



12 January 2017

Mr Rob Hansen
Research Director
Agriculture and Environment Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Via email: aec@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Hansen

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

The Council of Mayors (SEQ) welcomes this opportunity to provide input to the inquiry into the impacts of invasive plants (weeds) and their control in Queensland.

The Council of Mayors (SEQ) is the independent local government advocacy organisation for the one in seven Australians and two thirds of Queenslanders living in South East Queensland (SEQ). Our Directors are the 11 Mayors of the region elected by the community of SEQ.

On behalf of our member Councils, I make the following points in relation to the Inquiry's Terms of Reference:

Responsibilities of local governments under the Biosecurity Act 2014

Our member Councils report that the impact of controlling weeds is an ever-increasing resourcing burden. While implementation of the new Act is still being worked through, it is important to stress that implementation costs have not been matched with any State funding for the work.

Member Councils are concerned that when outbreaks impact private landholders, it will increasingly be the local Council left to deal with the problem, handling community concerns and providing extension services.

Control on Crown land

Member Councils are concerned that Crown land managers are not adequately funded to manage weeds and may not be meeting the Biosecurity Obligation under the Act. These agencies include Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Natural Resources and Mines, and Department of Transport and Main Roads.

These lands act as reservoirs of weed material and are likely to magnify the impact of an outbreak unless this land management improves.

Biological controls / new technologies

Member Councils agree that Biosecurity Queensland has a vital role in investigating biological control methods and as such needs to be adequately funded to meet this task.

Environmental programs administered by Department of Environment and Heritage Protection

Member Councils are not aware of such programs being available to the SEQ region.

Coordination across the three levels of government

Recently, Council of Mayors (SEQ), in conjunction with the Local Government Association of Queensland, established a regional pest management sub-committee under the Co-Investment Arrangement. Whilst it is early days, it is hoped that this approach will assist with regional coordination across State and Local Government departments along with key land managers such as Seqwater, as well as better informing the State prioritisation process.

A whole of government approach is needed and supported and the framework provided by the *Biosecurity Act 2014* should be the mechanism employed to prioritise and allocate funding to the relevant on-ground and research actions.

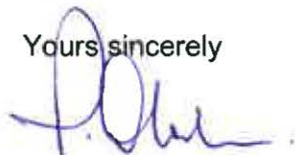
Two of the three case studies to be examined by the Committee are relevant to SEQ, namely fireweed and giant rat's tail grass. Member Councils would appreciate the opportunity to provide evidence to the Committee in due course on the control of these two weed species.

We would like to point out that the three case studies to be investigated by the Committee are too limited and do not reflect the wide range of issues associated with weed management. The Committee has selected three agricultural weeds which are similar in their impacts and control. SEQ contains highly urbanised areas as well as rural areas and high value conservation areas. In addition to agricultural impacts in the rural areas, weed impacts to areas of high conservation value, riverine and aquatic areas are environmental and social in nature and are considered a high priority for our member Councils. It would be useful for the Committee to examine case studies from these categories.

It should also be noted that Council of Mayors (SEQ) supports the detailed submission made by the Local Government Association of Queensland to this inquiry.

Should you require any further information regarding our position on this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me at [REDACTED] I look forward to your positive consideration of the issues raised in this submission.

Yours sincerely



Peter Olah
Executive Director