

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

Submission No. 042

To: [REDACTED] [Agriculture and Environment Committee](#)
Subject: Submission to the Inquiry into invasive weeds Qld Government
Date: Monday, 16 January 2017 3:41:40 PM

To:
Research Director Agriculture and Environment Committee,
Parliament House QLD 4000.
From:
Vivien Butler

[REDACTED]
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16th January, 2016

Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to submit the following to the Inquiry regarding the spread of Giant Ratstail amongst other invasive weeds.

I am a small landholder (27 acres) on the Sunshine Coast. There is an Energex easement through the property and more recently the water pipeline to Brisbane from the Sunshine Coast took an easement.

The property is not farmed and is only used to graze our families horses. The property has been in the family since 1954 and specifically owned by myself since 1980. The paddocks were kept weed free due to constant surveillance and immediate attention to any weed appearance by both chemical spraying and hand weeding.

What has become obvious in the last 10 years is that the Energex personnel and contractors have brought Giant Ratstail onto the property, which I am constantly eradicating. They do this because they DO NOT HAVE ANY PROTOCOLS THAT THEY ADHERE TO when moving from one property to another. There are a number of properties on the Sunshine Coast with Giant Ratstail and the Energex service/technical vehicles move from one property to another without any cleaning procedure, thus transferring the seed.

When the Qld Government took an easement for the water pipeline, it was and still is, a constant battle to stop their vehicles and personnel from traversing paddocks in vehicles that have not been cleaned. They move from a contaminated property to other properties and DO NOT HAVE ANY PROTOCOLS regarding decontamination.

During construction of the water pipeline we had up to 20 service vehicles a day coming onto the property, this is in addition to the scrapers, excavators and trucks etc.

There vehicles moved up and down the pipeline (as they had to) through contaminated and non-contaminated properties with no regard.

The saga went on for 3 years with regular service vehicles coming on to the property. The legacy was infestation with Giant Ratstail which had to be immediately and consistently eradicated.

I have now made it exceedingly plain that they MAY NOT drive across the paddocks and that they can get out and walk after cleaning their boots.

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As a not related aside, the start of the initial work to instigate the pipeline was around the time of E.I. and the lockdown. These people working on the government pipeline had NO IDEA about biosecurity and moved from one property to another with no regard. After some heated discussion I made them leave their vehicles outside the property and to disinfect their boots before coming onto the property. If my horses weren't allowed off the property due to the EI protocol then employees and contractors were not going from horse property to horse property without some form of biosecurity. They had NO protocols at all. Same with Energex personnel. This situation highlighted the total lack of vigilance and procedures.

Slashing contractors, earthmoving equipment etc also have no biosecurity protocols or procedures that they adhere to. Slashing contractors often work on properties with Giants Ratstail (and a variety of other weeds) and then load up and move to another property. Many landholders do not oversee the arrival of contractors and therefore do not see the state of the machinery when it arrives on their property. This is how so much invasive weed is spread.

Councils also contribute to the problem with roadside slashing. Once again the machines move from weed infested ground to weed free ground spreading the various types of weeds. Where this has happened on our road verge, the resultant ratstail (not giant) has grown on the verge and then spread into our property. More work to eradicate!

In the forestry I see where motorbikes and 4 wheel drives (including National Parks vehicles) have brought Giant Ratstail onto the firebreaks etc.

For myself, it is constant vigilance and hard work to ensure weed free pasture. Treating Giant Ratstail with Taskforce is also expensive. I cut the seed heads off and then spray the plant with Taskforce which works very well in eradication, but is backbreaking work for me as I am 68 years old. The effort is well worth it to me to keep these weeds out of the paddocks.

To sum up: There should be Best Practice Protocols for contractors and machinery operators. Perhaps they should be licenced and have to undergo training and regular updates so that they can recognise noxious weeds etc, and take the appropriate measure for control. I also feel that as the Dept of Ag & Fisheries has the details of every property holder via a PIC, and also via RBE, they out set up an email system with say 3 monthly updates on what is of concern, who to contact for advise and what basic steps the property holders can take to help control invasive weeds and diseases.

Thanking you for your time and hoping there is some value in my submission.

Yours faithfully,

Vivien Butler

