



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Standing Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

**MEDIA ALERT**

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Chair: Alby Schultz MP

# The Impact of Pest Animals on Agriculture

## Regulations hamper resolution of pest animal problems

The House of Representatives Agriculture Committee has been told that government regulations are hampering resolution of pest animal issues in Western Australia.

The House of Representatives Agriculture Committee visited Western Australia on 11 and 12 April, conducting a public hearing and inspections in relation to its inquiry into the impact of pest animals on agriculture.

On 12 April, the committee visited Yuin property owned by the Foulkes-Taylor family. The state barrier fence, which runs through the Foulkes-Taylor's property, prevents thousands of emus from entering agricultural lands beyond the fence. The committee was told that landholders should be able to harvest emus from the wild, especially around the time of a population explosion. Currently, fencing is the only means of controlling the spread of emus, because they are a protected species.

Landholders also want to be able to use meat from kangaroos shot locally as bait for wild dogs. Currently, once the annual kangaroo quota has been filled, kangaroos are shot and their carcasses left to rot, while farmers are required to import bait meat from outside the state.

Committee chair, Mr Alby Schultz, said, "The committee is very interested in exploring the possibility of using native pest animals as a resource. It is certainly a problem when kangaroos and emus are in excessive numbers and farmers are prevented from using them as a means of supplementing their income.

"The committee heard similar evidence in Tasmania about problems with utilising wallabies and possums as a resource. Resolving these problems will play an integral part in assisting landowners to better manage the pest animal problems on their land."

The committee also held discussions with pastoralists in Leonora. The committee heard evidence about the critical need for funding in the area, particularly to employ doggers to manage the wild dog problem which has had a major impact on the sheep industry in the area.

"Wild dogs have had a devastating effect on pastoralists in the Leonora region," said Alby Schultz. "The sheep industry up there has been virtually destroyed by dogs to the extent that pastoralists are now turning to cattle. However, a large number of calves are also lost to dogs.

"Eagles are also a serious problem for pastoralists running sheep on their properties. However, they are almost powerless to deal with the eagles because they are a protected species."

A public hearing was held in Perth on 11 April. The committee took evidence from the Conservation Council of Western Australia and representatives from the Western Australian government.

**For media comment:**

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**For background information:**

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