

European House Borer Roof Inspections Underway in Ellenbrook

Perth, 9 July 2007 – More than 200 roof inspections are in the process of being carried out by the European House Borer (EHB) Response in Ellenbrook homes.

The inspections are part of ongoing efforts to contain the European House Borer, with a view to eradicating this destructive pest of pine wood and timber.

“The roof inspections in Ellenbrook are an important part of our surveillance strategy,” EHB Response Operations Manager, Jason Lette said.

“So far, we have not found any evidence of the borer in the roofs we’ve inspected, although there was evidence of other timber pests”.

Agreement for the inspections was sought from Ellenbrook householders living in homes built between 1994 and 1998, which were constructed using untreated pine roofing.

Trained pest inspectors have been engaged to look for evidence of EHB in the roofs. This can include blistering of the wood, oval-shaped exit holes that run with the grain of the wood, frass (a mixture of fine particles of wood dust and pellets of excrement) and a characteristic scraping sound made by EHB larvae as they feed.

“Inspecting a sample of pine roofs in affected areas on a regular basis helps us to monitor and stay a step ahead of the pest,” Mr Lette said.

“We’re very pleased that EHB has not been found in any roofs thus far, and urge the public to continue their vigilance and to call our hotline if they see anything they think might be suspicious.”

EHB was first identified in Perth in January 2004. Since then, EHB Response has inspected more than 56,000 Perth properties and 300,000 hectares of pine plantations for the pest. There are 114 infested sites in total, centred around two main clusters – the Mundaring Hills and the Gnangara/Ellenbrook area, including 8 pine plantations. Plantation removal in affected areas adjacent to housing is planned.

The majority of infested urban sites have been completely cleaned up, with all possible host material removed. Pine trees, which have the potential to harbour EHB, are now also being removed. In total, more than 12,000 tonnes of susceptible material has been destroyed.

Fines of up to \$2,000 apply for moving pine in contravention of regulations. This is outlined in the Agriculture and Related Resources Protection (European House Borer) Regulations, gazetted by the State Government in 2006.

More information about European House Borer is available online at www.ehb.wa.gov.au or by calling the Freecall Hotline at 1800 084 881.

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