

RECOGNISED BIOSECURITY GROUPS — OPERATIONAL PLANS — BOYUP BROOK

1336. Hon COLIN de GRUSSA to the Minister for Agriculture and Food:

I refer to the minister's response to part (5) of question without notice 1171. Given the level of community objection demonstrated through petition 160 on the biosecurity levy imposed on residents of Boyup Brook, tabled in the Legislative Council, the low rate of response from the Boyup Brook shire area of 1.2 per cent of landowners, and that 83 per cent of respondents opposed the levy, can the minister outline how the requirement to demonstrate community support has been met in respect of the levy imposed on landowners in the Shire of Boyup Brook?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:

I thank the member for the question. I acknowledge that the Boyup Brook shire has been running a war of attrition against Blackwood Biosecurity Inc. I think what it has been doing is quite disgraceful. On the occasions that we have written to those landowners in the Boyup Brook shire, we have had very low response rates. Indeed, this year when we ran the general advertisements in the local newspaper we had a total of two responses. We are aware that the shire has been actively urging people not to pay their rates, refusing to provide the rating detail and causing the leadership of this group, who are incredibly dedicated individuals, volunteers, to reach the end of their tether. Fantastic work has been done. The BBI was set up under the previous government and it has done some extraordinary work and had success with the projects it has run. In the past two years it removed 1 500 foxes. It has held very successful fox hunts and has been able to get rid of 1 500 foxes. In the past 18 months it has removed 530 feral pigs.

The government will consider this and will seek to engage with the community. We are not seeing any of this come out from the correspondence and advertisements, but we acknowledge that the shire president and former shire president, who has been putting his petitions in Mitre 10 and wording everyone up to sign them, is having what no doubt is his desired impact, which is to destroy what has been a very, very successful organisation since 2014. We will certainly consider the petition.