

## **Comment on: 'Modernising Australia's approach to managing established Pests and diseases of National significance: Discussion paper'**

### **Appropriate Practical**

Agree with: "promote more collaborative working arrangements between government and those stakeholders directly affected by established pests and diseases, rather than have stakeholder groups acting in isolation."

At present it is very difficult to get information. To prevent incursions education is vital.

### **How contributing**

Disseminating information via websites eg. [www.portbotany.org](http://www.portbotany.org) and facebook and trying to get local Councils, media (unfortunately the Port is split between 2) to do likewise.

Trying to get agencies to do something about education. Trying to get the NSW Ports in case of maritime issues to take a leadership role.

In case of weeds trying to get agencies like NSW Lands and NSW NPWS to clean up and promoting weed control strategies eg. <http://laperouse.info/biological-bitou-bashers/>

Example of where NSW Lands being particularly difficult. There were 3 productive Chinese market gardens. When 1 gardener retired Lands handed land to adjoining cemetery to manage and it is now covered in pampas, castor oil and lantana along with other weeds like bitou. Not only are seeds being spread around the area but the weeds are an impediment to water flow. Gardener is prepared to take land on and make it productive but Lands won't work on a solution and local Council is powerless even though the land is zoned RU4 small rural lot.

Photo to illustrate -

<https://www.facebook.com/SaveTheLaPerouseMarketGardens/photos/pb.225919084174500.-2207520000.1433894009./514218838677855/?type=1&theater>

### **Sufficient**

More emphasis on prevention and containment and education.

### **Issues effective action**

"Promote development of partnerships between government, industry and the community"

We have a long way to go in this area.

Late last year fire ants were discovered on the DP World terminal at Port Botany. Potential impacts to local community significant. The community members of the Port Botany Community Consultative Committee (PBCCC) received a brief email in early December (just after the November quarterly meeting). Alerts to local community were slow in coming. Took a week for local councils to use newsletters, facebook etc. NSW Ports the landlord at Port Botany didn't even put an alert on their website - and wouldn't when asked. NSW DPI as combat agency had volunteers and staff hunting around the local area on 20th December. When I asked one team at which terminal the ants had been found they couldn't answer. When I raised this at a PBCCC someone said they didn't want people to be sightseeing - seriously! There is still a culture of 'what they don't know won't hurt them' around the Port which extends even to emergency planning (even though the published material emphasizes community preparedness).

## **How best implemented**

Have to start with culture change - the 'right to know' and the importance of information sharing between agencies and with the public. We have to have a coordinated approach just the same as we need it for floods, fire, coastal storms etc.

Re the Fire Ants, I tried to get DAFF or DPI briefing at the February PBCCC but no way. Got word that I could go out to Rosebery to talk to staff. They don't get it that it isn't about one person being 'satisfied' but having a proper public education strategy. Eventually got biosecurity as a standing item on future agendas for quarterly meetings but at last meeting when I asked about the Asian Toad found at Belrose I got blank looks (from NSW Ports staff and stevedores, EPA, local Council). Being up to speed on biosecurity and emergency planning are bread and butter around a large container port. No different to knowing what to do if you live in a fire prone zone. It's basic risk management and community have to be part of the 'conversation'.

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