




Speech By
Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

Record of Proceedings, 18 February 2016

ADJOURNMENT

Yellow-Winged Locust

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (7.12 pm): I rise to bring to the attention of the House a pest locust that is affecting grazing families and communities west and south of Charters Towers. A community still suffering from the recent drought is currently experiencing plagues of yellow-winged locusts that are destroying every blade of grass in their path. Graziers have contacted the Australian Plague Locust Commission and Biosecurity Queensland to ask for assistance to control the locusts, but they have met with disinterest and rejection.

Members might be aware that the Australian Plague Locust Commission and Biosecurity Queensland undertake locust control to prevent plague development and migration, but do not directly protect individual crops. We have also been informed by Biosecurity Queensland that it will only assist with the control of a declared plague locust. Unfortunately, the yellow-winged locust is not a declared pest under the Queensland biodiversity legislation. Biosecurity Queensland is washing its hands of this issue, saying that it is not its problem because the yellow-winged locust is not a declared pest.

The locusts are having a significant impact on properties that have had their first worthwhile rain, after suffering three and four years of severe drought, resulting in the growth of fresh green native grass. The destruction caused by locusts creates the devastating loss of fresh pasture, leaving a landscape that equals the drought situation before it rained. I wish to read correspondence that I have received from a local property owner, to help illustrate the urgency of this matter. Mr Patrick Scharf from Tarangie Station, Charters Towers, writes—

Dear Mr Knuth:

... as you know we have been battling Grass Hoppers for the last 4 or 5 weeks. Getting up each morning and going out and spraying them. Coming back to reload with chemical and going back out again 4 or more times every day, which takes up most of the day. We started spraying them when we first noticed them on the ground. We have had them here before so know what damage they can and will do. Wipe 2000 hectare paddocks out in a matter of days. Devour all the grass and move on to the next paddock. I will include photos and video's to show you the extent of the damage they have done.

We have been using Regent 200 to spray them. The cost of a 1 liter bottle is \$240 so the cost of spraying is very high especially when you take in the hours we have to spend doing it. On top of this is the ongoing cost of losing that grass and not being able to put cattle into those paddocks ...

...

In concluding this letter, please, I beg you and other members of parliament, please declare these Yellow Wing Grass Hoppers a pest so we can get some assistance in controlling them. Just imagine that your house garden, all lush and green is devoid of half the grass, back to plane dirt overnight.

We call for this pest to be declared a pest under the biosecurity legislation. I table the letter.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 9 February 2016, from Mr Patrick Scharf of Charters Towers to the member for Dalrymple, Mr Shane Knuth MP, regarding the declaration of the yellow-winged grasshopper as a pest [\[196\]](#).