



Steven Miles
DEPUTY PREMIER OF QUEENSLAND

WORKING TOGETHER FOR QUEENSLAND

28 October 2020

Andrew Cox
CEO
Invasive Species Council
By email: andrewcox@invasives.org.au

Dear Mr Cox

Thank you for your letter of 16 October 2020 regarding our policy commitments in the 2020 Queensland election, and your policy proposals. The Palaszczuk Labor Government's strong health response to the COVID-19 pandemic has meant that we can now start to deliver our plan for economic recovery. This plan will support jobs, help small business, invest in Queensland's manufacturing industry, buy local, and bring forward new infrastructure.

The Red Imported Fire Ant program is a national program supported by the Federal Government and all states and territories. In Queensland the program is three years in to a 10-year eradication program starting from west of Brisbane and working towards the east, with suppression work undertaken in other areas where ants are present. This program is on track to achieve its eradication targets, and we are already seeing promising results from eradication work in areas west of Brisbane.

The Wet Tropics Management Authority (WTMA) began its Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program in 2013 to eradicate this invasive pest from areas within and adjacent to the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. WTMA has also worked closely with Biosecurity Queensland and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service on the Program.

Since 2016, the Palaszczuk Labor Government has committed over \$12 million to yellow crazy ant eradication including a further \$9 million over the next three years in 2019-20. The Program has demonstrated considerable success in lowering numbers of yellow crazy ants. Eradication has been achieved at several sites and many more sites are transitioning from broadscale treatment to intensive surveys and spot treatments. I am aware that the Program continues to receive considerable support from the local community and industries such as tourism, sugar and housing.

In response to detected yellow crazy ant infestations in Townsville the Palaszczuk Labor Government provided an additional \$140,000 in funding to Townsville City Council under the Queensland Feral Pest Initiative for management activities and is providing specific invasive ant management training to Council officers to build their capability.

Funding of \$1.2 million secured from the Federal Government is also being used to fund a Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) led project focused on building skills and capacity for management of invasive ant species among landholders, local governments and key agricultural and industry organisations.

In Queensland local governments are responsible for managing feral deer through their biosecurity planning process and landholders are responsible for taking control actions consistent with these plans.

The Palaszczuk Labor Government will continue to assist Local governments to carry out a range of activities to manage feral deer, through the provision of training and coordination, as well as conducting research into best practice control methods. One example is the Palaszczuk Labor Governments research project in North Queensland that is examining factors that can limit the distribution and abundance of feral deer populations and determining optimum methods of control.

A re-elected Palaszczuk Labor Government will commence development of a new Feral Deer Management Strategy in 2021.

The Palaszczuk Labor Government has budgeted, on average, \$6 million per year on pest management within protected area and forest estates. We have allocated a further \$1.27 million to the joint Nest to Ocean Turtle Protection Program into 2021, and is seeking matching funding from the Australian Government to ensure work to reduce the impact of predators such as feral pigs and foxes on nesting success of marine turtles along Queensland's coastline continues.

The former LNP government cut Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services' rangers by more than 60, which meant less staff to maintain our parks and forests and conduct vital pest management activities. The Palaszczuk Labor Government has rebuilt this vital frontline workforce since the LNP's cuts.

The Palaszczuk Labor Government has a demonstrated record of achievement regarding Queensland's biosecurity. We have delivered on our commitment to conduct a detailed review of Queensland's biosecurity capability and developed a long-term plan to restore Queensland's biosecurity response to world's best practice. As you point out in your correspondence, the Palaszczuk Labor Government provided \$10.84 million of new funding to deliver on the core recommendations of the review Queensland's biosecurity capability.

The Palaszczuk Labor Government partnered with industry and community groups to design a biosecurity strategy that breaks new ground for collaborative effort in mitigating biosecurity risks. *The Queensland Biosecurity Strategy: Our Next Five Years 2018-2023* represents a shared strategic direction for addressing biosecurity risks in Queensland across government, industry and the community. In contrast, the LNP decimated DAF when they were in government including sacking 26% of Biosecurity Queensland staff.

A re-elected Palaszczuk Labor Government welcomes a continuing dialogue with the Invasive Species Council and other key stakeholders to ensure Queensland approach to managing pests and weeds remains world class.

Now is not the time to risk the LNP's cuts. Queensland's ongoing economic and health recovery requires leadership and stability, and Deb Frecklington and the LNP are a risk to our recovery.

I urge you to communicate this message with your members and supporters. Should the Palaszczuk Labor Government be re-elected, we look forward to working with you for the benefit of all Queenslanders.

Yours sincerely



STEVEN MILES MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Health
Minister for Ambulance Services