

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

Inquiry into Wildlife Roadstrike in Victoria

Geelong – Wednesday 20 August 2025

MEMBERS

Georgie Purcell – Chair

Richard Welch – Deputy Chair

John Berger

Katherine Copsey

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Gaelle Broad

Georgie Crozier

David Davis

David Ettershank

Michael Galea

Renee Heath

Sarah Mansfield

Rachel Payne

WITNESS

Scott Young, President, Livestock Council, Victorian Farmers Federation.

The CHAIR: I declare open the Legislative Council Economy and Infrastructure Committee's public hearing for the Inquiry into Wildlife Roadstrike in Victoria. Please ensure that mobile phones have been switched to silent and that background noise is minimised.

I would like to begin this hearing by respectfully acknowledging the Aboriginal peoples, the traditional custodians of the various lands we are gathered on today, and paying my respects to their ancestors, elders and families. I particularly welcome any elders or community members who are here today to impart their knowledge of this issue to the committee or who are watching the live broadcast of these proceedings. I also welcome any other members of the public watching via the live broadcast.

To kick off, we will just have committee members introduce themselves to you, and we will start with Mr Welch on the screen.

Richard WELCH: Good afternoon. It is Richard Welch, Member for North-Eastern Metro.

John BERGER: John Berger, Member for Southern Metro.

Gaëlle BROAD: Hi. I am Gaëlle Broad, Member for Northern Victoria.

The CHAIR: Georgie Purcell, Member for Northern Victoria.

Katherine COPSEY: Katherine Copsey, Member for Southern Metropolitan.

The CHAIR: Great. Thank you. All evidence taken is protected by parliamentary privilege as provided by the *Constitution Act 1975* and further subject to the provisions of the Legislative Council standing orders. Therefore the information you provide during this hearing is protected by law. You are protected against any action for what you say during this hearing, but if you go elsewhere and repeat the same things, those comments may not be protected by this privilege. Any deliberately false evidence or misleading of the committee may be considered a contempt of Parliament.

All evidence is being recorded, and you will be provided with a proof version of the transcript following the hearing. Transcripts will ultimately be made public and posted on the committee's website.

For the Hansard record, can you please state your full name and the organisation you are appearing on behalf of.

Scott YOUNG: Scott Young, Victorian Farmers Federation.

The CHAIR: Wonderful. Thank you. We now welcome your opening comments but ask that they be kept to around 10 to 15 minutes to ensure plenty of time for discussion and questions.

Scott YOUNG: No worries. Thank you very much, and thank you very much for the opportunity to present today to the committee. The Victorian Farmers Federation obviously represents a large group of farmers right across this state and from every part of the state. The challenge around wildlife road strikes is very prevalent, obviously, in those areas and to all of our members and farmers as well. Kangaroos remain the biggest cause, or the largest number, of strikes across the state reported by our members, but other species, particularly deer, wombats and wallabies, are also very prevalent.

Farmers in the regional areas obviously bear the brunt of most of these instances because they are the ones that are on the roads every single day, although obviously there are a lot of other people using the roads. The cost to our businesses is the longer travel distances at higher speeds, and the higher wildlife densities obviously are a cause of that. Collisions obviously lead to vehicle damage, personal injury in some instances and farm productivity losses. This is not just a wildlife issue, but it is a road safety and economic issue to us as well. We feel there are some data gaps. It was interesting hearing about the previous work that has been done as well around the reporting of the road strikes – the inconsistency and fragmentation across police, councils, insurance

companies and wildlife rescue groups. The lack of a centralised database means that prevention measures are not properly targeted, and under-reporting hides the scale of the problem. Farmers know it is far worse on the ground than perhaps the statistics suggest.

Some of our key risks that have been identified are plantation timber sites. As our state parks and national parks have been locked up for logging, the logging industry has moved out into primary production areas and established pine and blue gum plantations, which are essential for building products across Australia. But with the establishment of these they have established habitat which is ideal for animals to breed up – not only kangaroos but foxes and other wildlife. We think that exclusion fencing around these plantation timber projects would be very beneficial in reducing the number of animals that come into these plantations, breed up in these plantations and come out onto the roads.

