



Hon Andrew Powell MP
Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection

Ref CTS 14071/14

Level 13
400 George Street Brisbane 4000
GPO Box 2454 Brisbane
Queensland 4001 Australia
Telephone +61 7 3239 0844
Facsimile +61 7 3224 2496
Email environment@ministerial.qld.gov.au

4 JUL 2014

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to your letter of 10 June 2014 enclosing a copy of Petition No. 2256-14 lodged in the Queensland Legislative Assembly.

The Petition draws to the attention of the House that the decision to authorise the destruction of 1,050 agile wallabies at South Mission Beach should be suspended in the absence of scientific population counts, ecological studies or the use of non-lethal alternatives.

The petitioners therefore request the House to suspend further shooting of agile wallabies within the Cassowary Coast until all non-lethal alternatives are exhausted, and an independent scientific study is conducted upon the remaining agile wallaby population to ensure that the conservation of the Cassowary Coast agile wallaby population is not at risk, or the biodiversity of the Cassowary Coast.

The Department of Environment and Heritage Protection is aware of the overabundance in the agile wallaby population at Mission Beach. It has become evident that the agile wallaby population has greatly increased due to the local landscape being modified and a number of other factors including natural weather patterns.

The overabundance of the agile wallaby population has resulted in a number of issues for the local community. The government has received a significant number of complaints about health and safety concerns, including road hazards, aggressive behaviour and excessive wallaby excreta. There has also been significant damage to properties, crops and pastures.

There are mechanisms under current legislation that allow the department to issue Damage Mitigation Permits (DMPs) to control animal numbers through lethal means when the population becomes out of balance. Currently, a small number of DMPs have been issued to rural landholders in the surrounding Mission Beach area to protect their crops and pasture from damage by wallabies.

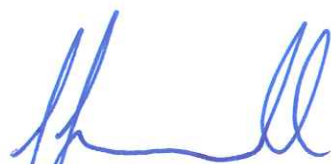
In order to monitor macropod numbers, the department conducts periodic surveys of the agile wallaby population, predominantly in the South Mission Beach area. At the most recent survey conducted in April 2014, approximately 1660 agile wallabies were counted. The area covered by the survey is a very small area in the broader Mission Beach area and the numbers counted are a subset of the area's total population. It is important to note that the number of animals authorised to be taken under DMPs will not affect the continued presence of the species in the area, nor their overall sustainability in the wild. It should also be noted that there is a national standard for humanely destroying macropods, which must be adhered to under these permits.

The department is continuing to work with rural landholders, the Cassowary Coast Regional Council and members of the community at Mission Beach to develop ongoing wallaby management responses and plans that will see the issue addressed in the long-term.

I appreciate that many of the petitioners may find the culling of any wildlife to be disturbing. However, the Queensland Government believes the approach to wallaby management at Mission Beach is both responsible and balanced whilst ensuring the conservation of the species.

I trust the above information is of assistance to the House in its consideration of this matter. Should your staff have any further enquiries, please do not hesitate to contact Ms Sally Egan, Acting Director Wildlife Management Unit of the department on telephone 4688 1258.

Yours sincerely



ANDREW POWELL MP
Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection