



13 February 2017

Our ref: 58-00785

Mr Andrew Cox  
Chief Executive Officer  
Invasive Species Council  
[andrewcox@invasives.org.au](mailto:andrewcox@invasives.org.au)

Dear Mr Cox

## **A NATIONAL RESPONSE TO ERADICATING RED IMPORTED FIRE ANTS FROM AUSTRALIA**

Thank you for your email dated 17 January 2017 regarding the national response to eradicate Red Imported Fire Ants (RIFA) from Australia.

As you may be aware, a State election will be held on 11 March 2017. Following an election announcement, the Government assumes a 'caretaker' role, ensuring that decisions are not made that would bind an incoming government or limit its freedom of action. Given these circumstances, the Minister has asked me to respond on his behalf.

The future of the national RIFA eradication program will be decided at the May 2017 Australian Agriculture Ministers' Forum.

Plant biosecurity officers have reviewed the Report of the Independent Review Panel and advised me that RIFA remains technically feasible to eradicate.

The Department of Agriculture Food Western Australia (DAFWA) concurs with the national policy position that RIFA is a pest of national significance and that the extent of RIFA infestation has now been determined.

DAFWA also agrees that it remains in the national interest to eradicate RIFA and that it is technically feasible and cost beneficial to do so.

DAFWA supports the proposed 10 year RIFA eradication program and is currently liaising with the Western Australian Treasury to develop a cabinet submission on the matter. Final decision on funding will rest with the Western Australian Cabinet following the election.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Chennell  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR