

RECOGNISED BIOSECURITY GROUPS — DECLARED PESTS

1031. Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE to the Minister for Agriculture and Food:

I ask this question on behalf of Hon Colin de Grussa, who is away from the chamber on urgent parliamentary business. I refer to the oversight of recognised biosecurity groups by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and the setting of the declared pest rate.

- (1) Which specific directorate or branch of DPIRD has direct responsibility for RBGs?
- (2) On how many occasions has the minister intervened in the setting of the declared pest rate so as to limit the amount of funding available to the RBG; and can the minister list those occasions?
- (3) In the event that the declared pest rate is effectively capped by the minister, what financial assistance is available to RBGs to make up any shortfall in funding caused by the cap?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:

I thank the member for the question.

- (1) The department's biosecurity directorate manages the compliance and governance arrangements of recognised biosecurity groups as well as the administration of the declared pest account.
- (2)–(3) I do not accept the premise of the member's question. As the minister, I am responsible for the determination of the rate under section 130(1) of the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007. Determination is informed by RBGs' proposed operational plans, advice from DPIRD and the outcomes of consultation.

Hon Martin Aldridge interjected.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: I have been exercising my responsibility under section 130(1). The responsibility in the legislation is clearly the responsibility of the minister.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: I know the idea of a minister actually doing their job is pretty foreign to the people on the other side, but we actually take it seriously. We look at the desires of the RBGs. If it had ever been the plan that the RBGs just get whatever they want, it would have been written in the legislation like that. We have the RBGs, we have the advice from the department and then we have the result of the consultation, and the minister's job is then to make a determination, as set out in the legislation.