

QUESTION ON NOTICE
No. 103
Asked on Thursday, 14 February 2008

MS LEE LONG asked the Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries (MR MULHERIN)-

QUESTION:

With reference to the recent discovery of the pest fish species Tilapia in a tributary of the Walsh River—

What is being done to eliminate this infestation to prevent its spread into the Gulf?

ANSWER:

Pest fish species such as Tilapia are extremely difficult to eradicate once established in flowing waterways like those encountered in the Mitchell River catchment and its tributaries like the Walsh River and Eureka Creek.

The Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries has implemented a response strategy to address the recent detection of Tilapia in Eureka Creek and the potential for their spread into the Walsh River and other Mitchell River catchment tributaries.

This strategy incorporates long term Tilapia control options including the possible use of the fish poison Rotenone once wet season flows have subsided and provided the risk to the surrounding ecosystem and native fish species is low.

Rotenone may only be applied to sections of Eureka Creek that could be successfully isolated from the main water flow and where native fish mortalities could be minimised.

Efforts have already been made to control the Tilapia population via manual removal and with the assistance of electro-fishing equipment.

Pest fish surveillance is ongoing throughout Eureka Creek and the Walsh River region and will continue through until May 2008.

Long-term pest fish surveillance in the Mitchell River catchment and tributaries will continue beyond May 2008 as part of the Gulf Region Pest Fish Vulnerable Catchments Program.

Pest fish education in the region has been increased and educational material has been distributed with the assistance of stakeholders to residents, schools and various other outlets to raise the awareness of pest species such as tilapia.