



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Standing Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

MEDIA RELEASE

Issued: 27 January 2005

Chair: Alby Schultz MP

RESUMED INQUIRY

The Impact of Pest Animals on Agriculture

The House of Representatives Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Committee has resumed its inquiry into the impact of pest animals on agriculture in Australia.

The committee chair and the federal member for Hume in NSW, Alby Schultz, said the evidence presented to the committee before the federal election indicated that there were urgent issues relating to the impact of pest animals that must be addressed at a national level. The committee therefore wanted to complete the valuable work begun last year.

The committee began its inquiry in March 2004. Before the inquiry lapsed at the last election, the committee had received 83 submissions and conducted public hearings in Albury and in Canberra on the wild dog problem.

Mr Schultz said that one estimate suggested the annual cost of introduced vertebrate pests to the Australian economy was some \$720 million.

“This figure only covers the economic costs and certain estimates of environmental impact,” Mr Schultz said.

“It does not include the high social and emotional costs placed upon landholders and regional communities at the front line of the pest animal problem.

“The evidence received concerning the impact of pest animals indicates a wide range of impacts by a broad range of species. In particular, the control of wild dogs is a critical issue that must be urgently addressed in the areas affected. Other pest animal problems raised in evidence include foxes, pigs, cats, deer, horses, mice, goats, rabbits, carp and cane toads.

“The committee is yet to consider a program for the inquiry but it is likely to concentrate on expanding on the evidence already received by way of public hearings around the country.”

Further details about the inquiry, including terms of reference and submissions, can be obtained from the committee’s website at www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/primind/ or by contacting the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4500 or emailing primind.reps@aph.gov.au.

For media comment:

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