

MAIN ROADS — DECLARED PESTS

**1306. Hon COLIN de GRUSSA to the Minister for Agriculture and Food:**

I refer to questions without notice 1194 and 1241 to the Minister for Transport.

- (1) In view of the Minister for Transport's response, has the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development initiated any investigations into potential breaches by Main Roads Western Australia of the Biosecurity and Agricultural Management Act 2007 related to the control of declared pests within MRWA-controlled road reserves in the Esperance region?
- (2) Can the minister confirm that the current review of the BAM act includes increased statutory and regulatory mechanisms of accountability for state government agencies specific to the control of declared pests and weeds on land under their control?

**Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:**

I thank the member for the question. I note that rabbits move around, so I am not quite sure why the member is so convinced that the rabbits are breeding on the roads and not on the farms adjoining them. It is an interesting idea.

- (1) No investigations have been initiated at this time. It should be understood that breeding conditions for rabbits have been ideal through winter and spring, resulting in higher populations in Esperance, and also elsewhere. DPIRD has released biological control in population hotspots five times over recent months. DPIRD has supported the Shire of Esperance and the Tjaltjraak Aboriginal rangers to also release biocontrol on lands under their management. Sampling has confirmed that the biological control agent is causing mortality in rabbits. Rabbits are not currently a priority pest of the Esperance Biosecurity Association but could be something it takes up if it has community and stakeholder support.
- (2) As part of the statutory review of the BAM act, I have appointed an independent panel to conduct a review that will investigate and report on the operation and effectiveness of the act, the adequacy of penalties and any other matters of significance. Under the BAM act, all land managers, including the state government, have a duty to manage declared pests on their land. Specific provisions exist relating to the performance of public authorities in relation to declared pest control. The management of widespread and established pests across all land tenures is being considered as part of the review.