

Minister for Primary Industries and Water
Minister for Hospitality and Small Business
Minister for Racing

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Mark Shelton MP
Member for Lyons
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13 FEB 2025

Dear Mr Shelton *Mark*

Thank you for your constituency question regarding rabbit management in Lyons.

I know many farmers are battling with rabbits in large numbers. I am also hearing of increased reports of damage in urban areas.

The nation-wide shortage last year of rabbit haemorrhagic disease, known as calicivirus, has not helped, a matter which I was the only Minister to raise among my state and federal colleagues at the Agricultural Ministers' Meeting last July.

The Tasmanian Government has now worked to secure a supply of calicivirus and we are hoping to start releasing it at the end of February or early March if drying off continues. Rain could potentially delay the start of distribution efforts, but I know Biosecurity Tasmania is carefully monitoring the conditions so we can get things going.

Releasing calicivirus at the wrong time can infect rabbits less than 12 weeks old which are naturally immune, and risks boosting immunity within rabbit populations longer-term.

Our biosecurity officers are also out talking to people in the community and identifying places which will be suitable for release of the virus.

Around 140 release sites across the State have been identified and, importantly, calicivirus can be released in town areas. Areas in Lyons identified for release include Campbell Town, Oatlands, Ross and Triabunna.

Other successful measures for rabbit control include shooting, trapping and destruction of burrows.

The Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania's website contains useful information for gardeners at nre.tas.gov.au/invasive-species/invasive-animals/invasive-mammals/european-rabbits

You can also reach out to my office at anytime to discuss rabbit control. Please contact Caroline Atkinson on 0488 479 054 for further information.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Jane Howlett', written in a cursive style.

Hon Jane Howlett MP
Minister for Primary Industries and Water