

RECOGNISED BIOSECURITY GROUPS — OPERATIONAL PLANS

**1171. Hon COLIN de GRUSSA to the Minister for Agriculture and Food:**

I refer to the minister's statement to the house on 20 October 2020 regarding recognised biosecurity groups' operational plans.

- (1) Has the government made any assessment on what percentage of RBG activities are related to biosecurity issues that can be linked to the lack of pest and weed control on land under the management, control or ownership of the state government?
- (2) If yes to (1), what was the outcome of that assessment?
- (3) If no to (1), why not, given that the government has imposed a compulsory levy on landowners, most of whom manage the control of pests and weeds on their own properties?
- (4) How many comments were received from stakeholders in favour of the establishment of declared pest rates of any RBGs established in 2020?
- (5) What is the threshold of support required in order to implement a declared pest rate?

**Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:**

I thank the member for the question.

- (1)–(2) We do not accept the basic premise of that question. Therefore, of course, there has been no assessment because the supposition is not well founded. I comment that this really continues an arrangement that has been in place for a long time.
- (3) Our government, like previous governments, holds the view that for effective management of established declared pests and weeds, a cross-tenure, coordinated community approach is required.  
  
As the member would be aware, the state government contributes a matching dollar-for-dollar amount to any funds raised by the declared pest rate. The intent of this matching rate is to facilitate a whole-of-landscape approach, noting that the declared pest rate does not replace an individual landholder's responsibility to control declared pests on their own property. The intent of the recognised biosecurity group model is to provide a coordinated approach and drive the principle of shared responsibility.  
  
I would also add, member, that it is not only via the matching funding to the controlled pest rate that the department, or indeed the government as a whole, does work in relation to these pests, be they weeds or animals.
- (4) The only group that had a rate established for the first time in 2020 was the Midlands Recognised Biosecurity Group. Of the 957 landholders consulted in the MRBG operational area, there were 13 responses—one supporting, seven not supporting and five neutral. This year I discontinued the declared pest rate in Carnarvon, as I judged a significant percentage of the levy payers to be opposed to the levy.
- (5) Recognised biosecurity groups are required to demonstrate community support for determining a rate chargeable for a financial year prior to the minister giving consideration to formally consulting on, and any subsequent raising of, a rate under the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007.