



**The Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP**  
**Minister for Primary Industries**  
**Assistant Minister for Tourism and Major Events**

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**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**LEADING PEST RESEARCH UNIT HITS 20-YEAR MILESTONE**

NSW Minister for Primary Industries, Katrina Hodgkinson, today marked the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Department of Primary Industries' (DPI) Vertebrate Pest Research Unit in Orange, where she unveiled a plaque celebrating the occasion.

Ms Hodgkinson said the unit has played a key role in leading pest animal research, supporting agricultural production and rural communities through the development of management strategies for wild dogs, foxes, feral pigs, rabbits and other pests.

"The unit's success hinges on the strong ties and respect it has generated within rural communities – it's no secret that landholder engagement, supported by capacity building and training, plays a key role in delivering on-ground action to better manage pests," Ms Hodgkinson said.

"The unit has delivered breakthrough research over the past two decades, including new ways to release Rabbit haemorrhagic disease (RHD), which has had a profound impact on rabbit numbers and cutting-edge new approaches to managing wild dogs.

"The pest programs and policies that NSW has in place today are thanks to the scientific rigour and world-leading research undertaken by the Vertebrate Pest Research Unit.

"The advances made by DPI in developing nationally targeted, high impact research and innovation strategies for vertebrate pests are recognised at state and national levels."

Member for Orange, Andrew Gee, said an industry-driven symposium on vertebrate pest research was held in Orange this week setting key outcomes to boost animal pest management across Australia.

"DPI, Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre (IA CRC) and Australasian Wildlife Management Society held the special symposium to address key goals, outcomes and strategies which support rural and regional communities," Mr Gee said.

"Through the IA CRC, DPI is working to prioritise biosecurity research with our partners to strengthen research outcomes, address knowledge gaps and develop innovative approaches to the management of biosecurity risks.

"I congratulate the unit on reaching its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary – it's no secret that we have some of the best agricultural minds in the country housed in the DPI at its headquarters here in Orange."