Roadside vegetation obviously provides a lot of cover for wildlife, and the amount of regrowth on the roadside verges due to changes in management along those roadside verges has meant that there is a lot less time for people to identify wildlife on the side of the road and have time to be able to stop and avoid collision. Obviously the seasonal dusk till dawn peak times are far more dangerous, and the current drought conditions have obviously driven a lot of the wildlife out of the bush to come out onto our farming properties and onto those roadside verges which, due to not being mown or maintained, have a lot of feed there, and obviously animals are going to where the feed is, and that creates a challenge.

Some of the things that we feel are needed are a statewide wildlife road-strike strategy, so once again, one agency collating all the data that is out there so that we can try and identify some of those hotspots; better data; targeted mitigation, through fencing and vegetation management; warning systems in hotspot areas; exclusion fencing for plantations, as I mentioned; and driver awareness campaigns. I have seen a lot of instances where drivers have swerved to avoid hitting wildlife and ended up either just getting stuck or in a serious accident, hitting a tree or another vehicle. I am part of the CFA, and I have seen firsthand what we have had to go to.

Why this matters: collision costs to farmers are thousands of dollars each year in vehicle repairs. The vehicle repair industry is way behind time, so you cannot hit a kangaroo one day and get it fixed the next. There are months and months of waiting time before you get your vehicle, so we have got that vehicle downtime and lost productivity. It is a serious safety risk, obviously, for our farm families, workers and regional motorists, and farmers want to see practical, proactive solutions that reduce both human risk and animal suffering. Thank you.

The CHAIR: Okay, great. Thank you so much. We will kick off with Ms Broad.

Gaelle BROAD: Thank you. Look, I am just interested in – you have talked a bit about it, but the impact of road strike on the agricultural industry. Can you expand, from what you have seen practical examples of, what impact does it have?

Scott YOUNG: A lot of the time obviously we are driving in our primary production vehicles, so it is not a bigger impact in the trucking side of things but in the smaller utility vehicles. They are often our primary method of getting around between farms and getting supplies, and if one of those is out of action for a number of months, then we obviously have to go out and rent another vehicle or somehow mitigate that. That is really challenging. I know it is challenging for anybody who loses their vehicle, but when it is one of your primary sources of income on your property, it is hard.

Gaelle BROAD: I have spoken to smash repairers in Bendigo, and one of them said they are booked out now for months. If you go to Melbourne, you can get repairs done very quickly, but for them about 60 per cent of their current work is just on vehicle repairs. So yes, it is quite incredible, the impact. I have also heard about insurances increasing. Are you aware of that, of people having to pay higher insurances because of the number of incidents in an area with wildlife road strike?

Scott YOUNG: I have not heard of that, but the insurance repairs – one of my neighbours hit a kangaroo on his way to Sheepvention recently, an agricultural event in Hamilton, and went to the repairer there, and they said an 11-month wait. He obviously did not get it repaired there and went back to try and get it repaired a bit more locally. It is great it can get repaired straightaway in Melbourne, but a lot of our rural people have not got that opportunity to be able to get their vehicle into Melbourne and it needs to get done locally. It presents a real challenge. And obviously being so isolated in rural communities, it is essential that you have got that mode of transport to get around.

Gaelle BROAD: Just on the thoughts of the Victorian Farmers Federation, how well is wildlife being managed in Victoria compared to other states or what do you see?

