

QUESTION ON NOTICE
No. 757
Asked on 29 October 2013

MR HOLSWICH asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (MR McVEIGH)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister outline the steps the government is taking to deal with feral animals, particularly feral dogs, with particular reference to areas of land surrounding Lakes Samsonvale and Kurwongbah?

ANSWER:

Wild dogs, like feral cats, pigs and foxes, are declared pests under Queensland legislation which means that local governments must manage the species in their local government area and landholders must take reasonable steps to control the species on their land.

The Queensland Government is committed to minimising the impact of feral animals. As a sign of this commitment, in June this year the Government hosted a Pest Animal Summit in Toowoomba which was attended by a range of organisations and individuals including landholders, industry, conservation and land management. Even some of the banks who would potentially provide finance to landholders for exclusion fencing were in attendance. Information from the summit will guide the development of a framework to deal with particular feral animal issues.

I have also taken direct action to combat the impacts of wild dogs. The employment of five wild dog coordinators directly assists local government and landholders to manage wild dog impacts. These officers have had significant success in fostering participation in wild dog control activities.

Last year, I reinvigorated the Queensland Dog Offensive Group, or QDOG, which has representation from industry and local government. This group of dedicated representatives works with local governments and landholders to develop landholder-led feral animal management.

I have also cut the red tape that was hindering landholders from participating fully in wild dog control by allowing the use of meat for baiting that is not certified for human consumption and by lessening the restrictions on the use of 1080. Producers carrying out baiting activities now have the ability to store commercial baits and local governments may now allow baiting without the landholder needing to seek neighbour approval.

Frontline Service Officers from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) provide leadership and assist co-ordination for feral animal management in Queensland. They provide technical advice, supply 1080 for use in state-wide baiting programs and train authorised 1080 users. Significant success has been achieved in areas where landholders have formed local committees to manage wild dog control in their local areas.

DAFF also has a long history of research into better management techniques for feral animal control and it is currently leading a project to investigate wild dog ecology and control in urban and peri-urban areas. In the future this work will be relevant in determining control programs in closely settled areas across the State.

I have recently received correspondence from the Moreton Bay Regional Council on the issue of wild dogs. The predominantly urban and peri-urban nature of the Moreton Bay Regional Council area requires a different approach to wild dog control. I am advised that council runs an intensive wild dog management program that includes trapping extensively and baiting in the less populated areas.

The South East Queensland Water Board, or SEQ Water, also manages land in that area and I am advised that they continually monitor and control pest animals. However, the combination of urban land abutting water reserve makes control operations more difficult. Residents should report wild dog activity to the Moreton Bay Regional Council or SEQ Water.