



**Rebecca Vassarotti MLA**

Minister for the Environment  
Minister for Heritage  
Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services  
Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction

Member for Kurrajong

---

Our ref: 23/688

Mr Tom Duncan  
Clerk  
ACT Legislative Assembly  
[Tom.Duncan@parliament.act.gov.au](mailto:Tom.Duncan@parliament.act.gov.au)

Dear Mr Duncan

Thank you for your letter of 29 August 2023 about e-petition E-PET-017-23 that was lodged by Dr Marisa Paterson MLA with the Assembly on 29 August 2023. Pursuant to Standing Order No. 100 of the ACT Legislative Assembly, I am pleased to provide you with this reply to address the subject of the petition.

As the Minister for the Environment, I acknowledge the Principal Petitioner and his organisation for their ongoing advocacy for the government to increase control action against the Common Indian Myna (Common Myna) bird. I declared the Common Myna a prohibited animal in 2021 pursuant to the *Pest Plant and Animals Act 2005* (the Act). This declaration under the Act makes it an offence to keep or supply a Common Myna. The Act also allows me the option of preparing a pest animal management plan. I also acknowledge the Dr Paterson MLA for sponsoring this petition for the government's consideration.

The ACT Government has a significant responsibility for managing Canberra's high-quality natural environment. These environments provide crucial habitat for numerous plant and animal species including those that are risk of extinction. With decades of experience in invasive species management, the government employs a scientific, evidence, and risk-based approach to prioritise the allocation of its finite resources towards invasive plant and animal activities. This approach guides the government's control actions against species that pose the greatest risk of causing harm. These include deer, pigs, rabbits, African Lovegrass and Serrated tussock to name just a few. This prioritisation process remains dynamic, adapting to new information to maintain the sustainability, resilience, and health of these ecosystems and to safeguard the agriculture industry and urban areas.

---

ACT Legislative Assembly London Circuit, GPO Box 1020, Canberra ACT 2601

 +61 2 6207 8975

 [vassarotti@act.gov.au](mailto:vassarotti@act.gov.au)

 @RebeccaVassarot

 RebeccaVassarottiACT

ACT Government biosecurity and conservation experts have assessed the risk of harm that Common Mynas have on the environment and agriculture in the ACT. This assessment has concluded Common Myna distribution in the ACT is mainly in urban areas and that their presence in woodland habitats have declined significantly over the past 20 years. There is currently insufficient evidence provided to suggest that Common Mynas have contributed to the decline of Matters of National Environmental Significance and threatened native bird species in particular. In addition, Common Mynas do not affect agricultural production. Overall, whilst remaining a pest in urban environments, the threat posed by Common Mynas is considered low.

The government has considered the research conducted in 2014 by Dr Kate Grarock. Dr Grarock determined that intense localised culling where Common Myna densities are high can be effective, but that “current cull efforts are not high enough to have significant widespread reductions on Common Myna abundance in Canberra.” The paper also noted that “natural reproduction, survival and/or immigration [of Mynas] is able to replace the culled individuals”.

In addition, the government has considered the information published by the RSPCA on the management of Common Mynas in the ACT. This RSPCA states “Although recent research using long-term observations of bird abundance in Canberra has suggested that the Common Myna has a negative impact on the long-term abundance of some native bird species, the significance of this impact has been questioned, as has the methodology used for the research. Furthermore, since the impact of Common Mynas is not clearly understood, it is yet to be determined if killing Mynas has any effect other than reducing local Myna populations.” The RSPCA also concludes that “trapping and killing by community groups should not be encouraged. Rather, in agreement with a number of experts on this issue, efforts to enhance bird diversity in urbanised areas would be better directed to improving the quality of natural habitat.”

The Conservator and Flora and Fauna and other conservation officials of the ACT Government met with the Principal Petitioner in early 2023 to gain a shared understanding of the issues associated with Common Myna management in the ACT. Discussion topics included the impact of the species on the environment, and whether CIMAG’s practice of using car exhaust fumes (carbon monoxide gas) to euthanise birds was considered humane. At the meeting, the Principal Petitioner was encouraged to further explore his organisation’s concerns with the Canberra Ornithologists Group (Canberra Birds).

In consideration of all information available, the government does not view that there is sufficient evidence available at present to prioritise the development of a management plan and increase control and other actions against the Common Myna as described in the petition when compared to the threats posed by other pest plant and animals. However, the government is currently a strategic biosecurity assessment that was funded in the ACT Budget 2023-24. The Common Myna will be considered as part of this assessment. This strategic level assessment will help to further guide and inform the government on the priorities for pest plant and animal management that pose a threat to the ACT.

In recognition of the essential role played by community groups to protect, conserve and enhance the ACT’s environment, the ACT Government encourages collaboration with existing groups like the Canberra Ornithologists Group (COG) to support good decision making about what, if any, management and control actions need to be taken against Common Mynas. This approach reflects

the government's ongoing commitment to evidence-based decision-making and responsible environmental stewardship.

Thank you for providing me with the petition. I trust that the information in this letter is helpful to the Principal Petitioner and the Sponsoring Member.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. Vassarotti', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rebecca Vassarotti MLA

27/11/2023