said the State Government providing \$100,000 to the Goldfields Nullarbor Rangelands Biosecurity Association to boost feral animal control in the Southern rangelands was another example of not providing an appropriate response to pest animals and a co-ordinated plan is needed.

"This funding will provide little relief to pastoralists beset by feral camels. To make matters worse, the auditor general found information on the impact of pest species is still not comprehensive or shared amongst stakeholders, which makes it hard to manage State-wide pests and effectively allocate resources," Mr Mazza said.

"As the auditor general declared, it is vital that entities work together to effectively manage pests to protect WA's natural heritage and agricultural viability."

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