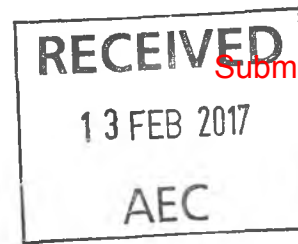


Inquiry into the impacts of invasive plants (weeds)  
and their control in Queensland



Submission No. 056

## OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Liz Schmidt



3 February 2017

Our Ref: 1154208  
File Ref: 03/AUT/08  
Your Ref: 11.1.14  
Enquiries: Liz Schmidt

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

Dear Mr Hansen

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

Thank you for your letter of 6 December 2016, inviting Charters Towers Regional Council to participate in the inquiry into the impacts of invasive plants (weeds) and their control in Queensland.

The matter was the subject of internal consultation between compliance officers, supervisors and the Director Planning and Sustainable Development.

Council offers this feedback in relation to the impacts and control of only one of the three case studies nominated. Prickly Acacia (*Vachellia Nilotica*) is currently the only invasive plant directly affecting this region, however, vigilance on preventing the introduction of Fireweed and Giant Rat Tail Grass are of high priority.

As Prickly Acacia has been an ongoing issue throughout the Charters Towers Region and has the potential to severely impact primary production, Council has for many years worked with landholders to control and where possible eradicate this invasive plant. Under the Land Protection Act 2002, Council was limited in the actions that could be imposed on the landholders due to the structure of that legislation.

With the implementation of the Biosecurity Act 2014, Council has been able to review some of its policies and procedures regarding compliance of invasive plants and animals. Whilst this is an ongoing process and Council is yet to update its current local biosecurity plan, it should be noted that this legislation is still quite new and as such most of impacts of proposed and newly implemented Biosecurity Programs are yet to be experienced. Council has encountered challenges and in providing this submission it focuses on the key impacts to which the inquiry directly relates.

PO Box 189 Charters Towers Qld 4820

**ADMINISTRATION:** 12 Mosman Street Charters Towers Qld 4820 Australia

**PH.** (07) 4761 5300 | **F.** (07) 4761 5344 | **E.** [mail@charterstowers.qld.gov.au](mailto:mail@charterstowers.qld.gov.au) | **ABN.** 67 731 313 583

[www.charterstowers.qld.gov.au](http://www.charterstowers.qld.gov.au)





1. **The responsibilities of local governments in relation to the control of prohibited, restricted and invasive plants imposed under s.48 of the *Biosecurity Act 2014* are reasonable, and local governments are meeting those obligations.**

Being familiar with the local government area assists Council in being able to meet their Biosecurity obligations. However, small Councils with large tracts of land to manage can not effectively ensure that the invasive biosecurity matter is managed in compliance with this Act. This is unrealistic for a number of reasons including but not limited to;

- The number of available staff, small Councils have only limited staff to attend these items;
- the powers available to an Authorised Person, including the terminology used within the Act prevents a clear and concise outcome, specifically where invasive plants are impacting neighbouring properties;
- the distances to be covered safely within local government policy to cost effectively manage Council's obligations; and
- direct political influence, where councillor support is required.

2. **Programs for the control of weeds on Crown land administered by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines are effective.**

Department of Natural Resources and Mines are quite active within the local region and have a good working relationship with Council, ensuring areas impacted with invasive biosecurity matter are effectively being controlled.

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

Overall funding has been a limiting factor for ongoing programs. NRM and Landcare groups are assisting in filling some gaps left by the Department in both support and technologies. Since 2013, when Weeds of National Significance (WoNS) moved into its final stage, public programs, like supporting Prickly Acacia control, appear to be less effective.

4. **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.**

Environmental programs administered in this area have impacted favourably where applied.

5. **Federal, state and local government weeds programs are coordinated to maximise their achievements and to have a whole of government approach.**

Coordinated weed programs are quite effective in this region due to a strong regional pest management group, sound cooperation with stakeholders, and deep knowledge base available.

Apologies for submitting our response after the closing date.

Yours faithfully

ER Schmidt  
Mayor

