

MEDIA STATEMENT



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AUDITOR GENERAL IDENTIFIES GAPS IN MANAGING PLANT AND ANIMAL PESTS ACROSS THE STATE

In the Auditor General's latest report tabled in Parliament today, Auditor General Colin Murphy found that gaps in the state-wide management framework increased the risk that established pests would spread and have a growing impact on agriculture, environment, social amenity and public health.

Mr Murphy said that prevention of new pests has been a key focus for the Department of Agriculture and Food (DAFWA) since the introduction of the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007 (BAM Act).

"The good news is that no new pests have become established in the state since the arrival of the Cane Toad in 2009."

"However, eighty per cent of declared pests are already established in the state and these need to be effectively managed to minimise the spread and reduce their impact."

To meet this challenge the BAM Act envisages a collaborative approach between DAFWA, other government agencies and the thousands of landholders who are responsible for pest control.

"However, current practice falls well short of this collaborative approach which has left gaps in how established pests are being managed state-wide."

"We also found that we could not get an accurate picture of the spread of established pests, whether their impact is growing, why DAFWA is spending money on some pests and not on others, and which of the current control programs are most effective."

"From the landholder's perspective, the drop in monitoring and enforcement from DAFWA reduces the incentive for landholders to meet their responsibilities."

"This report recommends a range of measures be implemented by June next year to strengthen the framework for the collaborative management of pests with government agencies, landholders and community groups."

“This includes the development of a state-wide plan for the management of declared pests, as well as clearly defined roles for key government agencies and establishing an accurate picture of high priority pests.”

“Another key challenge for DAFWA is how to fairly align the funding and implementation of pest programs to ensure that those who benefit most contribute fairly to the cost.”

“I am encouraged that DAFWA has acknowledged the report’s findings and recommendations, and hopeful that both government and private landholders will work together to effectively manage this issue.”

The Auditor General’s report ‘*Managing the Impact of Plant and Animal Pests: A State-wide Challenge*’ (Report 18 – December 2013) can be downloaded from the Office of the Auditor General website at www.audit.wa.gov.au

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