

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

Submission No. 051



Fax Cover

4 pages including this

TO: The Research Director,
Mr. Rob Hansen
Queensland Parliament
Agriculture and Environment Committee
Inquiry into the Impacts of Invasive Plants (Weeds) and their control in
Queensland

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From Peter Douglas

[REDACTED]

Good Morning Rob,

Thank you for our discussion Tuesday – our printer has decided to help at last
but I am not up to signature and such via email

Yours,

[REDACTED]

Peter Douglas

**A Submission to The Queensland Parliament's Agricultural and Environment
Committee Inquiry into Invasive Weeds-their impact and control**
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This submission is written by Peter Douglas –a grazier from near Jundah

47 years primary production experience from jackeroo to Group Manager to owning
and operating a block in partnership with his wife Myra

17 years in local government, 8 as Mayor, Barcoo Shire

10 years Chairman of Desert Channels Natural Resource Management group

part time weed spray contractor for Barcoo Shire

Member of the Lake Eyre Basin Community Advisory Group

**The responsibilities of local government in relation to control of prohibited,
restrictive or Invasive plants imposed under s48 of the Biosecurity Act 2014 are
reasonable and local government are meeting those obligations**

Part of the responsibility of local government is to lead by example- Councils in the
Lake Eyre Basin catchment have done a lot to control declared weeds along road
corridors (particularly Main Roads-thanks mainly to Main Roads funding)

As for ensuring compliance-on grazing land a sad effort –lack of funding and lack of
enthusiasm for being in the firing line.

This raises the question –Are regulations sound enough to be enforced or are they as
weak as wild dog control which has loopholes you could drive a truck through?

Handing out poison to landholders to use is a haphazard approach with little hope of
success- weed eradication is easily pushed back down the priority list as the year rolls
on

**Programs for the control of weeds on Crown land administered by Dep't Of
Natural Resources and Mines are effective**

Not clear what this covers-can't comment

**Biosecurity Queensland's weeds programs including biological controls and new
technologies are adequately funded and effective at controlling weeds**

Maybe, maybe not - the problem being that some people pin their hopes on biological
control and do nothing while waiting for the magic to arrive. Not every biological
control released has been successful as the cane toads will attest

Finding a balance for expenditure of funding is very complicated. On one hand
research must be carried out without letting the problem get out of hand if no control
is found

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Environmental Programs administered by the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection impact favourably on weed control programs administered by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and local governments

By the results obviously not

Federal, State and local government weeds programs are coordinated to maximise their achievements and to have a whole of government approach

Again by results, obviously not. However where there is no compulsion to control Prickly Acacia (or any other weed) how do you get coordination when you cannot have an all in approach? The agencies may coordinate all they like; there is some interaction between agencies, local government, and the Natural Resource Management groups but participation is voluntary. Lack of tangible results speaks for themselves. The "Containment Line" is a joke

General Comments

Traditional approach has not worked. Area of infestation has roughly quadrupled to 23 million ha infested, some say 31 million

The Lake Eyre Basin channel country is under increasing threat as Prickly Acacia is brought down stream by water, livestock or transport

The 2 NRM Groups –Southern Gulf and Desert Channels have had some success using Federal and State funding.

Desert Channels succeeded in gaining permission for off label usage of Tibuthiron in water courses under strict guide lines enabling extremely dense core areas to be treated by drone application

Why not have funding through local government from Queensland Treasury to primary producers similar to that promoted by Longreach Council for exclusion fencing

Desert Channels have an approach of "we'll help you to help yourself" where producers are given assistance the first year of a planned program, no action in year 2 by the grazier = no return by Desert Channels. This approach has had a great success rate

The "we can't live without Prickly Acacia" attitude brings an interesting point. Perennial grasses cannot compete with canopy cover bringing annual grasses which die off then stock have to fall back on Prickly acacia. This situation is exacerbated by dry times, overstocking and kangaroos

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General Comments continued.

Reestablishment of perennial grasses has a beneficial effect as the land goes into dry times later and responds better when rain comes.

Pasture Growth and canopy cover are directly related more canopy-less grass

Outside contractors are usually the most efficient way to get results unless the problem is small and enthusiasm is high.

Quarantine of stock for at least a week before movement would go a long way towards cutting transported seed volume as does washing motor transport- even if only the wheels are washed out makes a difference.

If government and community are to get the best return on investment in eradicating Prickly Acacia some courage will have to be shown.

I would strongly recommend that the Committee invite Desert Channels and Southern Gulf to give a briefing demonstrating an approach to invasive weed eradication that works

The greatest threat to pastures and in particular to the Mitchell grass bio region and flood plains of the Lake Eyre Basin is encroachment by Prickly Acacia and gidgee trees One has to be eradicated the other controlled.

The cost to the grazing industry in lost production has to be high, the cost of assistance for early onset drought would also add to it let alone the physical and mental cost.

Healthy pasture is to the grazing industry what the Reef is to tourism and fishing. Prickly Acacia can be beaten

Sources

DNR Fact sheets
Desert Channels Queensland-
Southern Gulf Catchments
Barcoo Shire Council
Mayor Belinda Murphy McKinlay Shire
Mayor Ric Britton Boulia Shire
Mayor Bruce Scott Barcoo Shire
Bio Security staff
Life experience

Thank you for the opportunity to comment

Peter Douglas