

QUESTION ON NOTICE
No. 1069
Asked on 1 September 2009

MR MCLINDON asked the Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland (MR MULHERIN)-

QUESTION:

Will the Minister review the proposal to abolish the Darling Downs-Moreton Rabbit Board given it is entirely self-sufficient, conducting successful operations without State Government funding and the fact that more than 150km of the rabbit proof fence is on state and federal owned land?

ANSWER:

No. The Government supports the recommendation from the Review of Government Boards, Committees and Statutory Authorities to abolish the Darling Downs Moreton Rabbit Board in its current form.

It is important to note that this review did not make judgements in relation to the value of the work being undertaken by the Darling Downs Rabbit Board but rather dealt with the question of whether there is a need for this body to continue to be a statutory body, with board appointments approved by the Governor-in-Council.

A more targeted review of the pest animal barrier fences, including the fence maintained by the Darling Downs Moreton Rabbit Board, has recently been completed by Hyder Consulting. Although the Hyder Report recommends that the Darling Downs Moreton Rabbit Board be abolished, it does not recommend that the Darling Downs Moreton Rabbit Fence be abandoned.

The Report recommends that the rabbit fence and the wild dog barrier and check fences are retained and managed collectively by a single organisation. The Report contains an in-depth economic benefit:cost analysis of the fences that leads to the recommendation that the fences not be abandoned and that efficiencies can be gained through economies of scale.

Consultation with stakeholders on the recommendations of the Hyder Report has been completed and Biosecurity Queensland is currently reviewing the responses. The government will subsequently develop a number of options for the future management of the barrier fences.

No changes will be made to the current governance arrangements for the Darling Downs Moreton Rabbit Board until the Hyder Report consultation has been completed, and the Government has considered both the review recommendations and the results of the stakeholder consultation.