

# Winning the Hearts and Minds

## Proceeding to implementation of the Lord Howe Island Rodent Eradication

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Lord Howe Island Board



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# Key Island Features



- Main island + 28 smaller islets
- 1445 ha (2100 ha in 3D)
- 12km long, 1-2km wide
- World Heritage listed
- Many threatened and endemic species
- Rugged mountains
- Settlement area approx. 350 ha
- 350-400 residents + tourists

# Key Project Features

- Primary target species - Black Rat and House Mouse
- 42 tonnes of Pestoff 20R cereal based pellets (Brodifacoum at 20ppm)
- Combination of aerial and hand broadcast and bait stations
- Captive management of woodhens and currawongs
- Concurrent eradication of masked owls by secondary poisoning, shooting and trapping



**Biggest challenge - people and settlement area**



# How did we get here

- Rats introduced in 1918
- Long history of attempted control
- Eradication first proposed in 2001
- Draft Plan in 2009
- Funded in 2012 - \$9.5M
- Project has always been divisive in the community



# What have we tried in the past

- Pure science, logic and reason
- Community Hall meetings
- Workshops with subject matter experts
- Off island consultants
- Fact sheets / brochures



Change is not new,  
but it's still not easy



# What went wrong – terribly wrong

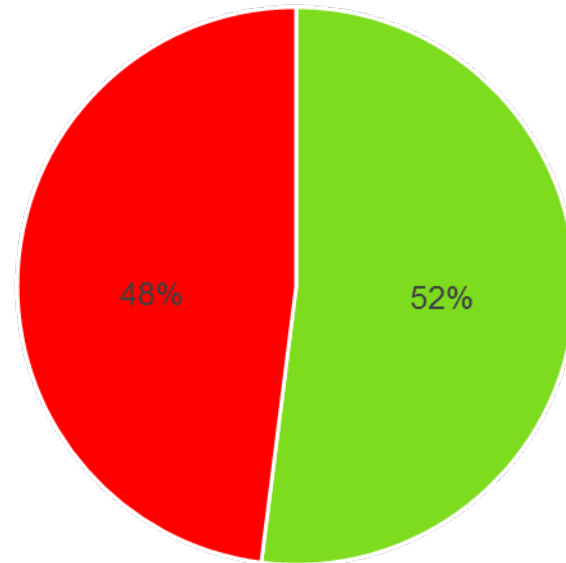
- Pure science couldn't explain OR satisfy the emotional issues
- “It would be a great thing for the island – why don't they understand that”?
- “We didn't feel like we were included in **your proposal**”
- Initial consultation was reactive and didn't allow for community input.
- That was 2009 and we are still dealing with this legacy



# Where did that get us

- 2015 referendum
  - 98% agreed there is a rodent problem
  - Decision to proceed made based on majority vote
- 2015 – 2017 Stage 2 Planning and Approvals
- Final decision Sept 2017
- Implementation in winter 2018?

