

Minister for Primary Industries and Water
Minister for Racing

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Mr Rob Fairs MP
Liberal Member for Bass
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3 OCT 2024

Dear Mr Fairs

Rob

Response to Constituency Question:

Question:

Weeds and pests really worry some of my constituents who have farms or crops. They are concerned about the biosecurity system and how we can safeguard locally against biosecurity threats, and they worry about things like honey mites, having seen the cost of something like fruit fly. What is the government doing about pests and weeds in general, and more specifically, is it taking any steps to prevent our farmers from threats that come from local sources, like other properties or trucks or transport?

Answer:

Tasmania is internationally renowned for producing premium produce that is both of a high standard but also safe from pests and diseases.

While biosecurity is a shared responsibility, through our 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future we have committed to maintaining a strong biosecurity system. This is why the Tasmanian Government's 2024-25 Budget includes almost \$13 million for biosecurity.

This investment million demonstrates our commitment to protecting our borders and managing risks from pest and disease incursions like Varroa Mite and fruit fly, safeguard animal welfare and manage risks to primary industries. Our investments include:

- \$7.9 million boost for frontline biosecurity services;

- \$3 million over four years to strengthen biosecurity resources and expertise;
- \$1.2 million over three years for additional biosecurity officers;
- \$500,000 over four years to support TasFarmers to continue enhancing on-farm biosecurity engagement; and
- \$300,000 annually over three years to support industry groups, such as Fruit Growers Tasmania, to maintain community awareness.

Through the recently announced funding, two new Senior Biosecurity Inspectors, two Senior Biosecurity Officers and a Stakeholder Engagement Officer will be employed for animal welfare services. Our investments also assist in implementing the recommendations of the Centre of Excellence for Biosecurity Risk Analysis, who conducted an independent review of four of our biosecurity pathways to assess our effectiveness in mitigating biosecurity risks.

These investments are on top of those already made by the Tasmanian Government including the Detector Dog Unit Improvement Plan, which featured bred-for-purpose detector dogs, kennel infrastructure upgrades and nationally recognised training for our handlers.

We also importantly invest to help reduce local and transport related biosecurity threats, including from thousands of truck movements carrying hundreds of thousands animals within Tasmania each year. The Tasmanian State Government recently provided funding to the Agriclean Powranna Biosecurity Truck Wash to help reduce livestock waste hitting Tasmanian roads and spreading weeds and diseases.

The Government also continues to work with key stakeholder such as the honey sector on key issues such as varroa mite, with a Tasmanian Action Plan for Varroa Mite (2024-2034). The Action Plan sets a framework of activities for the Tasmanian Government beekeepers (commercial and recreational) and pollination reliant cropping sectors to minimise the risk of entry of varroa mite into the State, while also preparing to respond if it does.

We continue to invest in our critical biosecurity systems through our 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future to maintain a strong biosecurity system now and into the future.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jane Howlett', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Hon Jane Howlett MP
Minister for Primary Industries and Water