

Minister for Primary Industries and Water
Minister for Veterans' Affairs

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Mr Marcus Vermey MP
Member for Clark
Email: HAProcedure@parliament.tas.gov.au

21 AUG 2026

Dear Mr Vermey

Marcus,

In Parliament on 12 August 2026, you asked the following question on behalf of your constituents:

Many constituents in my electorate have raised concerns about the increasing number of rabbits. The numbers are damaging, they're causing farms to have issues with pasture and native vegetation. I've read that calicivirus is becoming less effective at controlling rabbits in parts of Australia, which has led to many landlords to question long-term effectiveness of the current control measures. What is the Government doing to ensure effective biological control options remain available? And how is it supporting integrated rabbit management to protect agricultural productivity and the environment across Tasmania?

Firstly, thank you for the question on behalf of your constituents. I acknowledge the concerns being raised by landowners about increasing rabbit numbers and the impact they are having on agricultural productivity, infrastructure and our natural environment. Rabbits are notoriously difficult to manage, and calicivirus is an important tool, but it is not a silver bullet. Biological controls can become less effective over time as immunity and resistance build up in rabbit populations.

The Tasmanian Government is co-investing in a \$3.6 million national partnership to combat growing rabbit numbers across our communities. The funding will see the Centre for Invasive Species Solutions and Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) work with state and territory governments to research new biocontrol agents.

This is a three-year national project and is the first phase of a longer-term program aimed at developing a new RHDV variant as a biological control agent for rabbits.

In the meantime, we are continuing to use the biological control tools available to us. Following favourable conditions in autumn, Biosecurity Tasmania released calicivirus at 82 locations across Tasmania between 13 March and 15 May 2026, targeting areas where rabbits were having the greatest impacts.

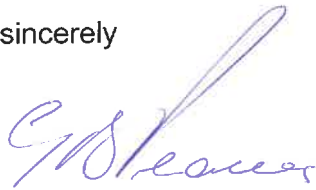
Importantly, effective rabbit management requires an integrated approach. Landowners are encouraged to combine calicivirus with other control measures, including baiting, shooting, trapping, warren destruction, fumigation, harbour removal and exclusion fencing. Biosecurity Tasmania can also work directly with landowners and stakeholders to provide advice on integrated pest management and strategies to bring rabbit populations down.

Ultimately, protecting Tasmania's agricultural productivity and environment from rabbits requires sustained effort and cooperation between landowners, councils, government and the community.

The Government will continue to support both the practical control measures available now and the research needed to ensure we have effective biological control options into the future.

Thank you again for raising this matter on behalf of your constituents.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G. Pearce', with a large, sweeping flourish above the name.

Hon Gavin Pearce MP
Minister for Primary Industries and Water