



Bombala Rural Lands Protection Board

106 Maybe Street
P.O. Box 23
Bombala NSW 2632
Phone: 02 64583055
Fax: 02 64583099

Inquiry into the Impact on Agriculture of Pest Animals

The Bombala Rural Lands Protection Board on behalf of its ratepayers wishes to make a submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry regarding their enquiry into the impact on agriculture of pest animal species.

Terms of Reference:

1. National significant pest animal issues.

- Different perceptions by different stakeholders, groups and individuals of the significance of various pest species is of concern.
Eg: agriculture stock industries versus conservation on the wild dog issue – some people, groups feel the retention of wild dogs in the wild provide a balance in nature of some native fauna species where agriculture considers them to have a large economic/social impact due to dog attacks on livestock. Feral deer are considered good sport for some recreational hunters and populations are conserved or domesticated deer let go into the wild population for further recreational shooting where agriculture, some urban people and other land managers consider them a nuisance and want them eradicated.
- Some of the above issues could be overcome by Regional plans for each specific pest species with co-operation understanding and input from all stakeholders and groups.
- On state boundaries there should be a co-ordinated interstate approach from all stakeholders on a local level but this will not work effectively if there is not common policy/legislation and adequate long term funding to carry out the pest animal work required (in this region we have an interstate pest animal working group involving from the State of Victoria – Dept of Primary Industries, Parks Victoria and from NSW – National Parks and Wildlife Service, State Forests, Landcare and Rural Lands Protection Boards which was formed to co-ordinate over the borders wild dog/fox and pig on ground works programs for the control and eradication of these species usually meeting twice a year.
- Authorities should take notice of on ground pest animal controllers and stakeholders and support their concepts on control and support with funding.
- Good access is needed in Park and Crown Land areas for adequate ground control of pest species when control methods are hindered by policy of the preferred



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control methods such as by helicopter for baiting, shooting or where dense canopy by vegetation prevents (access would also apply to wild fire management).

- We consider pest animal species of significance affecting this area at the moment are wild dogs, pigs, deer, foxes, goats and rabbits.
- Co-ordination of all pest species should take place at one time if possible providing funding is sufficient.
- Harbour reduction/harbour habitat should not be overlooked in any species control/eradication program and requires extra funding.
Eg: blackberries – pigs, goats, rabbits, foxes control.
- All stakeholders should have input on any policy, regulation or method changes regarding pest animal species.
- In NSW Rural Lands Boards should be sole control authority over all land tenure for all pest animal species with funding given to this authority from the crown occupier stakeholders (RLP Boards are the recognised pest control authority NSW).
All stakeholders would still have input into pest animal control for each species recognised as importance to each region/area.
This would lead to more efficient co-ordinated control if one authority did control over all the land tenure and occupancy. This would also apply to other states we feel.

2. Prevention of new pest animals becoming established.

- More regulation in the keeping of new exotic animals that may be introduced and education of potential problems they may cause if allowed to become feral in the wild. Eg: standard fencing/licences. High penalties if escape (cost rounding up or destruction).

Detection and Reporting

- Reporting in each state should be co-ordinated by only one authority in each state (this is warranted for exotic disease also)
- Data is needed for mapping incidences and density of pest species costings for control of each pest species, lost production to agriculture land and impacts on nature fauna and flora on all land tenure and social impacts.
This reporting and data is needed for good control and potential eradication and long term funding estimates for authorities and government.



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- Education to all people in Australia is the “KEY” to good detection and reporting systems.

Eradication of Infestations (new and high risk).

- Resources and funding should be number one priority with new species populations to try and eradicate them as soon as required.
- Also resources and funding should be number priority for high risk species populations where potential for disease is eminent.
- More and ongoing research is needed for more efficient and proficient control of pest species.

Reduction of the impact of established pest animal populations.

- Properly co-ordinated planning by all stakeholders (pest plans for each species) and ongoing consistent funding is needed to have any considerable long term impact on established pest animal populations.
- We must consider the economic impact of all pest animal species on agriculture (conservationists must realise this and work in with agriculture when preserving vulnerable/endangered species when pest animal control methods may have some impact on what they are endeavouring to protect) good pest animal control is the benefit of all, both agriculture and the environment.

3. Adequacy of State Government Expenditure

- More efficiency for each dollar spent with more efficient less costly control methods already proven and a better co-ordinated approach. Funding must be consistent and ongoing for efficient control over at 3-4 year periods – ad-hoc reactive funding is not efficient in the long term.
- Funding by some government stakeholders for pest animal control is very low and they do not consider important and this varies from area or region and is sometimes dependent on the district or area managers desire for pest animal control as opposed to other conservation and natural resource management priorities – this should be more uniform within areas/regions with the same pest animal problems.



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4. Scope for Industry Groups and R & D corporations to improve their response to Landholder concerns about pest animals.

- Must support and fund research into new control methods and they must be practical and cost effective.
- There must be national co-ordination by industry groups and R & D Corporations where there is a common landholder concern about pest animals. (everyone should be united).
- More research is needed into sensitive issues with “1080” poison opposed to native fauna especially the spotted tail quoll issue. - there is little science really available on each side of the argument re surface baiting with 1080 – all affected stakeholders and government should finance common research and alternatives. Eg: at the moment it appears mainly that only the sheep & wool industry is funding research into an alternative for “1080” poison.
- More research and funding is needed in the distribution of protected vulnerable/endangered plant and animal species throughout Australia so conventional cost effective control methods can be used in areas where they do not exist. – so often large areas are locked up without any true knowledge if any species are present or not – the science must be precise.
- Government (both Federal and State) must listen to landholder concerns because they are being affected both financially and in some cases emotionally.

5. Promote community understanding of and involvement in pest animals and their management.

- Good pest animal management is in the best interest of agriculture, conservation and environment and benefits the whole country.
- Good research and known findings should be widely published.
- Promotion should be through all media outlets (television, radio & newspapers) as well as magazines, other printed articles and literature as well as on websites.
- Balanced education through schools and tertiary institutions.
- Before any good publicity is given all stakeholders should be consulted and advised to ensure a balanced view.



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- Human health and disease (animal, human and exotic) problems associated with pest animals species should be highlighted, as well people should contain domestic animals at all times and not allow them to become established in the wild or cause damage to livestock or the environment. Eg: goats, pigs deer, pet and working dogs.
 - Publicity should be consistent and of a good simple education standard.
 - ***Further comment:***
There is increasing concern in this area and others of the impacts on agriculture and the environment of some native fauna and birds which have increased significantly over the last few years. (such being wombats kangaroo's and sulphur crested cockatoos.
 - Domestic roaming dogs are becoming a concern in many areas attacking livestock, especially close settled areas near towns and within and around rural subdivisions.

The Bombala Rural Lands Protection Board thanks your standing committee for being able to have input into this inquiry.

Regards,
Bombala RLPB
Contact: Mandi Stevenson
Administrative Officer
or Ranger Graham Hillyer
Phone: 02 6458 3055
Fax: 02 6458 3099
Email: bomrlpb@bigpond.com