

NORTHERN SLOPES RURAL LANDS PROTECTION BOARD

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To: The Chair, Deputy Chair and Honorable Members of the Committee
Representing the Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry for the Inquiry Into The
Impact on Agriculture of Pest Animals.

Comments on Terms of Reference:

1. Feral Pigs raise issues such as:

- ◆ Economic damage to crop and pasture
- ◆ Disease spreading capabilities
- ◆ Damage to soil structure i.e. erosion
- ◆ Economic damage of fence lines
- ◆ Ability to survive and thrive in vast contrast of conditions and their roamability (ability to travel long distances through all types of terrain)
- ◆ Predation of native fauna
- ◆ Destruction of native flora

Foxes raise issues such as:

- ◆ Economic damage to the nations sheep flock (the killing of lambs)
- ◆ Predation of native fauna
- ◆ Control of the fox, by groups of landholders, is hampered by non sheep producers lack of desirability to cooperate in baiting programs

Australian and State Government processes can be better linked for more coordinated management across state boundaries if:

- ◆ Uniform regulations for all control programs are in place throughout each state
- ◆ Federal Funding targets known hot spots of pest animals with the organising body having jurisdiction to work in all states

2. *To consider the approaches to pest animal issues across all relevant jurisdictions:*

To answer your 3rd dot point: Eradication of Infestations-

- ◆ Money needs to be forthcoming into areas. The largest would be a Federal Allocation for the control of Feral Pigs via Aerial Control Measures. Rural Lands Protection Boards have at their disposal fully trained, well-equipped personnel for aerial culling of feral pigs. These personnel are largely under utilised due to the exorbitant cost of helicopter hire.

Somewhere, somehow Federal Funds through either military or private helicopters need to be deployed in hot spots throughout our nation. The only way feral pigs can be

controlled when in large numbers in certain parts of our country is to go in big and hard. For this type of control, dollars are needed and will be required ongoing for a minimum of 3 years. The economic damage that feral pig creates throughout agriculture will offset the monies required to run such campaign. Only high-density pig population areas would be targeted and as mentioned before the only real expense for the Government is helicopter hire. Throughout NSW infrastructure is already available to carry out programs.

3. *Consider the adequacy of State Government expenditure on pest animal control in the context of other conservation and natural resource management priorities, with particular reference to National Parks.*

To answer this question, more information on State Government Expenditure needs to be at our disposal. However I will give a brief overview of our thoughts:-

Having worked closely with National Parks & Wildlife Service in relation to pest animal control I believe their budget to be adequate. State Government funding of pest animal control within other departments i.e. State Forest and Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (D.I.P.N.R.) controlled Crown Lands seems to be a long long way from adequate.

Our thoughts are this:

- ◆ All fox baits within NSW to be handed out free of charge by Rural Lands Protection Boards (RLPBs) (to be funded by Government). Free baits would be a great enticement for landholders without any real need for controlling foxes to participate in Group Baiting. It would be a small cost on a large scale problem.
- ◆ If Government could make available to RLPBs throughout the State one or possibly two helicopters with pilots, the RLPBs system would be able to organise, co-ordinate and run massive successful large scaled high density feral pig reduction campaigns.

Surely somewhere within Military Air Craft Training the need for pilots to attain proficiency in practical manoeuvres could be aligned with the Agricultural need of feral pig destruction.

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On behalf of
Northern Slopes Rural Lands Protection Board