

Our ref: CTS 24896/25  
Your ref: 4284-25

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18 DEC 2025

Mr Neil Laurie  
The Clerk of The Parliament  
Queensland Parliamentary Service  
[neil.laurie@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:neil.laurie@parliament.qld.gov.au)

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to your email of 18 November 2025 regarding a petition as Tabled in the Queensland Legislative Assembly on 18 November 2025 (4284-25) - *Call for urgent reform of the National Fire Ant Eradication Program* (the Program).

The threats that fire ants pose to Queensland and Australia are well established. The National Fire Ant Eradication Program Response Plan 2023-2027 (the response plan) was developed following an independent Strategic Review in 2021 and endorsed by all then Commonwealth, State and Territory Agriculture Ministers in July 2023. This expert review noted that it is still considered biologically feasible to eradicate the ants, and that areas affected by the ants need a much stronger suppression and management effort, in the interests of public health and amenity, and economic impacts.

The review and two other independent reports noted that mismanagement of the program contributed to the spread of fire ants. Since the change of government, eradication is now being closely monitored and recommendations from the three reviews are being implemented, including year-round treatment and record funding in suppression. Unsubstantiated claims regarding the methods and chemicals used and the authority to conduct treatments are noted as an impediment to eradication and suppression efforts.

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) regulate agricultural and veterinary chemicals in Australia. The APVMA assesses risks associated with agricultural chemicals and veterinary medicines to assess and predict potential impacts, establishing use parameters. The APVMA must be satisfied that products meet their safety and efficacy criteria prior to authorising any use of the product. The APVMA also manages adverse experiences associated with the use of approved agricultural treatment products.

The Program engaged independent toxicologists in response to reports that its treatment resulted in adverse impacts, including mortality of animals. These assessments concluded that it is very unlikely that fire ant treatments caused any reported effects, confirming previous APVMA assessments.

The Program takes its General Environmental Duty (GED) under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* very seriously. The Program currently meets its GED by assessing the sensitivity of environmental values present in areas that are to receive broadscale eradication treatment. These habitat assessments inform treatment decisions, including for example, the exclusion of the Main Range area. The Program has also adopted post-treatment monitoring.

The Program remains committed to treating 100 per cent of properties identified as being at risk to support the community and the national eradication effort. Under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*, authorised officers may, at reasonable times, enter the place (not a residence) to take any action authorised by the biosecurity program. Consent is not required; however, the Program works with landholders to ensure a balance between their concerns and effective treatment. The Queensland Police Service is engaged only after repeated attempts have failed to secure a safe entry to undertake treatment. Human rights assessments are undertaken prior to initiating this escalated action.

The Program is currently undergoing a routine, independent review that provides external assessment of progress at key stages. This review is examining governance arrangements including delivery of program milestones, risk management, and the resourcing required to support the successful delivery of the response plan. This review is intended to ensure accountability and strong governance practices, and the outcomes and responses to any of its recommendations will be transparent.

The Crisafulli Government will continue to work diligently in our fight against fire ants.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. Perrett', is positioned above the printed name.

**TONY PERRETT MP**  
**Minister for Primary Industries**  
**Member for Gympie**