



# Investigating rural skills shortages and pest animal problems in WA

## *Donkey telemetry helps cull more than 80,000 feral donkeys in the West*

The House of Representatives agriculture committee returns to Western Australia this week to take further evidence on the pest animal problems it looked at last April, and to conduct its first public hearing for a new inquiry into rural skills training and research.

### ***New inquiry into rural skills training and research***

The first public hearing for the inquiry into rural skills training and research will be held on **20 July 2004** between **3.00pm and 5.45pm** at the **Duxton Hotel, Perth**.

The committee will hear from the WA Farmers Federation, the recently established Agricultural Research Western Australia (ARWA), WA Government, and the Agricultural Educators Association of Western Australia.

The committee chair, Alby Schultz (Member for Hume, NSW), said, "the committee is interested in discussing whether the demand for knowledge and skills in the agricultural sector is being met by educational opportunities and research programs. This is vital to ensure the sustainability of Australia's rural sector."

### ***Inquiry into pest animals***

The committee also plans to conduct a final series of public hearings and inspections in WA for the inquiry into pest animals, before drafting its report, which is expected to be tabled in federal parliament before the end of the year.

The committee will hear from the Pastoralists and Graziers Association, WA Government, and the WA Farmers Federation on **20 July 2005**, between **12.30pm and 2.45pm**, also at the **Duxton Hotel, Perth**.

The last public hearing for the pest animals inquiry will be held on **22 July 2005** between **9.30am and 12pm** at the **Tropicanna Inn, Broome**. The committee will take evidence from WA Department of Agriculture field officers on donkey telemetry, a culling technique where a "Judas" donkey fitted with a radio collar leads shooters to other feral donkeys, and also from the Kimberley Zone Control Authority representatives on general pest control activities.

Mr Schultz, said, "the committee is looking forward to finalising evidence to the pest animals inquiry by following-up some matters raised during its visit to WA earlier this year".

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

**For media comment:** please contact the committee chair, Alby Schultz MP, on 0428 693 553 or email [Alby.Schultz.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:Alby.Schultz.MP@aph.gov.au).

**For more information:** please contact the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4500 or 0401 718 890.