

**North Queensland First
Response to Invasive Species Council 2020 pre-election questionnaire**

Reply from Jason Costigan 26 October 2020

Q1. Yes, noting that SE Queensland is not our priority.

Q2. Yes, noting that SE Queensland is not our priority and we would be guided on any changes by experts in the field.

Q3. Yes, absolutely. Regrettably, I have been kept in the dark in relation to the situation at Shute Harbour in my own electorate. The Whitsunday Regional Council has failed to provide any information since the infestation was first discovered. I thank the Invasive Species Council for providing background information on this matter in the lead up to the 2020 State Election.

Q4. Yes, noting that Townsville is not the only area of concern.

Q5. Yes, noting that Cairns is not the only area of concern.

Q6. We have made it very clear we are not going to be a party famous for feasibility studies. We believe in getting results, instead of being bogged down with paperwork.

Q7. We are concerned with an increase in the feral deer population in areas within our geopolitical footprint. I have seen feral deer myself on the Bruce Highway in Central Queensland and believe it is only a matter of time before a serious motor vehicle accident takes place involving feral deer. We believe in a shoot-to-kill approach, no different to the sustainable culling of other species, either native or otherwise, where it is in the public interest, particularly in the areas of community safety. This is only common sense.

Q8. I am not familiar with the strategy but would be happy to be briefed by experts if we secure the balance of power on October 31, with a view to updating the strategy.

Q9. One of the many projects we have committed to, subject to NQ FIRST securing the balance of power, is the relocation of Biosecurity Queensland's head office and major operations from South-East Queensland to Mareeba in the Far North as part of a wider decentralisation agenda. The funding for this project would come from our \$1b Building the North program, financed by mining royalties. We believe that BQ should be in the Far North, which remains on the biosecurity 'front line' and hence our commitment several months ago towards relocation.

Q10. Not only would NQ FIRST retain the Ministerial Advisory Council but we would want strong regional and indigenous representation on that Council and would want to see regular meetings in regional communities, in particular, in the Far North. If NQ FIRST secures the balance of power, we would want to see who is on that Council and if need be, ask the Minister to make the necessary changes.

Q11. We would expect representatives from the environmental and or NRM sectors on the Ministerial Advisory Council, along with representatives of the agricultural sector and other key stakeholders.

Q12. That is a matter for the Treasurer but NQ FIRST wants a Northern Development Fund, financed by mining royalties from the Galilee Basin, which could make a contribution to such as a strategy.

Q13. We would do whatever we could to get better value for the taxpayer and "community action towards responding to the early stages" of invasions would be strongly supported by NQ FIRST.

Q14. Yes, on the basis that this work is done at the new headquarters of Biosecurity Queensland at Mareeba, as outlined in a previous response.

Q15. NQ FIRST would seek expert advice in relation to these matters.

Q16. No, because NQ FIRST does not believe in bigger government – just better government and improved service delivery for the people of Queensland, in particular, North, Far North and Central Queensland. It is my strong view that Queensland's next Minister for Primary Industries or similar should also be the Minister for Biosecurity and that the role be given greater recognition.