2015 Community Referendum



■ Eradication ■ Increased rodent control □



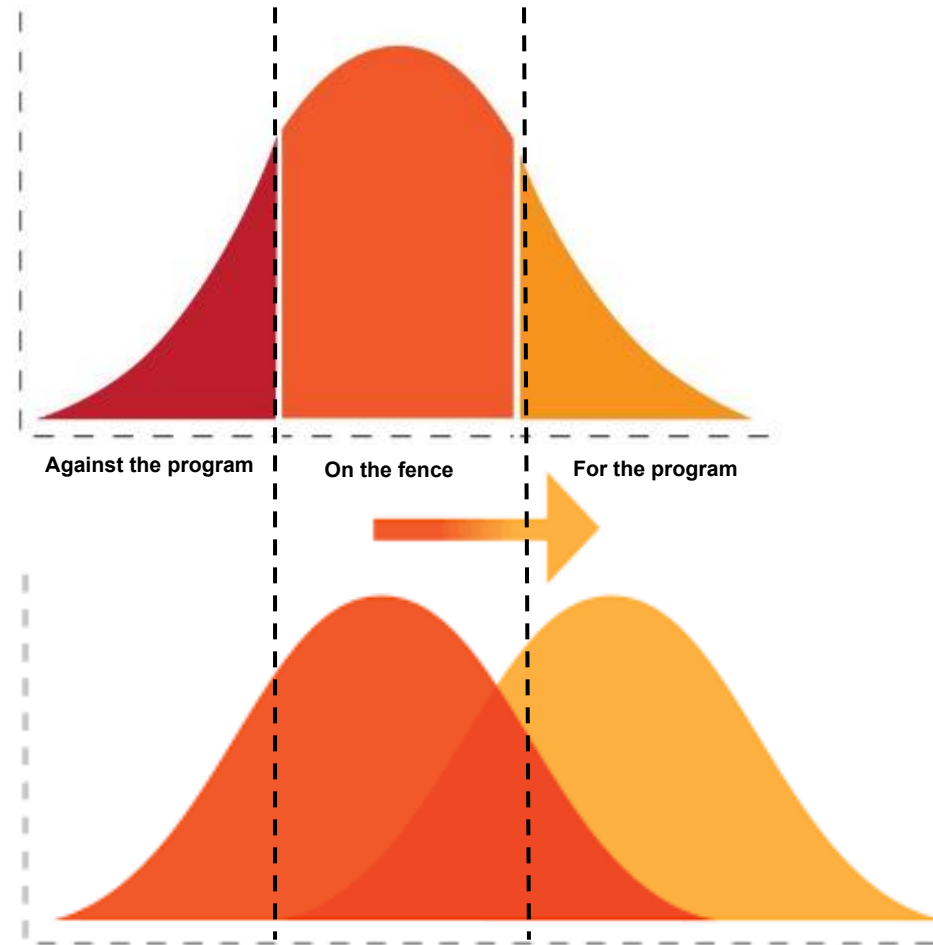
# What are people still concerned about

1. Lack of trust
2. The method
3. Environmental and non-target impacts
4. Human health
5. Tourism
6. It won't work here



# How we are dealing with it

1. **Building trust**
2. Resident Community Engagement Officer
3. Constant one on one engagement with all – it doesn't always have to be about rats
4. Driving home key facts
5. Calling the “BS”



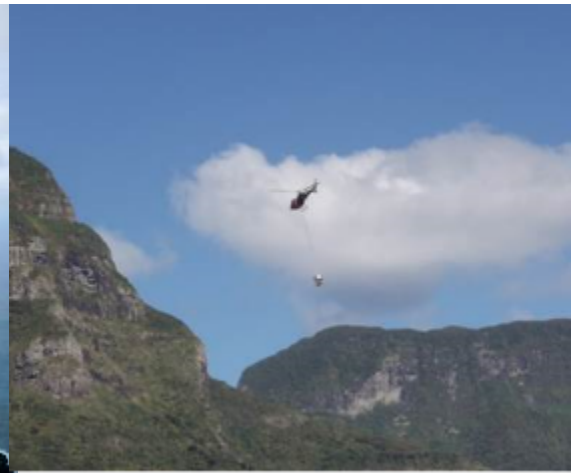
# Lack of trust

What are we hearing	How we are addressing it
“Another example of the Board imposing it’s will”	Talk to us, together how can we make this program work
“Your not coming in to my place”	Who would you be comfortable with
“Islanders have looked after the place for generations”	Let’s take the next step then together
“What’s in it for me”	Figuring out individual drivers



# The method

What are we hearing	How we are addressing it
“You can do it all with bait stations”	240,000 with one every 10m <sup>2</sup> ?
“What about sterility technology”	75% is not good enough
“It will rain poison on rooftops”	How can we work together to bait on your property





# Environmental and non-target impacts

What are we hearing	How we are addressing it
"It will kill all the birds and insects"	We are taking the species at risk into captivity
"It will poison the lagoon and coral"	Show us where this has occurred
"Rats are in equilibrium"	What about the current impacts
"Just use more poison"	Do you think that's a good option?



# Human health impacts


What are we hearing	How we are addressing it
<p>"Its not safe"</p> <p>"It will poison our drinking water"</p> <p>"You won't be able to eat fish for years"</p>	<p>Lets get an independent expert human health panel to look at all your issues.</p>
<p>"Won't somebody think of the children"</p>	
	<p>Lets get the parents and Department of Education's opinion too</p>



# Tourism impacts

What are we hearing	How we are addressing it
“Tourists will die”	“net economic benefits from the eradication are over \$140M with \$58M of that directly benefitting the residents of LHI”
“No nobody will come ever again”	
“Who’s going to compensate us”	
“it will degrade the World Heritage values”	





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ANALYSIS


## Costs and Benefits of Rodent Eradication on Lord Howe Island, Australia

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# It won't work here

What are we hearing	How we are addressing it
“You can’t compare other islands to here.... unless it’s Henderson Is”	Explaining about the 700 successful islands and techniques used there 
“It’s too rugged and the bush is too thick”	
“You won’t get every rat or mouse”	
“How will you stop them coming back”	





# Getting it done – by any means!!







We ***do not*** inherit the earth from our ancestors ***we borrow*** it from our children.

Native American Proverb

Thank You

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