

SUBMISSION TO

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE'S

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

Our submission deals with fireweed (*Senecio madagascariensis*).

When Trevor worked for the Department of Primary Industries he can recall collecting a sample of fireweed, around 1985, from the Tamborine area and one of the Government Botanists said at the time this was the first recorded find in Queensland. So 32 years later it has certainly spread to many parts of the State, particularly in south-east Queensland.

The Committee's discussion paper tells of the problems associated with fireweed. Whilst we have seen fireweed in recent years, 2016 proved to be the perfect year for fireweed to propagate. The late winter, early spring rain at regular intervals, the weather and often well grazed paddocks meant the amount of fireweed that came up far exceeded any in previous years. This has meant that there is now a greater seed bank in the soil for later years.

Trying to keep on top of fireweed proves to be a difficult job. Whilst herbicides do work we are told that fireweed can still go through a flower development stage and seed setting even though it has been sprayed or pulled out of the ground.

What can we do?

- Spraying makes it hard for smaller property owners who do not have access to large spray rigs, as many larger property owners do.
- With constant spraying, particularly as it has to be carried out multiple times in a season, there is the inevitability that fireweed will become resistant to the spray being used.
- There is a case for the herbicides used to control fireweed to be made available to property owners at a subsidised rate.
- Currently it is not legal to take fireweed to a public tip. There should be a protocol developed whereas fireweed, which has been suitably bagged, can be disposed of in land fill or at transfer stations.
- Fireweed on public lands e.g. roads will continue to be a source of infestation for property owners. Public land owners, such as Councils and State Governments, do not have the resources to keep fireweed under control on the land over which they have jurisdiction.
- Fireweed is listed as Restricted Matter under the Biosecurity Act 2014. Is this realistic?

