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Considerations re the determining of a Pest Control Order for the European Red Fox

Dear Nathan,

Landcare NSW has given a submission regarding the endorsement or otherwise of making a Pest Control Order for the European Red Fox. As discussed in the submission Landcare NSW cannot make such a determination on behalf of its member groups – and that we would be encouraging Local Land Services to consult widely with their communities before any such declaration is made for their region .

We would now like to add some factors for consideration that we believe are of importance to the community, should the Pest Control order for the European Red Fox be made.

These considerations are framed from the viewpoint of the communities involvement in pest control programs, and the some of the likely questions or situations that may arise if there is a Pest Control Order for the European Red Fox

Kind Regards

Margot Jolly
PAC member representing Landcare NSW

Considerations regarding declaration of a Pest Control Order for European Red Fox



Whilst declaring the fox as a pest in NSW may add vigour to the implementation of broadscale control and assist participation in coordinated control programs, trial's undertaken by Lynette McLeod (see fact sheet link below) identified that changes in legislation **alone** did not result in increased participation rates in control activities. In order for legislative changes to result in improved on-ground outcomes they **must be rolled out with extensive land manager education and awareness programs** and also **provide adequate funding and resourcing to regulatory organisations to enforce the legislation.**

Case Study – Declaring the fox as a pest in New South Wales http://www.feral.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/FXCS4_DeclareNSW.pdf

Should a declaration be made other considerations that should be addressed include;

- The requirement to hold 'Safe handling of 1080/Pindone or AQF3' certifications in order to undertake 1080 baiting – How does a change in legislation impact this, will courses be subsidised or will more courses be run in order to upskill landholders currently not undertaking control?
- Will urban and peri-urban holdings/areas be included in the legislation? If so, how will this be managed? If not, how will this be justified to rural landholders and communicated to ensure that it is not viewed as a penalisation to rural land managers/community?
- How will this legislation be enforced? Wild dogs and feral pigs are currently declared yet there is a view held by landholders that there has been no successful 'orders' processed through the court system
- What constitutes 'control'? how will this be communicated effectively?
- Declaring the fox will spark the conversation around 'bounties' once again, how will this be handled as there are conflicting viewpoints as to the effectiveness of such arrangements.
- As fox densities are so high and they occur throughout the landscape (e.g. Melbourne has the highest fox densities in Australia) it is not feasible to 'eradicate the pest' (as referred to in 2nd last paragraph of recommendations document), however programs have demonstrated that the use of terminology is very important to promote/facilitate participation. E.g. more participation occurs if the program aims to 'eradicate' rather than

'manage'; - people feel they are doing something positive with such terminology. How will this use of language be managed to ensure best buy in by land managers, but also recognise and acknowledge that eradicating the European Red Fox from the Australian mainland is likely not to be not feasible.

- Another consideration is comments such as "will declaring the fox lessen the support given to wild dog programs", as without a corresponding increase in resources to LLS officers these officers will be required to do more, meaning that some other programs may have support reduced to them. A possible solution that has been occurring in some regions for a number of years, is where there has been support given to 'Predator' control programs rather than specific fox or dog programs, as baiting for wild dogs will also remove/bait foxes. This has been important as wild dog reports have been coming in from areas that have previously not had problems.
- It is important that all levels of agency/organisations/partners maintain that pest animal management (fox, wild dog, feral pig, rabbit etc) is the responsibility of the land holder. However Landcare would like to see that there is to support the community (these landholders) to undertake control programs as effectively as possible for greater community outcomes, rather than focussed at the individual landholder level.. It is important that control programs focus on coordinated approaches, and this is where Landcare in a region can be utilised (with support) to help achieve coordinated action and community knowledge and engagement through their groups. Often this is better achieved through incentives and knowledge building rather than 'token' big stick methods.

One distinct benefit of declaring the European Red Fox is that anyone keeping a fox in captivity can be fined. This may help in increasing the understanding and knowledge of the whole community regarding the impacts of foxes. It is also important in narrowing the knowledge gap between urban and city populations and rural producers as currently there are at least two organisations operating out of Sydney promoting and aiding in the adoption of Foxes as pets. Under the current legislation this is legal. Sydney Fox Rescue receives regular promotion and support from T.V programs and newspapers such as '7 News' and 'Mornings' on channel 9 and 'The Daily Telegraph'. They also have a Facebook page with over 4,300 'likes' and are a registered charity. The flip side of this is that changing the legislation so that foxes are declared will give groups like Sydney Fox Rescue greater publicity – at least in the short term. How will this be managed?

- Sydney fox rescue www.sydneyfoxrescue.com
- Fox Rescue – Aiding Exotic Wildlife www.foxrescue.hopout.com.au