

31<sup>st</sup> March 2024



QUEENSLAND  
FARMERS'  
FEDERATION

Mr Tas Lanach  
Committee Secretary  
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee  
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CANBERRA ACT 2600

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Via email: rrat.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Mr Lanach

**Re: Clarification of HANSARD – Red Imported Fire Ants in Australia**

Please forward this clarification onto the committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to give evidence at your inquiry. With regard to the HANSARD report below, I would like to clarify my response.

**Senator WHISH-WILSON:** We had ~~AgForce~~ in earlier, and they were part of the FAST taskforce. Are either of your groups part of that taskforce, or are you involved in any kind of formal way?

**Dr Dowling:** Were you asking if we're part of the taskforce?

**Senator WHISH-WILSON:** Yes.

**Dr Dowling:** Not to my knowledge—no.

When I answered that I was thinking that there was a special response taskforce which we were not part of. Subsequently, I have considered that you may have been referring to the Fire Ant Suppression Taskforce, which to the best of my knowledge, QFF was first invited to attend along with some 40 plus others in September 2023. The invitation said then that it had been established in 2022 (which we were not part of to my knowledge) and we were invited to the Sept 2023 meeting to discuss how this taskforce could become more collaborative and effective. The meeting consisted mostly of presentations and while there was a question section, the size of the meeting precluded any real discussion from all the participants. It was more of an information presentation. There was one subsequent meeting in November presented in a similar style and that was the last meeting attended. So effectively, while I found these meetings valuable (found out about the suppression policy and how it was separate to the eradication response), it was not a co decision making taskforce when I attended.

Yours sincerely

*Laurie Dowling*

Dr Laurie Dowling  
Policy Advisor Intensive Animal industries  
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