




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

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ADJOURNMENT

Navua Sedge, Eradication

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (11.26 pm): I table a poll from constituents regarding Navua sedge.

Tabled paper: Nonconforming petition regarding the Navua Sedge weed [\[1329\]](#).

The poll asked if the state government should prioritise funding into R and D and eradication of Navua sedge, with 100 per cent of the 234 participants saying yes. I ask the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries to take this seriously. Agriculture is the largest employer on the Atherton Tablelands and Navua sedge is killing it, and it is only going to get worse. Navua sedge is an invasive weed which has the capacity to spread at an alarming rate. The weed has now been found in the drier areas of the Tablelands—an area where it was initially thought it could never survive—and the situation is now critical.

Biosecurity Queensland points out that Navua sedge is extremely aggressive and takes nutrients, light and moisture from the natural pastures and is capable of forming dense stands that can smother many tropical pasture species. In pastures, Navua sedge is unpalatable and provides little feed value for cattle. Navua sedge can cause death in cattle as they cannot pass it, there is no nutrition, they put on no weight and they starve. Each flower has over 500 seeds which remain viable in the ground for over three years.

Without the existence of a pre-emergent herbicide, control of this weed is reliant on intensive and regular spraying. The devastation of this weed can be seen on neighbouring Fiji. Navua sedge has reduced the carrying capacity of pastures by up to 40 per cent and is a major cause of low milk production. It is estimated that Navua sedge could have a larger impact on pastures in Far North Queensland than it has had in Fiji. Applying the scenario of reducing carrying capacity rates by 50 per cent could potentially reduce the agricultural economy from \$149 million to \$74 million, which would be a devastating loss for the Queensland economy.

I was pleased that the call for urgent action has been heard by the Department of Transport and Main Roads, and I welcome the much needed additional spraying rates for Main Roads road verges. Unfortunately, this alone will not be enough to combat this invasive weed, and unless more is done much of our prime agricultural land will be rendered useless. The Tablelands Regional Council, the agricultural industry and I are seeking support for funding for a research and development program into Navua sedge and the establishment of a Navua sedge pilot program on the Atherton Tablelands to step up the fight to free this state of this devastating noxious scourge.