

happen in the universities. He has been caught out; it has been proven that he told lies to the parliament in New South Wales and he should get up in that parliament next week and apologise.

#### Tasmania: Foxes

**Senator MURPHY** (Tasmania) (6.57 p.m.)—I wish to speak briefly tonight about an ABC program known as *Catalyst*. On the face of it, *Catalyst* would generally appear to be a well researched, reasonably responsible program which is often educational. But on Thursday, 12 September this year, they ran a program called *Tassie Fox: A Biosecurity Threat*. The reporter, Jonica Newby, the producer, Naomi Lumsdaine, and the researcher, Geraldine McKenna, in preparing that program were either lied to or failed to do any real research at all. When the program commenced, the narration said:

2 years ago, a group of environmental vandals committed an unthinkable crime. They hand reared up to 19 fox cubs and released them into the previously fox free Tasmanian wilderness. It hard to comprehend that such a petty act has unleashed the greatest extinction threat since Tasmania's last ice age 10,000 years ago.

Following that, there was a comment from the fox task force officer, Nick Mooney:

Bringing foxes into Tasmania is probably the most foolish and stupid thing I could think of being done.

Then there was a comment from Mr Clive Marks, who is a fox expert based in, I think, Victoria. He said:

I would call it an example of bio-terrorism; we're dealing with something which is akin to September 11 for our wildlife in Australia.

Frankly, I have never heard such a load of rubbish in all my life. The reality is this: the police conducted an extensive investigation in Tasmania insofar as it related to the introduction of foxes into the state by a person or persons unknown. Let me read to you the report of the police. I hope that the people involved in *Catalyst* take the opportunity to listen to this information. There was an extensive investigation conducted by four detective constables and an officer from the National Parks and Wildlife Service. That investigation, among other things, said:

The reports that were received seemed to be very reliable and indicated that three people were involved in the importing, raising and release of 11 fox cubs in Tasmania. At this point in time we are unaware as to how many people were involved in the capture from Victoria of these fox pups. It is alleged that these pups were brought into the state over the Launceston show week of 1999 via the boot of a vehicle travelling on the *Spirit of Tasmania*. The pups were allegedly raised on a property in the Longford area in a pen in the bush until they were adult-size, approximately two months.

I do not have the time to read all of it, but the conclusion states:

In this inquiry with our agenda in mind I make these summations and also take into account the other role of wildlife personnel on alleged sightings etc. That there is no solid, physical, forensic, scientific evidence to support any findings of illegal importations of fox, or presence of fox, in Tasmania. With our agenda in mind I cannot explain the full contents and information that came to be in the minister's briefing note. I can say that our investigation was a totally negative finding.

There is another person who has been involved in this whole series of allegations about foxes in Tasmania. Mr Eric Bosworth at Symmons Plains has alleged that he shot a fox. He has made many public statements to the effect that there is a ballistics report that says that his rifle shot the fox. I have in my hand the ballistics report of the Tasmanian police. It says:

I have made an examination of a .22 WMR calibre CZ bolt action rifle serial number 7235225 and three bullet fragments removed from a dead fox which were submitted to our office on 28 September 2001. This examination revealed the following:

1. The rifle is in excellent condition and capable of discharge. No further examination was deemed necessary upon the rifle.
2. The bullet fragments were extremely small, damaged from the impact and calibre cannot be determined. They were all lead fragments without copper wash or copper jacketing. No class rifling characteristics are present on the fragments and they are unsuitable for further examination or comparison. Unfortunately on this occasion I cannot offer more useful information.

A further police report of 13 July 2001 says:

With reference to exhibits obtained, there is no evidence to support the existence of a fox.

Summary: the inquiries conducted by the task force has concluded that the original source of information cannot be corroborated by any material of fact or evidence. The briefing notes cannot be corroborated other than the existence of persons mentioned and no corroborative evidence to suggest any involvement in fox conspiracy.

There is no evidence available from the inquiry that there is an illegal importation of foxes by shooters in the Perth area. There is no evidence available from the inquiry that there has been illegal importation of foxes by any known group of civilians. All civilian sightings in the Hadspen Carrick region are not corroborated—I repeat: not corroborated—by any scientific evidence and can be explained. Mr Peter Mooney, at that time the search team coordinator for National Parks, has not established that foxes are in Tasmania and nor is there one single piece of evidence to corroborate that assertion. And yet an ABC program called *Catalyst* can make a very clear and concise statement that two years ago a group of environmental vandals committed the unthinkable crime. I say to *Catalyst*: on what basis do you make this statement, because it is the greatest load of crap that I have ever heard?

**The PRESIDENT**—I think you had better withdraw that.

**Senator MURPHY**—Mr President, on what basis are you asking me to withdraw it?

**The PRESIDENT**—I believe that it is unparliamentary.

**Senator MURPHY**—If you think it is unparliamentary, I will abide by your request and withdraw. Let me say that it is the greatest load of nonsense and dishonest reporting that you would ever want to hear. The fact that people like Peter Mooney from the Tasmanian National Parks and Wildlife Service and a guy known as Chris Emms, who is on the fox free task force, would have allowed this program to run that line shows just how dishonest they are being in this process.

Remember this: \$400,000 of Commonwealth money has been invested in this search for foxes. The fox free task force have embarked upon a 10-80 poison bait campaign. They say they have had one bait—one out of whatever number they have put in the ground—that has been taken by an alleged

fox. They now want to go around and find dogs that can find foxes. I have been a recreational hunter for most of my life. I have shot thousands of foxes. Given that the fox free task force has had over 300 fox sightings in Tasmania, whether there is one or whether there are 10 or 19 they still cannot find one. They will not involve the recreational hunters of the state—for what reason I do not know. I suspect that they do not really want to find a fox because, if they did involve the recreational hunting fraternity in the state, they would find a fox if one were there. That is the challenge for them, and I hope they may well take it up.

I hope that the Tasmanian government has the balls to make sure that these people do the job that they are being paid to do. Over \$2 million is committed to this program over three years, and that is a problem that the state of Tasmania can do without. We do not want foxes but, let me tell you, involve the people who can actually do the job, not a bunch of jerks from the National Parks and Wildlife Service who want to continue to be paid out of these funds for doing little.

#### **Telecommunications: Broadband Internet Connections**

**Senator LUNDY** (Australian Capital Territory) (7.07 p.m.)—I think it is fair to say that we all need to get ready for 12 months of bread and circuses from the government and Telstra. They are attached at the hip, and they are as one in their absolute focus on privatisation at the expense of the real issues both of them should be facing. The Estens inquiry will provide the forum for this exercise.

If they were looking beyond next year, Telstra would be thinking about modernising their network. If the government were looking beyond the next year and beyond privatisation, they would be thinking about how it could create the type of competitive marketplace needed to ensure that Australians have broadband communications infrastructure fit for the new century, at prices they can afford. But Telstra's corporate leadership is committed to minimising costs and maximising short-term profits. Building a network for the future has never been a priority for a company locked in a mutual agenda of privatisa-