



**Senator the Hon. Joe Ludwig**

**Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry  
Senator for Queensland**

REF: MNMC2012

Senator the Hon. Bill Heffernan  
Chair  
Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Senator

I refer to your letter dated 16 April 2012 to Ms Rona Mellor requesting further information about the operation of the Eminent Scientists Group, in addition to that provided during the References Committee's inquiry into Australia's biosecurity and quarantine arrangements. I also note correspondence of 26 April 2012 from the Committee Secretary, Dr Conall O'Connell seeking further information about the status of invasive species outbreaks.

To ensure that the department is able to provide the Committee with the most useful information available, I have asked them to be ready to answer questions on both topics during budget estimates and respond formally with a better understanding of the Committee's information requirements.

Again, thank you for your interest in this matter.

Yours sincerely

  
**Joe Ludwig**

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry  
Senator for Queensland

20 May 2012

Cc: Dr Conall O'Connell, Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry