



The Hon Mark Furner MP  
Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries

Our ref: CTS 09289/19  
Your Ref: A430905

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26 APR 2019

Mr Neil Laurie  
The Clerk of the Parliament  
Queensland Parliamentary Services  
Parliament House  
George Street  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 1 April 2019 regarding the petition received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly No. 3104-19.

Jurisdictions will officially list species as a pest where there is a need for specific offences to apply to people in order to prevent the entry or spread of the species in that jurisdiction. This is the case in Western Australia where cane toads are spreading through the Kimberly region since 2009 and Victoria where cane toads are not currently present.

In Queensland, pest species that require regulation, such as offence provisions, are listed as restricted or prohibited matter under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*. Cane toads are not specifically listed as restricted matter or prohibited matter in Queensland.

Cane toads have spread to most areas of mainland Queensland and are common in most environments, including backyards. It would therefore not be appropriate to apply specific actions or offences to every Queenslanders through regulation as restricted matter. It is unlikely that the imposition of offence provisions would significantly reduce the impact or spread of cane toads within Queensland. Mandatory control through regulation would impose increased costs on the general public and on state and local governments to check compliance.

Although cane toads are not listed as restricted matter, cane toads are still considered a significant pest in Queensland. Under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*, everyone has a general biosecurity obligation to take reasonable and practical steps to minimise the risks associated with biosecurity matter under their control.

All people dealing with cane toads have an obligation to manage the impacts of cane toads on their land and during their activities so that cane toads do not spread.

The *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001* allows for pests, such as cane toads, to be killed if it is done in a way that causes the animal as little pain as is reasonable. There is no need to list cane toads as restricted matter under legislation to enable a person to humanely kill the toad.

Local governments and their communities are best placed to control invasive species in their local area and can develop practical and appropriate solutions including strategies for addressing invasive species in their biosecurity plan or by making a local law for management.

Considerable investment has been made by both federal and state governments and various research funding bodies to find viable control methods for cane toads. Research has improved knowledge of cane toads and their impacts, however, there are currently no methods that are likely to lead to broad-scale, cost-effective eradication of cane toads.

Research in the Northern Territory has shown that the worst effects occur as the cane toad “invasion frontline” moves through an area. This research has also shown that some native species can adjust their behaviour and avoid interactions with cane toads if they can survive their initial exposure to toad toxins.

In the absence of an effective broad-scale control method, current local strategies focus on achieving positive biodiversity outcomes by decreasing the local impact of cane toads and containing their spread in new areas. These strategies include preventing cane toads from arriving on toad-free islands and protecting discrete areas of high biodiversity value, using the best available trapping and exclusion techniques.

Encouragement of community activities, education and public awareness about the negative impact of cane toads are the preferred government intervention rather than the imposition of enforced control measures and penalties.

Motivated individuals, community groups and local governments together can undertake cane toad control programs to protect their local environment without the need for the State Government imposing additional regulatory burden or offence provisions.

Current local strategies focus on achieving positive biodiversity outcomes by decreasing the local impact of cane toads and containing their spread in new areas.

Control methods include:

- removing eggs
- humane killing of individual toads
- fencing ponds to protect native frogs and fish
- blocking access to water holes
- baiting, trapping and killing tadpoles.

If you require further information, I encourage you to contact my Chief of Staff, Mr Brett Murphy, on 3719 7420.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Furner'.

**MARK FURNER MP**

**Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries**