

Biddadaba Creek Action Group



9 December 2016

Research Director
Agriculture and Environment Committee
Parliament House
BRISBANE QLD 4000
aec@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Butcher and fellow committee members,

Inquiry into the impacts of invasive plants (weeds) and their control in Queensland

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on this issue which is one that we have been battling with for many years.

We feel that the inquiry into the impact on invasive weeds in Queensland and in Australia in general goes much deeper than the three that you have identified in your press release. Prickly Acacia is not a problem in our particular area but we do understand the problem it causes. We also feel that a more local approach will be required as some weeds will be causing greater impact than others. Giant Rat's Tail is a big problem in our, and surrounding areas, and we believe that the Local and State Governments are a major cause of the spread of this weed. A prime example of this is the land bought by a previous State Government to build the Glendower Dam in the Scenic Rim Regional Council Area. This area of land is heavily infested with Giant Rat's Tail and nothing is being done to control it. Cattlemen are leasing the land on a month by month basis, fattening cattle and selling through the local saleyards. The cattle are then being purchased by locals with Giant Rat's Tail seed in their coats and stomachs, thus spreading the noxious weed unwittingly to buyer's properties.

The State Government needs to sort out its own backyard first then ensure that local councils maintain council land and verges so that landowners feel that their time and money is being well spent. Many of the points in your press release are failing badly. Native vegetation and animals are suffering badly as weeds take over what was once pristine creeks and pastures.

Local Farmers who have the knowledge and care about the weed issue are spending many hours and many thousands of dollars struggling to control or limit the spread of these weeds whilst local councils are turning a blind eye to the problem, not spraying these or other noxious weeds including Lantana, Creeping Lantana, Groundsel Bush, Blue Heliotrope, Green Cestrum bush – which is very deadly to stock and has been taken off the noxious weed list - Nogoora Burr and many more. The problem is also spreading to our waterways where weeds like Chinese Celtis, Cats Claw and Climbing Asparagus are running rampant through our creeks choking out native trees and increasing erosion. Yet all levels of government are looking the other way and not acting upon it.

The constant changing of names of management groups like SEQ Catchments which is now Healthy Waterways etc highlights the issue of the cost to our environment. The money spent rebadging these organisations, making field staff redundant and replacing them with administration staff, changing buildings and office staff would go a long way to help control the spread of weeds if put into the hands of private contractors who specialise in the control and removal of noxious weeds or Landcare and other green groups who have the interest of the environment as their priority not a balance sheet or self-preservation.

Weeds like Fireweed are near impossible to control by spraying alone. Many staff could be deployed into research stations like the one near Warwick to investigate if biological control could be an option to help win the battle. Establishing areas to wash down machinery when it is being mowed may also help slow the problem.

After the last State election, the Government sacked all field staff who were on the front line conducting field days, education farmers and talking to the new breed of landowners who move out from the city to their three to five acre properties with their two horses and a majority of whom think Fireweed is a beautiful wildflower and Climbing Asparagus is beautiful in flower arrangements.

The money needs to be deployed in the frontline. Stopping the spread of weeds from the source so we can get on top of them before they take over.

Again, the issue like the ridiculous vegetation laws that were bought before Parliament earlier in the year highlights the issue of people making decisions in areas they know very little about. Come out and speak to landowners and people who live and work in these situations daily to get the real facts and hard truths. I don't think there is much Fireweed in George Street and many of you have not had to deal with stock losses from Green Cestrum infestations.

Please feel free to contact me for any further clarifications or to take me up on my offer.

Regards

George Massam
President
Biddaddaba Creek Action Group

