

ROBBIE KATTER

Member for Traeger



MEDIA RELEASE

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PRICKLY WEED WOES TO WORSEN WITH DISMAL GOV FUNDS

As landholders grapple with the threat of worsening invasive weed spread in the midst of widespread heavy rainfall, the Palaszczuk Government is refusing to honour its commitment to eradicating a major environmental pest plant.

Following a shock backflip on a promise to deliver \$5 million in 2019 to eradicate invasive pest plant prickly acacia, the Government revealed it had committed only \$2.5 million to the Weed of National Significance plus three other weeds for the current financial year.

KAP Leader and Traeger MP Robbie Katter said the Government had wildly missed the mark on matching up resourcing with the dizzying scale of the prickly acacia problem, and echoed warnings of an environmental disaster if the “cancer of the bush” was not controlled.

Figures show invasive plants cost the Queensland economy about \$600 million each year. The prickly acacia infestation area has increased from about 6.6 million hectares two decades ago to about 33 million hectares now, featuring worst-hit areas in the Gulf and Central Queensland’s Mitchell grass downs regions.

“Some producers spend up to a staggering \$100,000 a year fighting this weed alone, trying to stop it choking out pastures, degrading and eroding soil, and blocking stock from access to water and mustering,” Mr Katter said.

The problem was exacerbated by rain events washing topsoil down waterways and spreading the weed seed over vast areas, like the heavy rains to hit Queensland over the past few weeks, but Mr Katter said the Government continued to wash its hands of the problem and sit idly by.

“The Government promised \$5 million to fight prickly acacia, reneged on that promise, then had the gall to deliver only half that amount to spread wafer-thin across control measures for not only prickly acacia but three other weeds,” he said.

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Those weeds included lantana, giant rat's tail and fireweed.

The Government's continued insufficient approach to directly combatting weeds followed its highly-criticised release of the Invasive Pest Plants and Animals Strategy 2019-2024.

At the time, lobby group AgForce criticised the delayed release of the strategy as the latest in a "litany of delays, smokescreens and broken promises" by the State Government, with claims it put Queensland on the back foot with managing invasive species.

It's believed that prickly acacia was distributed via advertisements and letters in regional newspapers during the 1870s after the Queensland Acclimatisation Society introduced the weed for its uses and by-products.

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