

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 30 October 2023 4:08 PM
To: NRC
Subject: Invasive Species Management Review - attention [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Following on from our conversations in Dubbo recently I thought I should send an email regarding an issue relevant to TOR 's 3,5 and 6. I will put it in the form of a short briefing note as I don't want to write pages. I hope you address this issue in the review because if we don't, we will continue to chase our tails over the long term.

ISSUE

Inadequate funding model for effective long-term management of invasive species in NSW.

BACKGROUND

The traditional funding model for management and/or research of invasive species in NSW and the rest of Australia is based on a partnership between government and industry bodies whereby programs focusing on reducing the impact of a particular species or a group of species are funded anywhere between 1-5 years, rarely longer, and most commonly 1-3 years.

The fundamental problem with this model is that it fails to consider the complex human social dynamics and the long-term issues surrounding such social dynamics in rural and regional communities.

Effective invasive species management programs require long-term coordinated group control over local or regional landscapes involving many land owners, stakeholders or community groups.

Short term funding (anything less than 5 years) works against effective management because of three reasons:

1. New staff recruited to the program are unable to establish sufficient trust, credibility and effective networks with landholders/stakeholders when their employment is for one-three years. Communities are always socially complex, and it takes time to learn how to work effectively within those communities.
2. Staff retention becomes an issue. Because there is no guarantee that funding will continue after the initial 1-3-year funding cycle, staff begin looking for other positions before the program ends. Churning of staff occurs, program credibility is impacted and effectiveness impaired. All those involved in the program (staff and landholders alike) find themselves on a tiring and frustrating revolving wheel of trust, knowledge and network renewal. This is exhausting and disheartening.
3. Invasive species research programs experience similar issues.

DISCUSSION

Government and industry funding cycles lie at the centre of this problem. Unless the basic funding model is made more flexible, we will continue to poorly serve taxpayers and those who contribute via levies to industry funds. The assets of government and community will not be protected in the long term because the return on investment is low with most short-term invasive species management or research programs. Programs need to be funded for at least five years and in many cases for 10 years, to ensure good returns on investment by effectively reducing impact and thus protection of assets in the long-term through addressing the human dimension complexities of such programs.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. Government central agencies such as Treasury and Premier and Cabinet work with environment and primary industry ministries and agencies to develop a funding model which allows for 10-year funding cycles of invasive species management and research.
2. Industry bodies involved in funding invasive species management or research programs liaise with government in the development of the long-term funding model.
3. Government seeks multi-partisan support for such a funding model.



Terry Korn PSM



“Ask not what you can do *to* the river but what you can do *for* the river. Care for the river and it will care for you.”