



26 October 2020

Mr Andrew Cox
CEO
Invasive Species Council

By email: andrewcox@invasives.org.au

Dear Mr Cox,

Re: 2020 Invasive Species Council Queensland election questionnaire

Thank you for your correspondence including your 2020 Invasive Species Council Queensland (ISC) election questionnaire.

As you would be aware, the LNP is a strong supporter of rural and regional Queensland. We value the role the ISC plays in advocating for the effective management of invasive pests and weeds in our community.

The outcome of this election is far more important than simply determining who will lead Queensland through its first fixed four-year Parliamentary term. It is about Queensland's future and who is best placed to guide us through the biggest economic crisis in almost a century.

LNP's economic plan

The LNP has a bold vision to make Queensland the economic powerhouse of Australia once again; the best place to get a job and get ahead. An LNP government will implement our economic plan for a decade of secure jobs, to get Queenslanders working again and lead Queensland out of recession by stimulating the economy.

Unlike the Palaszczuk Labor Government, the LNP has a plan to boost Queensland's economy. While it is true that economic uncertainty has never been so widespread in Queensland, it should not be forgotten that Queensland had the nation's highest unemployment, most bankruptcies, and lowest business confidence prior to COVID-19. As such, the decision made by Anastacia Palaszczuk to cancel this year's budget was reckless, and with Queensland the only Australian jurisdiction to not have a budget, it means Labor is flying blind through the biggest economic crisis in almost a century.

Our vision is to make Queensland the economic powerhouse of Australia once again, the best place to get a job, get ahead and raise a family.

The LNP's plan will get Queensland working again.

Our plan for a stronger economy and secure jobs is based on four foundations:

- investing for growth
- unleashing Queensland industry
- supercharging the regions
- securing our children's future

The LNP is the only party that has a plan to build a stronger economy and more secure jobs.

Red fire ants

Under the Palaszczuk Labor Government's National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program, the fire ant footprint has grown.

The independent efficiency and effectiveness review into the program revealed the density of larger fire ant mounds has actually increased under the Government's watch. That review was quietly released by the Government under cover of coronavirus restrictions earlier this year.

Despite spending more than \$134 million of the \$411 million allocated to the program and has not achieved its own KPIs and meeting community expectations. It represents another example of the Palaszczuk Labor Government's mismanagement of taxpayer's money.

Almost 1 in 10 of the compliance checks conducted in 2018-2019 were found to be non-compliant, and 30% of these non-compliant cases were not resolved within a month.

In one example the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries took more than five months to remove ants from a property on Bromelton. The extraordinary slow response is completely unacceptable considering the risk posed by fire ant infestations.

There is little public confidence in the program, especially in the battleground regions in the Lockyer Valley, Scenic Rim, and the northern Gold Coast.

The situation has deteriorated to the extent that the Queensland Ombudsman is currently conducting its own initiated investigation based on reports it has received from the public.

If the situation is not urgently reversed fire ants NSW will be threatened by infestations.

Queenslanders, as well as interstate taxpayers who contribute to the program funding deserve better use of their funds.

The LNP is firmly committed to the eradication program and rejects Labor's botched implementation and ongoing mismanagement.

Yellow crazy ants

The LNP takes the eradication of invasive species in Queensland seriously.

Eradication efforts such as the current program against yellow crazy ants should be properly funded and not be a political tool.

As a result of the LNP's advocacy last year we helped secure joint state and federal funding for the yellow crazy ant eradication program.

An LNP Government will work with communities and industries to eradicate yellow crazy ants. We are committed to delivering a budget within the first 100 days if elected on 31 October. As part of the budget deliberation process we would welcome engagement with the ISC.

Feral deer

An elected LNP Government will work with all stakeholders and the community to consider an approach to manage feral deer.

Queensland's biosecurity future

Given the uncertainty and secrecy that exists because the Palaszczuk Labor Government has not handed down a budget, making funding commitments is challenging. The reckless decision to cancel the Budget has denied Queenslanders access to transparent information on the state of Queensland's finances.

In stark contrast to the Palaszczuk Labor Government, the LNP has committed to handing down a budget within the first 100 days if elected on 31 October 2020.

Community representation

Queensland needs strong biosecurity measures to protect our economy, agricultural industry, local jobs, and the environment. As you would be aware, exotic pests and diseases can cause significant damage.

It is completely unacceptable the Palaszczuk Labor Government has failed managing biosecurity measures.

The Biosecurity Queensland Ministerial Advisory Council is meant to be one of the key tools in the biosecurity fight and is supposed to meet multiple times a year. For more than two years the Palaszczuk Labor Government has failed to call a meeting of the council. Bodies such as the Advisory council should have active role in informing government.

Funding invasive pests and weeds

Biosecurity incursions and outbreaks pose a serious threat to Queensland's agricultural sector. Pests and diseases like African Swine Flu, Armyworm, and Panama TR4 are threatening Queensland. Queensland's biosecurity is the last line of defence, and it is being frequently broken.

That is why an LNP Government will reinvigorate Biosecurity Queensland's operations and renew its focus.

We are committed to bolstering Queensland's biosecurity front line and back farmers with 10 extra operational staff.

We are concerned that Labor has inadequately responded to pests, invasive weeds, and diseases. The LNP will end six years of Labor inaction and renew a focus on what matters to farmers.

It was politically treacherous for the Labor Government to promise \$5 million for Prickly Acacia eradication measures and then take it away.

Queenslanders will not forget the Labor buried the parliamentary weed inquiry for three years only to deliver a report without any recommendations to help landholders. An LNP Government will dust off the report and properly reconsider the findings of the report.

The LNP has a plan to bolster and refocus the state's war on pest and weeds, which we are desperately losing under Labor. The status quo cannot be allowed to continue.

Labor has no budget and no economic plan for Queensland.

Only an LNP Government will build a stronger economy so we can invest in proper weed management controls.

Yours sincerely



Tony Perrett MP
Shadow Minister for Agricultural Industry Development,
and Fisheries and Forestry
Member for Gympie