



**Hon Peter Foster MLC**

Chair

Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs

18-32 Parliament Place

West Perth WA 6005

## Shire of Boyup Brook

Dear Mr Foster,

**RE: Petition No. 004 – Biosecurity levy imposed on the residents of Bridgetown-Greenbushes**

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to statements made by the Minister for Regional Development; Agriculture and Food; Hydrogen Industry, the Hon Alannah McTiernan MLC regarding the Shire of Boyup Brook and activities purported to have been held by the Blackwood Biosecurity Inc. within the Shire of Boyup Brook.

The Minister is correct in stating that the Shire of Boyup Brook has opposed the introduction of a Biosecurity levy in the Boyup Brook Shire. For the record, the Shire of Boyup Brook has opposed, and continues to oppose, the imposition of a Recognised Biosecurity Group (RBG) and Biosecurity levy on the Boyup Brook community on the basis that it has been done without proper community consultation. The Shire has taken a position of opposition in response to concerns raised by many members of its local community and in doing so, believes that it has acted on the community's behalf in this matter. The Shire's role is to represent its community and it continues to oppose the introduction of the RBG (BBI) AND the levy on the basis that the RBG was introduced without consultation with either the Shire of Boyup Brook or its residents/rate payers.

However, the Minister incorrectly states that the Shire of Boyup Brook has refused to meet with the Blackwood Biosecurity Inc. (BBI). In fact, several meetings have occurred between representatives of the BBI and the Shire, including a meeting between the BBI Chair, representatives from DPIRD and the Shire CEO late last year. The Shire President also, on several occasions, discussed the Shire's concerns regarding the RBG and levy with the BBI Chair. Several Shire Councillors most recently attended the BBI 2019/2020 Annual General Meeting last week.

In relation to events and support to the BBI, we make the Standing Committee aware that the Rylington Park Institute for Training and Research is owned by the Shire of Boyup Brook and is the location of six of the events that are listed in the Minister's attachment of BBI organised events. Rylington Park was leased to the Rylington Park Management Committee Inc. (RPMCI) until June 2020 and has since been under direct control of the Shire. The Shire was represented on the RPMCI board and, while it was opposed to introduction of the RBG and the levy, the Shire did not discourage the BBI from taking part in RPMCI activities on Rylington Park.

Several events that are listed by the Minister were not organised by BBI and had little or no involvement from the BBI group. The Rylington Park Ladies Day events (No 8) and Boyup Brook Fox shoots (No 15) are organised by Rylington Park and other members of the Boyup Brook Community. While BBI members may have attended the events BBI played no role in organising the events, nor were they part of the formal proceedings.

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At the 2019/2020 Annual General Meeting of the BBI held 02/09/2021, during the Treasurer's Report, the Treasurer made a statement that; *"BBI had not sought to include and did not want the Shire of Boyup Brook (and West Arthur Shire) included in its area of operation. However, BBI had included the Shire of Boyup Brook into its area of operation in response to pressure from the State Government through the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development."* The Interim Chairman has since confirmed that this statement will be included in the formal minutes of the meeting. Unfortunately, the minutes of this meeting will not be available until early next week. However, the Interim Chair will be able to confirm this for the Standing Committee that this statement will be included in the minutes.

The 2020/2021 AGM is scheduled to be held 25/11/2021. However, BBI had not done a budget for this year prior to the DPIRD advertising for community consultation on the DPR (levy). The failure to release details of a budget and the very public breakdown of the BBI leadership (including the animal cruelty charges faced by two employees of BBI) are events characteristic of the actions of the BBI and DPIRD, namely an ongoing lack of transparency and consultation. The timing of these events is likely to have led to the corresponding lack of consultation **response** with a popular belief in the Boyup Brook community that this particular RBG has been a spectacular failure and its role is finished.

The Shire of Boyup Brook has written to the Minister several times to make her aware of the Boyup Brook community's concerns and requests that the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs supports the Petition No. 004.

Regards

Dale Putland  
Chief Executive Officer

Richard Walker  
Shire President

9 September 2021