Scott YOUNG: It is very challenging at the moment. I do not think we have got a clear understanding of the numbers out there. I will speak from personal experience. I farm near Ballan, which is about an hour north of here. I am third generation there but grew up on the property and have been there all of my life. When I was young, we would have been lucky to see six kangaroos on the farm, a 2000-acre farm and surrounding areas. It would be nothing for me to go out and see over 300 of a night-time now, so there is a significant increase. Where that increase has come from – whether they are bred up in the bush, or we have had a large pine plantation near us just recently harvested, so I think a lot of the kangaroos have come out of that that lived in that pine plantation. But there is not a farmer I speak to who has not seen an increase in the number of kangaroos and wallabies – deer as well are really huge out there now – over their lifetime on their property. And especially with the seasonal conditions at the moment, having the drought, those animals are having to come out and source food in other areas. I think that has really made the problem come to the fore.

Gaelle BROAD: Just with the impact of drought you mentioned – kangaroos do breed at a very high rate, and you mentioned deer. What impact has that increased population number had on the agricultural industry? And do you think there is a direct correlation between population numbers and increased wildlife road strike?

Scott YOUNG: I definitely do at the moment – the increased wildlife numbers and road strikes. There are definitely more animals out there. They are travelling further for feed at the moment, which means that they have got to cross a number of roads to get that feed. As an agricultural industry we have got a lot better at growing crops in drier times over the years – we have got no till and things like that, which means now that even in very low rainfall environments, we are able to grow relatively sustainable crops, which means that there is more food out there in regional areas for those animals to come out of the state parks and native bush to graze on our property. It probably gives them a false sense of seasonal conditions. And having good feed means that they will obviously breed more.

Gaelle BROAD: There has been a lot of commentary in the news about the poor condition of the roads. Do you feel that the standard of roads is contributing at all to wildlife road strike as well?

Scott YOUNG: I think the standard of the roads does not help, but I think it is the number of animals out there at the moment looking for feed along the side of our regional roads. I think it is that vegetation on the side of the roads and being able to see animals in the distance and being able to slow down for those animals. In just the last four days my next-door neighbour was going down to – we run a table tennis competition at the local hall on a Tuesday night. One farmer going down a dirt road with trees right up alongside of the road hit two kangaroos on the way last night, and another group of farmers in their vehicle hit two wallabies. They would have been lucky to be doing 70 kilometres an hour. It is happening all the time. Yes, not being able to see on the sides of roads – I do not think it matters what speed you are going at, they will just hop out across in front of you. It makes it challenging.

Gaelle BROAD: Thank you.

The CHAIR: Thanks, Mrs Broad. We will go to Mr Welch next.

Richard WELCH: Thank you, Chair. Thanks for your presentation today. I would probably follow up on Mrs Broad's points. Is the farmers federation concerned about overall kangaroo numbers in Victoria, both the impact on farming productivity as well as road strike? How significant is the problem in Victoria?

Scott YOUNG: It is a big problem in Victoria. We have been bringing that issue forward to government for quite a while now, the challenge around the increase in numbers right across the state. We have been trying to see how we can get a better understanding of those actual numbers rather than the surveys that have been done in the past so we have got some really good stats, so that we have got factual information and it is not just perhaps farmers coming up here and telling you how many they have seen in their back paddock but you have actually got that true reflection of the figures that are out there.

Richard WELCH: That is the massive challenge here, I think, getting clarity around it rather than the anecdotal approach. Do you have any input into how that process can be improved?

Scott YOUNG: We have put submissions to government in the past around that. There is a lot of great technology that is out there now that we have not seen in the past. Traditionally, there have been aerial surveys done and numbers counted, but now there is a lot of really good thermal and infrared technology that is out there that has been able to see animals, even when they are in amongst trees and hidden, that I think would be very useful to be able to be used now.

Richard WELCH: One of the challenges is when you take a sample, you then extrapolate the sample and the sample may not be fully representative of it. Do you have any sort of sense of how big the sample needs to be to be accurate?

Scott YOUNG: It is a challenging question to answer on the spot, but I am –

Richard WELCH: Yes, sorry.

Scott YOUNG: Farmers are seeing kangaroos in areas that they have never seen kangaroos before. So I think that sample area needs to be a lot bigger than what it has been previously because, yes, they are right across the state now, rather than being in specific areas – in large numbers, not just smaller numbers.

