

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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14 MAR 2025

Dear Mr. Shelton

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark".

Thank you for your constituency question regarding the release of calicivirus and further rabbit management controls available. I know Tasmanians have been battling with rabbits in huge numbers this year.

Biosecurity Tasmania undertakes rabbit control using calicivirus (RHDV1) when conditions are suitable for a successful release, as recommended by pet management experts.

In good news, Biosecurity Tasmania commenced its planned release of calicivirus to control rabbit populations, starting in the in the Westbury/Exton region on 28th February 2025, with many more areas to follow. You can check the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania's website for updates on future releases here: [nre.tas.gov.au/rabbits](http://nre.tas.gov.au/rabbits)

You will note that as of 10 March 2025, the following sites have had releases in your Electorate: Westbury, Exton, Osmaston, Derwent Valley, Granton, Bagdad, Mangalore, Pontville, Brighton, Mole Creek, with more to be released week beginning 10 March in Longford, Cressy, Campbell Town and Deloraine.

Calicivirus is specific to rabbits and there is no risk of calicivirus transferring to other animals or humans. Calicivirus releases are restricted to trained officers from the Department, who will monitor conditions to determine when a calicivirus release will be most effective.

Rabbits exposed to calicivirus are likely to die, however, some exposed rabbits will live a full life and breed as normal, increasing the likelihood of resistance in that rabbit population.

Landowners are responsible for cleaning up carcasses on their property – use gloves and wash hands afterwards. Landowners can support the spread of biological control agents by allowing rabbit carcasses to remain in the environment. You can also check with local council about disposal in municipal waste bins.

Regarding other approaches to manage rabbits, for a calicivirus release to be as effective as possible, it is recommended that other control options are used in conjunction with calicivirus. An Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach is the most effective and cost-efficient method of containing wild rabbit populations.

In the case of rabbits, an Integrated Pest Management Plan requires the use of more than one control technique in rapid succession. Control options include warren and habitat removal, poisoning, fencing and shooting. The best time to do this is generally early autumn when breeding has generally stopped because the grass, they feed on has dried off.

The Department of Natural Resources and Environment (NRE Tas) is also enabling more pest control businesses statewide to safely access and use Pindone, an anticoagulant product.

It is also working with local Councils and pest controllers to ensure they can access the tools available and are providing further communication and information to communities. For more information about the use of rabbit control methods go to [nre.tas.gov.au/rabbits](http://nre.tas.gov.au/rabbits)

Successful rabbit control depends on a large degree of cooperation between landowners, local and state governments, and we appreciate the community cooperation to tackle this problem.

I hope this information is of use.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jane Howlett', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Hon Jane Howlett MP  
**Minister for Primary Industries and Water**