

The Wrap

Wild dog carnage continues

Six years after a parliamentary inquiry, wild dogs still plague rural Australia.

The House of Representatives has supported a motion moved by Nationals MP Darren Chester which calls for a national approach to tackle the numbers of wild dogs doing damage in rural Australia.

The Member for Gippsland in Victoria told parliament one of his reasons for moving the motion was to highlight to city dwellers how devastating wild dogs can be.

His motion called on the House to recognise the economic and environmental impact wild dogs have on rural industries and native wildlife.

It also called for acknowledgement of a need for national coordination across all governments of the management of wild dog numbers. The management of wild pests is primarily the responsibility of state and territory governments.

Mr Chester said the devastation wreaked by wild dogs on the agricultural sector added up to about \$60 million a year and piled huge amounts of stress on farmers trying to protect their livestock.

“There are graphic accounts of dogs emerging particularly from sections of public land and preying on young lambs,” he said.

“It’s obvious just from talking to these people the stress that they are facing when they encounter slaughter of stock, on an almost daily basis on many occasions.”

Tasmanian MP Dick Adams was part of an inquiry held in 2005 into wild pests which examined the use of 1080 poison.

He said he believed that recreational shooters can also play a role in keeping numbers under control.

“Hunting has been controversial in the past but I believe the sporting shooters of Australia are working to spread a more educated and balanced message about the value of hunting as a conservation tool as well as a fast and humane way of dispatching pest species.”

New South Wales MP Janelle Saffin said wild dogs have lost their fear of people.

“Some people have put in control measures and some people have the guard animals, but the predation is increasing in the day time,” she said.

In 2005 a House of Representatives committee report into the impact of pest animals made 47 recommendations for improving the management of pest species such as foxes and wild dogs.

It urged the then government to reconsider its commitment to phasing out the use of 1080 poison and to make access to the poison easier for landholders.

It also wanted the NSW and Victorian governments to remove bans on aerial baiting and an improved national approach to the consistency of pest animal legislation across the country. And it made recommendations to ensure the humane treatment of pest animals.

However a formal government response has yet to be presented to parliament. The report is available at: www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/arff/reports.htm •



DOG ATTACK: Action needed on wild dogs