

Victorian Liberal Nationals Coalition Media Release

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HELPER WAVES WHITE FLAG TO FOXES

The Victoria Government is considering a proposal to relocate the state's entire eastern barred bandicoot population to French Island to protect it from marauding foxes, Shadow Minister for Agriculture Peter Walsh revealed today.

Mr Walsh said the Brumby Government had admitted it had had little success in trying to recover the nationally endangered species due to fox predation.

"The Brumby Government has waved the white flag to foxes at the expense of the state's farmers and other species endangered by foxes," Mr Walsh said.

"Instead of embarking on an eradication program to lower fox numbers, it is considering relocating the entire eastern barred bandicoot population."

Mr Walsh said livestock and native animals would remain under threat while Agriculture Minister Joe Helper refused to reintroduce the successful fox bounty.

"Mr Helper must apply some common sense and listen to the state's farmers who want to see the fox bounty reintroduced permanently," Mr Walsh said.

"Not every species endangered by fox predation can be relocated to French Island.

"If the government was serious about saving the thousands of lambs and calves lost to foxes each year and protecting endangered species such as the eastern barred bandicoot and spotted quoll, it would reintroduce the fox bounty permanently."

Mr Walsh said despite the success of previous fox bounty programs, the Brumby Government axed the program in 2003 and again in 2008.

"Yesterday Minister Helper is congratulating himself for the success of the government's new FoxStop program which has recorded a paltry 6000 kills in an entire year.

"The program is a farce. It has done very little to address the economic losses farmers are facing as a result of fox attacks.

"When the fox bounty was reinstated in 2007, 63,174 foxes were shot, while the 2002 program was responsible for the eradication of about 198,000 foxes.

"The Brumby Government is out of touch with the needs of Victorian farmers. Its efforts to control the fox problem in this state have been half-hearted at best," Mr Walsh said.

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