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The Netherlands Travel Report September 2024

(a) the dates in respect of which the allowance is claimed;

16 September 2024 – 27 September 2024

(b) the reason for the travel;

- Meeting and ride along with Netherlands Animal Ambulance to learn how the service benefits the community and its animals.
- Tour of FOUR PAWS Felida Big Cat Sanctuary .
- Visit to multiple sites where infrastructure has been implemented to reduce wildlife road strike, facilitated by a local fauna group.
- Meeting with Kangaroos Alive.
- Visit to the Dutch Parliament to meet with MPs about the kangaroo trade, and the import of skins to countries across Europe.
- Speaking event with Party for the Animals.

(c) an indication of whether the travel relates to parliamentary business or electorate business;

The travel was for electorate business:

- Northern Victoria has one of the largest kangaroo quotas in the state, with the skins and body parts exported to the Netherlands.
- Northern Victoria has a rising wildlife road strike problem, with many constituents raising the issue in relation for both animal and human safety. The Netherlands has addressed this issue and reduced road strike by up to 85% in some areas.

(d) if there was accommodation used in respect of the claim—

(i) the town, city or suburb in which the accommodation was located; and

(ii) the value of the accommodation;

- Airbnb, Brussels - \$200.14
- Airbnb, Muiden - - \$1814.71
- Moxy Hotel, The Hague - \$245.34
- Quentin Golden Bear, Amsterdam - \$225.07

Total: \$2589.71

(e) if there was commercial transport used in respect of the claim, the mode and value of the transport;

Ubers and taxis to accommodation, meetings and airports

Total: \$846.61

(f) a statement of the Member's objectives;

There is a movement to progress animal protection legislation at a political level around the world, and the Animal Justice Party has a sister party in the Netherlands called the Party for the Animals. It has three elected representatives in the Dutch Parliament and many local council equivalents. This trip was to speak to political representatives, NGOs and advocacy groups about policy currently in place in the Netherlands that we are pursuing in Victoria and my region to learn about its

effectiveness and challenges, including efforts to reduce wildlife roadstrike and the rollout of animal ambulances, both of which have been done there successfully. Another focus of this trip was the export of kangaroo skins, with Europe being one of the main importers from our commercial shooting program. My region of Northern Victoria has one of the largest shooting quotas, and it is an issue that I receive consistent correspondence about.

(g) a brief description of the Parliaments and other organisations visited (if any);

- Dierenambulance Amsterdam - <https://www.dierenambulance-amsterdam.nl/>
 - Animal ambulances throughout Amsterdam, and the Netherlands, where members of the public can call in for sick and/or injured animals.
- FOUR PAWS Felida Big Cat Sanctuary - <https://www.felida-bigcatsanctuary.org/>
 - A specialised sanctuary for large cats (lions, tigers etc) that have been rescued from abuse and captivity, and cannot be released into the wild.
- De Faunabescherming - <https://www.faunabescherming.nl/>
 - A fauna organisation responsible for the introduction of infrastructure and technology to reduce wildlife roadstrike, including eoducts and thermal imaging cameras.
- Kangaroos Alive - <https://www.kangaroosalive.org/>
 - An organisation protected to the protection of kangaroos of kangaroos around the world with many international campaigns, including ending the import of skins and body parts into Europe.
- Party for the Animals - <https://www.partyfortheanimals.com/>
 - Dutch political party for animal protection – met with members and MPs Ines Kostic, Christine Teunissen and Esther Ouwehand.
- The Dutch Parliament

(h) a list of those persons met in relation to the reason for the travel and the assistance or information obtained from such persons;

- Dennis Vink (Campaign Manager) – Kangaroos Alive
- Ines Kostic MP – Party for the Animals
- Christine Teunissen MP – Party for the Animals
- Esther Ouwehand MP – Party for the Animals
- Marjolijn Veenstra (Manager) – Party for the Animals
- Members – Party for the Animals
- Dirk Verheij (Secretary) - De Faunabescherming
- Simone Schuls (Sanctuary Manager) – FOURPAWS Felida Big Cat Sanctuary
- Martijn van der Weerd (Director) and Eelco Miedema (Operations Manager) - Dierenambulance Amsterdam
- Casper Veldkamp MP – Minister for Foreign Affairs
- Committee members – Foreign Trade Committee

(i) reference to any documents or publications obtained or considered to be of interest in a Parliamentary sense;

N/A

(j) brief summaries of the study areas pursued in the countries visited;

Technology and infrastructure to reduce wildlife road strike, effectiveness and uptake of animal ambulances, the operation of international animal protection political offices, views and perceptions on the import of kangaroo skins into the Netherlands.

(k) summary of the results achieved and any recommendations arising.

There were numerous purposes for this trip:

- To learn about animal protection at a legislative level in another jurisdiction, and improvements we could make in Victoria;
- To discuss Australian native animal issues of interest to Dutch legislators;
- To meet with NGOs and advocacy groups about policy areas the Animal Justice Party has an interest in that have been implemented in the Netherlands, their effectiveness and challenges;
- To learn more about the work of Dutch legislators and advocacy organisations to improve wildlife welfare, particularly reducing wildlife road strike, as well as the international efforts to stop the import of kangaroo skins into European countries from Australia.

Wildlife Roadstrike

We met with wildlife advocacy groups Dierenambulance Amsterdam, Faunabescherming and De Toevluchtlet to discuss efforts to reduce wildlife road strike through infrastructure development including implementation of fencing, highway overpasses and ecoducts. Combined efforts in the Netherlands have resulted in a reduction of large mammal roadkill by up to 83 percent in some places. This is important to research considering an estimated 10 million animals die on Australian roads each year and vehicle insurance claims involving collisions with kangaroos have recently increased across parts of Australia. In my electorate of Northern Victoria, the rate of wildlife roadstrike is the highest of anywhere in Victoria and it continues to be one of the issues we are contacted about most frequently.

In the last 5 years, Wildlife Victoria has attended to 3,371 animals that were hit by vehicles in the Macedon Shire.

Whilst some measures require further research and significant funding, temporary methods including thermal animal detection and rope bridges for arboreal animals have potential for implementation on Victorian roads, in established wildlife hotspots. This information was particularly useful with an inquiry on this issue before the Economy and Infrastructure Committee to take place next year.

Kangaroos

A number of Dutch politicians have an interest in the prohibition of kangaroo skins and parts. A large quantity of these skins and parts come from my region, with Northern Victoria having one of the largest kangaroo shooting quotas in the state, with the Macedon Ranges and Mount Alexander Shire having their quotas increased despite community opposition. I was able to provide them with information on the commercial shooting program and how it operates, including a briefing to the Chair of the Foreign Trade Committee.