Richard WELCH: You may not be able to answer this either, but I would love to get your thoughts on it. The cost of a proper, accurate survey versus the cost in road strike and farm productivity – would that be a worthwhile investment in your view?

Scott YOUNG: Well, I think we need to fully understand the problem. Without having an accurate understanding of actually how many animals are out there makes it very difficult to be able to work on a strategy going forward, if we do not know the scale of that problem.

Richard WELCH: I think actually Ms Broad has taken all my other questions, so I will finish there. Thank you, Chair.

The CHAIR: Great. Thanks, Mr Welch. We will go to Ms Copsey.

Katherine COPSEY: Thank you. Thanks for coming today and for your presentation to the members of the committee. I want to go back and touch on some of the concentration of populations of animals that you have mentioned as a result of drought, as a result of habitat loss. Just testing your thoughts on the increasing frequency and severity of weather events and climatic events as a result of climate change – so increasing frequency and severity of drought but also fires and habitat destruction based on that – taking it up to a very high level, do you see that climate action mitigation is important in responding to this problem –

Scott YOUNG: Yes.

Katherine COPSEY: and its impact broadly on your members?

Scott YOUNG: I have not got the figures on habitat loss, but there has also been, with Landcare over the last 20 or 30 years, a lot of rehabilitation on our farming properties. We have actually got a lot more native vegetation on our properties now, on a lot of farms, than we did have 30 years ago. So we have actually increased the environment for those animals to live and breed in, which is a challenge as well. I think as the urban sprawl goes out there is a loss of some land there that animals are breeding up in, and that is then pushing them further out potentially. But we have always had droughts and floods, so I think we always have to navigate around those challenges when they arise. But I think the big one for me is getting an understanding of the population and where it is and where those challenges are, because we are getting changes now with, as I have mentioned, the plantation timber in the high-rainfall areas that is coming out into farming land now where we are actually producing environments for breeding that have not been there in the past and increasing numbers in those areas. We have raised this with government before. But, you know, we think there is a good opportunity here to put exclusion fencing up around these plantations so that –

They are going on to farmland that is pasture most of the time, so there are no native animals living on that land at that time. And if we can exclude, obviously, kangaroo numbers breeding up in those areas – and even, you know, the challenges in the blue gum plantations around koalas and things breeding up in those plantations and then putting those animals at risk when they are harvested – if we can reduce that, I think it is a win for the

environment and a win for us as farmers in reducing the breeding up of those species, and it could be foxes and rabbits and things as well that are breeding up.

Katherine COPSEY: Just following on from that, do you see wildlife corridors and Landcare potentially having a role in that as something that can help ease that, to provide migration routes essentially for animals so they do not get trapped?

Scott YOUNG: Yes. Whether there needs to be more thought around those corridors and where they are and perhaps have them planned so they are not going to be at an area that is close to a freeway or something like that, that is going to minimise the risk of those road strikes.

Katherine COPSEY: Great. It is a great segue to my next question. We have had other submitters who are quite supportive of healthy wildlife populations being taken into account far earlier in Victoria's planning process, for example, when regional expansion is being considered. Is that sort of forethought something that the VFF is supportive of?

Scott YOUNG: I would have to take that question on notice, I think, and take it back. That is not something that I could probably answer on behalf of the organisation.

Katherine COPSEY: All good, happy for you to. Just going now to another topic that I am sure your members would be well aware of if driving in regional conditions and at dawn and dusk and the different risks that come with that. Is increased driver education, including at the start of people's driving habits, something the VFF sees a need for?

