

Question on Notice

No. 36

Asked on 12 February 2019

DR M ROBINSON ASKED MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES (HON M FURNER)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister (a) provide fire ant detection statistics by suburb within Redland City over the last five years (by year), and (b) advise the current practice for notifying nearby property owners when fire ants have been located?

ANSWER:

On behalf of the Commonwealth and State governments, the Queensland Government is co-ordinating the national program to eradicate fire ants.

An independent Chair leads a National Steering Committee in overseeing and directing Australia's largest eradication effort.

(a) This table identifies infestation (ant colonies) by each suburb on a year by year basis.

All these infestations have received treatment.

Redland City Council mainland suburbs and fire ant colonies detected for the period 2014 – 2019

Suburb	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
Alexandra Hills	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Birkdale	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Capalaba	0	0	0	8	6	0	14
Cleveland	0	0	0	1	2	0	3
Mount Cotton	2	9	5	4	9	1	30
Ormiston	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Redland Bay	2	6	0	3	12	1	24
Sheldon	2	2	0	4	4	0	12
Thorneside	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Thornlands	0	3	0	11	16	0	30
Victoria Point	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wellington Point	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	6	20	5	31	53	2	117

During the period 2015 to 2017, there was significant urban development in the area, with semi-rural properties being developed for high density residential land use. The creation of suitable fire ant habitat and potential movement of fire ant carrier materials associated with this activity are considered the main reasons for this increased infestation.

(b) Following the confirmation of a fire ant sample, the program contacts the person who reported the find. If that person is not the owner of that property or business, the property owner is also routinely notified of the identification by telephone. The advice includes information on:

- the program and its activities;
- the confirmation of the presence of fire ant;
- the level of the infestation detected;
- whether bait treatment is to occur or has already occurred at the time the sample was collected, and if the treatment method of direct nest injection is planned; and
- the person's General Biosecurity Obligations.

At this time, the program officer seeks permission for the use of chemical treatment by Direct Nest Injection under the *Pest Management Act 2001* and Pest Management Regulation 2003 to destroy the infestation and arranges a time for the direct nest treatment if it is required.

Following detection of a suspect fire ant in residential areas, program field officers continue surveillance on the adjoining properties to identify the extent of the infestation. If further infestation is detected, a process of extending surveillance to the next neighbouring properties continues until no further suspect fire ants are detected. Program field officers doorknock the neighbouring properties.

If residents of neighbouring properties are not home, notices are left in the letterbox advising of the program's requirement to inspect the property.

Information on detected infestation is provided to the local council on a monthly basis through the provision of an emailed report.