

# Eradication of red fire ants from Australia: Statement of Concern

## An open letter to Australian governments

We, the undersigned, are deeply concerned about the spread of red fire ants. We support full eradication of red fire ants in Australia.

Red fire ants will impact Australia's outdoor way of life. They will infest playgrounds, sporting fields and backyards, reduce agricultural output, do serious injury to those who live and work in infested areas and threaten the safety of our children and our unique native plants and animals.

**We call on all federal, state and territory governments to urgently:**

- a) Fund the eradication of red fire ants to the level recommended by the expert review into the red imported fire ant eradication program.
- b) Commit to fund the program until the job is complete to provide certainty and ensure success.
- c) Provide the necessary oversight and transparency to ensure eradication efforts are effective and accountable to governments and the public.
- d) Ensure effective biosecurity measures are in place to prevent the arrival of new infestations of red fire ants.

### Endorsed by



- **Invasive Species Council:** Andrew Cox, CEO
- **National Farmers' Federation:** Tony Mahar, CEO
- **AgForce:** Charles Burke, CEO
- **Nature Conservation Council of NSW:** Kate Smolski, CEO
- **Victorian National Parks Association:** Matt Ruchel, Executive Director

- **Local Government NSW:** Cr Keith Rhoades, President
- **Queensland Regional NRM Groups' Collective:** Andrew Drysdale, CEO
- **Fruit Growers Tasmania:** Phil Pyke, Business Development Manager
- **Sunnybank Community and Sports Club:** Peter Carroll, Chairman



# Why we are concerned about red fire ants

## Invasive Species Council

"If Australia fails to eradicate fire ants almost no corner of the continent will be safe from these menacing predators. Fire ants can rapidly expand in numbers and have the potential to invade more than 99% of the nation. Once out of control fire ants would threaten every aspect of Australian life, including our farming communities, schools, sports grounds, tourism industries and unique natural heritage."

**Andrew Cox, CEO**

## National Farmers' Federation

"Red fire ants are a threat not just to agriculture but to the entire Australian community. The National Farmers' Federation advocates for a strong, robust and science-based approach to biosecurity – this includes proactive measures to maintain Australia's favourable pest and disease status."

**Tony Mahar, CEO**

## Nature Conservation Council of NSW

"People love spending time in Australia's great outdoors, visiting stunning beaches, beautiful bushland and iconic landmarks. Fire ants threaten our amazing natural places, and put our unique wildlife at risk. We must do all we can to manage the pending invasion before it is too late."

**Kate Smolski, CEO**

## AgForce

"This aggressive stinging ant is a major threat to the survival of young calves and cattle in southeast Queensland. Human lifestyles and farming procedures would change forever if red imported fire ants are not eradicated. AgForce along with producer members across Queensland agree that surveillance and treatment must continue."

**Charles Burke, CEO**

## Victorian National Parks Association

"Red fire ants could make visiting our great national parks almost unbearable, and cause havoc to many of our birds, mammals, frogs and reptiles. Urgent, effective treatment is essential."

**Matt Ruchel, Executive Director**

## Sunnybank Community and Sports Club

"Fire ants are under control in our area right now but they would be a major disruption to our club's sport groups and community if they get out of control."

**Peter Carroll, Chairman**

## Local Government NSW

"We are concerned by the potential spread of red fire ants and the financial costs to affected councils and the social and environmental impacts on their communities."

**Cr Keith Rhoades, President**

## Queensland Regional NRM Groups' Collective

"The demonstrable impact these pests are having on the environment and people fully justify the magnitude of investment required and the NRM Groups in Queensland look forward to working with governments and communities to help implement the eradication program."

**Andrew Drysdale, CEO**

## Fruit Growers Tasmania

"We are very concerned over the potential expansion of red fire ants if eradication isn't funded into the future. This is a devastating pest in many ways and would immediately halt the transfer of nursery plants across state boundaries from affected areas. The potential economic impact of the fire ants could equal over time that of the Queensland fruit fly."

**Phil Pyke, Business Development Manager**