Scott YOUNG: Definitely, yes. And we have been raising this with government recently, that driver education driving on regional roads, so not only around kangaroos; there could be other animals out there. You know, we hope it is not farm animals out there, but occasionally farmers are moving animals and have got signage out on the road – just educating road users what that means when those signs are out there and to slow down and take time. I move livestock along the road probably once a month, and probably 10, 15 per cent of the drivers slow down and understand. I have got signs and lights and everything I am supposed to do when I am taking them along, but unless I physically park in the middle of the road and make them slow down to go around me, they will go around me at 100 kilometres an hour. So getting people to understand what it means to drive on rural roads and the challenges to look out for, whether that be wildlife or whether it be slow-moving farm machinery or sheep or cattle or whatever it is. I think driver awareness is really key. I just saw two nights ago on social media, on the Casterton page, that someone driving from Adelaide to Hamilton swerved to miss a kangaroo and ended up stuck in a ditch and almost rolled the car over. I think as rural drivers, we are more inclined to hit the kangaroo than swerve for the kangaroo because we know the risks of swerving and hitting a tree or hitting an oncoming motorist. I know, as a father, I have taught my kids to obviously slow down and brake, but to not swerve to avoid that collision because there is a higher chance of injury in swerving and avoiding than there is in hitting the animal.

Katherine COPSEY: My final question is just around – you kind of touched on it there – disturbing reports we have heard in some submissions of people going out of their way to hit animals, so swerving to hit an animal. I just wonder if you can comment on consideration of native animals as a pest and whether there are risks, whether you are aware of people taking that attitude of trying to deliberately target native species on our roads and what the VFF's stance would be on that?

Scott YOUNG: That is not something that farmers do or –

Katherine COPSEY: Not suggesting it would be your members.

Scott YOUNG: that I would advocate for or anything. All I was saying was that, as a father, I am saying to my kids, 'Don't swerve to miss an animal,' whether it be a dog, someone's pet dog, or whether it be a kangaroo, because you are at greater risk of hitting a tree, a telephone pole or oncoming traffic and endangering someone's life. I am not recommending someone go out and deliberately run over wildlife.

Katherine COPSEY: Thank you.

The CHAIR: Thanks, Ms Copsey. I will kick off. There have been a number of suggestions that kangaroos are in plague proportions and should be controlled and managed. I guess my perspective on this would be that kangaroos are a native animal and the reality is farmed animals and many of the farmed animals that your members breed are introduced species, and that is resulting in competition for land and feed, and particularly in drought circumstances like the ones we have now. Often the response is shooting and killing the wildlife, the native animal, in favour of the introduced animal. Do you think that there is a role for farmers to play in coexisting with wildlife, rather than opting for the easier, simple solution?

Scott YOUNG: Farmers are running a business on their land, and every inch of our land is essential to our livelihood, at the end of the day. We grow crops, we grow improved pastures so that we can, in a livestock sense – a livestock farmer is what I am and a grain farmer as well – get a return on our farming practices. That is from our livestock eating the grass and the improved pastures. I do not feel it is the responsibility of the farmer to feed our native animals on our improved pastures. I think with the improved pastures and cropping, as I said earlier, there is potentially an inflated population that would not have been there if we were not improving our pastures and cropping across the area. I do not think the native population in the past would have been as high as what it is without our improved farming systems.

The CHAIR: Population data actually shows that kangaroo populations are decreasing. I think the reality actually is we are just seeing them in more of our spaces now because obviously there has been development, drought conditions and competition for land that was previously their habitat, and that is only, sadly, going to increase. And of course one of the things that this committee is exploring is what we can do to allow our native animals to be in the place where they were long before us and also not damage the needs of various different industries, including yours. But I guess my question more is: do you have examples of farmers – I certainly have some farmers in my electorate who care deeply about this issue. I have one sheep farmer in Romsey whose passion is protecting wildlife and ending road strike on the road that he lives on and allowing his property to be shared with the sheep and the wildlife. I guess, do you really think that it is just not a responsibility of the people who are using this land that was previously habitat too?

