

Question on Notice

No. 1272

Asked on 26 October 2021

MR S BENNETT ASKED MINISTER AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES (HON M FURNER)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the cessation of funding for control of the bio-security risk West Indian Drywood Termite in Queensland— Will the Minister advise of his government's plans to control the spread of this disastrously destructive imported pest throughout Queensland, when householders are unable to afford \$60,000 to tent and fumigate their houses to treat a termite infestation?

ANSWER:

West Indian drywood termite (WIDT) was first detected in Maryborough, Queensland in 1966. It can damage timber in houses, other buildings and wooden items including furniture.

The Queensland Government has spent many millions of dollars to control WIDT since this time, including conducting structural fumigation of infested buildings.

WIDT is now widespread in Brisbane, and occurs in other parts of Queensland, including Bundaberg, Townsville and Rockhampton.

As such, a decision was made not to reinstate the program when it expired on 15 January 2021.

To facilitate this, a two-year transition strategy commenced on 1 July 2021, with \$0.95 million allocated to provide Queenslanders with the necessary tools and resources to manage WIDT into the future.

The strategy will include:

- extensive stakeholder communication, education, and awareness to improve understanding of how to manage the impacts of WIDT;
- research and development focusing on improved detection techniques and alternative treatments for the pest;
- training and upskilling of pest controllers to provide specialist treatment and detection techniques; and
- working with our trading partners to prevent the spread of WIDT to other states and territories and ensuring that industry is able to meet market expectations for freedom from the pest.