



Queensland  
Government

Hon Stephen Robertson MP  
Member for Stretton

Minister for Natural Resources  
and Mines

Ref N/04/03357; N/04/03377 HO  
CTS 07537/04; 07558/04

21 DEC 2004

Mr Neil Laurie  
The Clerk of the Parliament  
Parliament House  
Alice and George Streets  
Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to your correspondence of 24 and 25 November 2004 enclosing copies of Petition Nos. 313-04 and 412-04, lodged in the Queensland Legislative Assembly on 23 and 24 November 2004, respectively.

Both petitions draw to the attention of the House that every State and Territory, except Queensland and the Northern Territory, allow ferrets to be owned as pets. The petitioners, therefore, request the House to amend the *Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002*, to allow ferrets to be kept in Queensland as pets.

Ferrets are not native to Australia and have the potential to establish wild (feral) populations, as they have already done in New Zealand and the British Isles. In New Zealand, ferrets and stoats have become serious predators of native bird-life and their eggs, particularly ground-nesting birds. Ferrets are also known to be a vector for dangerous exotic diseases such as rabies.

Although other States have failed to restrict the keeping of ferrets, they are taking a major risk by allowing these animals to be kept as pets. This concern is highlighted by a report of wild ferrets being seen in Tasmania. Also, ferrets established in Western Australia were controlled by trapping. The Vertebrate Pests Committee that reports to the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council, and which represents all States and Territories in Australia and New Zealand, classifies the ferret as an 'extreme risk to the Australian environment'.

Several States have banned the keeping of wild ferret breeds, known as polecats, even though there is no reliable way of differentiating between wild and domestic breeds. Queensland, therefore, considers that it is sensible and important to continue to prevent the keeping of this potential pest.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Yours sincerely

STEPHEN ROBERTSON MP

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