Scott YOUNG: I have planted over 100,000 trees on my property in the past 30 years. I have got 80 hectares of native vegetation on my property. I have supported the wildlife as well as my business on my farming land. We need to be able to keep the two separate. I am not against nature and I am not against native wildlife at all, but as I said earlier, we had six kangaroos, roughly, on our property 50 years ago, and now we have got over 300. I struggle to understand. I know there has been a lot of research done, but I think that is pretty –

The CHAIR: I think you said you live in Ballan, and obviously that is one of the areas where there has been development, and of course animals then go to places that they probably previously have not before.

Scott YOUNG: No. There is plenty of native bush around our area, but I think it is the better farming practices and the better feed availability that have increased the population.

The CHAIR: Does the VFF offer anything to farmers who might want to make changes to support biodiversity and their farming interests as well?

Scott YOUNG: No, it is more through Landcare that farmers would go to do those sorts of things.

The CHAIR: And I just note that the VFF very recently called for streamlined shooting permits for kangaroos in drought conditions, which the government did approve. We heard from a commercial shooter at the last hearing, obviously a professional shooter operating within the commercial industry separately to the ATCW system that the VFF has advocated for, and he claimed that it is relatively common – in fact quite common – for farmers and other landholders to shoot over the permit limit. This is being proposed as one of the options to combat this issue that we are analysing. Does the VFF have a process to oversee that ATCW permits are being complied with, given that the organisation has advocated so strongly for them to be more easily accessible?

Scott YOUNG: The VFF does not oversee the permits. That is the government.

The CHAIR: Yes, I understand that, but is there anything that you do to ensure that – obviously when shooting happens on private land, it is basically impossible to monitor compliance; does the VFF offer anything to members to ensure that they are complying with the law if they are going to destroy wildlife?

Scott YOUNG: No, we do not, but I have got a permit, and it is very extensive as to the regulation that you have to adhere to when you get a permit. I think what we would like to see at VFF a lot more is actually the tags going out more than farmers having to go out and control the kangaroos. We would rather see the animals go into the food or the pet food industry, rather than us having to destroy them and bury them on farm. We would really like to see that pet food industry increase and that side of things to go forward. But yes, it is not something that we follow up or enforce at VFF.

The CHAIR: Okay. And just lastly, do you have any members who are actually directly responding to wildlife road strike as volunteers or collecting data, or is this just an issue that you know your industry is regularly dealing with, being regional?

Scott YOUNG: I have not got those figures. I do not know if we have got any – we could have members who are; I do not know.

The CHAIR: And – sorry, I know I said that was my last question, but just one more – we have explored the options for data collection, and of course this would require buy-in from not just the wildlife rescue community but members across all of Victoria and particularly those who live in regional areas. Is this something that you think your members would engage with to collect meaningful data to identify hotspots and areas of need for change?

Scott YOUNG: I think potentially it may be, yes.

The CHAIR: Okay, great. That is all from me. I will go to Mr Berger.

John BERGER: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Scott, for your presentation and appearance at today's hearing. A couple of common themes have been resonating with me throughout this hearing. One is the roadside vegetation. I am just wondering if you see a role for your members and farmers in general to help assist in ensuring that roadside vegetation is kept down, given that some councils are somewhat reluctant to get involved in ensuring that that is kept down? I do notice that a lot of farmers do do it, and it would be at their cost, but is there a role for them to actively assist with it?

Scott YOUNG: It is challenging. A lot of roadside vegetation has changed now as far as the way it is seen, so there is a lot of protected roadside vegetation now and native roadside vegetation, which makes it more challenging to keep that under control. I will go back to my own instance once again. Being part of the fire brigade, we have got a strategic corridor that we burn each year, or try to burn each year, and we have not been able to do that for the last two years, which is a two-chain road, so a large road. Not burning that for the last two years, there is a significant amount of small trees – not actually native vegetation; a lot of pines and things like that popping up. But if we do not get back to being able to manage that, it means those trees encroach and then will give you a narrower field of view. But it is getting harder and harder to be able to get a permit through the CFA to continue doing that burn each year because of the restrictions around anything around native vegetation and being able to control it. So yes, it has made it really hard for a lot of brigades and a lot of rural areas to be able to manage it. And as a farmer, I would not be able to go and slash the side of the road without a specific permit, and there are sensitive areas that we do need to protect.

