

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications  
Legislation Committee**

Answers to questions on notice  
**Environment and Energy portfolio**

**Question No:** 12  
**Hearing:** Supplementary Budget Estimates  
**Outcome:** Outcome 1  
**Program:** Biodiversity Conservation Division (BCD)  
**Topic:** Yellow Crazy Ants Eradication  
**Hansard Page:** 119  
**Question Date:** 24 October 2016  
**Question Type:** Spoken

**Senator Waters, Larissa asked:**

Senator WATERS: Sure. Is there a view now that eradication can be achieved in the Wet Tropics World Heritage area?

Mr Murphy: I think that is the aim and that is what everyone wants to see. There are yellow crazy ant sites all across Queensland. It is hard to know the extent and at what sites those ants can be eradicated. As I said, the early signs are that the population sizes and the number of nests have reduced in Far North Queensland and, obviously, we are very hopeful that eradication can be achieved with the funding provided.

Senator WATERS: What was the reason for the timing of the funding, given that WTMA had been seeking additional yellow crazy ant funding for at least a year—I remember asking about this quite a while ago. When was the funding decision made?

Mr Murphy: The decision was made as part of the budget process leading in to the election.

Senator WATERS: So it was made in the budget and announced in the course of the campaign?

Mr Murphy: That is right.

Senator WATERS: The decision was made in the budget. Obviously budget papers can be difficult to decipher at times, even for the most experienced individual, which I do not claim to be. Was it discernible in the budget papers that that funding had been granted or was it only clear once that announcement was made in the course of the election campaign?

Mr Murphy: My memory of the budget papers was that it was not specific to yellow crazy ants, but there was an enhancement to the National Landcare Program in the budget papers. Then during the election, it was followed by an announcement.

Senator WATERS: When you say it was an enhancement to Landcare—obviously Landcare is an enormous program—was it only at the point of announcement that it got specifically allocated to yellow crazy ants?

Mr Murphy: I am not sure. I would have to take that on notice.

Senator WATERS: Thank you for doing that. Could you confirm for me the time frames for decision-making, because it goes to caretaker mode, it goes to why there was the long delay and it goes to why it was suddenly announced in the election campaign. I am interested in that but, if you could provide me with the factual dates, that would be great.

**Answer:**

In the 2016-17 Budget, handed down on 3 May 2016, the Government allocated \$22.6 million over three years from 2016-17 to the *National Landcare Program - Emerging Priorities* to fund new or emerging environmental protection and natural resource management priorities.

On the 20 May 2016, the Government announced an election commitment of \$8.8 million over three years from 2016-17 to tackle yellow crazy ants. The commitment was to provide

\$7.5 million from the National Landcare Program to support yellow crazy ant and tramp ant control in Far North Queensland and \$1.3 million from the Established Pest Animals and Weeds Initiative, administered by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, to build the skills and capabilities of landholders and key agricultural and industry organisations to undertake detection, early intervention and management of tramp ants.

Costings released by the Government as part of the election in June 2016 identified the \$7.5 million from the *National Landcare Program - Emerging Priorities 2016-17* Budget measure.