I know, once again from my own experience, we have got a lot of kangaroo grass on the side of the road, native grass. The fact that we have not burnt that for the last two years, I have noticed a lot more introduced species coming back into the side of the road because when you burn it, the first grass that comes back is the native kangaroo grass, and it actually thickens up that population. So I think we could look at some of those methods of keeping the roads a lot clearer and actually support the native grasses on the side of the road.

John BERGER: Just on another topic, also through the hearing – and I know I have brought this up a number of times – is the signage for kangaroos. It has been around since we were kids. Do you think that the driving public are just complacent that once they see a kangaroo sign, the diamond with the kangaroo on it, they just glaze over and there is no real awareness as to what it actually means now?

Scott YOUNG: Yes, I think that goes back to that road education piece earlier. I think a lot of that can be done by leaving it bland. Travelling to Daylesford quite a bit, there is a lot of Melbourne traffic that takes that road and they do not have an understanding of what it means, and there are a lot of animal strikes through that area. They do not understand – the trees are up, once again, to the side of the road, and they do not understand

to be ready to be able to slow down, especially at those dawn and dusk times, to be able to avoid where possible those strikes.

John BERGER: Would you have any ideas as to what might change people's thoughts about when they see one of those signs?

Scott YOUNG: No, I do not.

John BERGER: I am just looking to see – insurers. The insurance industry I think should take a bit of an interest in it. They are the primary people that fix the vehicles.

Scott YOUNG: Yes, and perhaps some awareness around what an impact looks like, not to the animal but to your vehicle, and that impact around losing your vehicle for a while because it is undrivable and those sorts of things, to remind people that it is a dangerous road and to slow down or be wary of what could be ahead, especially at these times. I think that is the other challenge in rural areas, that every time there is something wrong with our roads we do not want to keep putting the speed limit down. If we have got potholes and poor roads, instead of improving the road we tend to put a speed sign on there, and then all of a sudden our transport infrastructure is delayed and then that is a flow-on cost to our food production system when it goes through. So I think we have got to be very wary of blanket lowering of speed limits and things like that. It has really got to be a thought-out process and understand that it is going to have the desired result at the end of the day, otherwise we are going to affect food prices.

John BERGER: Sure. That is me, Chair.

The CHAIR: Great. Thanks, Mr Berger. Did any members have follow-up questions?

Katherine COPSEY: I might just follow on from that. One of the things that has been suggested is dynamic signage that is changeable, that reflects recent hotspots or is more engaging than just fixed signage that people might habituate to. Do you think that that is something that would be more effective?

Scott YOUNG: Yes, potentially if it has been identified that that signage is going to have an impact. Obviously a flashing sign makes people aware a lot more, and if it was seen that there were some key times around dawn and around dusk for a certain period of time that might be effective. And listening to the previous speakers, I think it is all about getting the data and ensuring that it is going to be effective. But then once again, how do you get people to obey those signs, because there are plenty of people who do not.

The CHAIR: Thanks. Ms Broad, did you have one?

Gaelle BROAD: Look, just a general comment, I guess. We have heard different types of mitigation strategies, like the overpasses, underpasses, virtual fencing, thermal imaging on cars, but just in a rural setting in Victoria, do you see the merit of those? Do you have any thoughts on that type?

Scott YOUNG: Fencing is effective. A large wildlife fence is effective at stopping animals passing through. But yes, there are a lot of challenges to try and guide the wildlife through the corridors that we would like them to go on, that Georgie spoke about before. How do we do that effectively and get them to go where we would like them to go and not onto the roads and getting struck?

Gaelle BROAD: Thank you.

The CHAIR: Great. Thank you so much, members. And thanks, Scott, for taking the time to appear before us and coming in person; we really do appreciate that when we have come out to a regional hearing. That is all we have time for.

Witness withdrew.