



## David Littleproud MP

Federal Member for Maranoa

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# Media Statement

December 20, 2016

### **Maranoa MP pushes for more pest management funding in Qld as a result of Landcare boost during backpacker tax agreement**

AS part of an agreement to pass the backpacker tax, Landcare will receive \$100 million additional funding – money which should be directed to wild dog barrier fencing and prickly acacia eradication, Federal Member for Maranoa David Littleproud said today.

“I believe this additional Landcare funding should not only be focused on the best environmental outcomes, but also concentrated on projects which will deliver benefits to our regional and rural communities and economies,” Mr Littleproud said.

“With this in mind, I have offered community-strengthening projects to the Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce in order to support the construction of wild dog barrier fencing and the eradication prickly acacia in my electorate.”

The Maranoa MP – whose vast rural electorate covers more than 40% of Queensland – said the two programs would result in tangible outcomes for the Landcare investment.

“Sheep wool and meat are community-building industries and were large employers in my electorate – from producers to shearing teams. This industry was responsible for a population influx which resulted in more teachers and medical staff in rural towns but the sheep industry was being held ransom in the teeth of wild dogs.

“The rollout of wild dog barrier fences now means some producers – who previously experienced the loss of 60-70% of lambs – have document tangible results with some recording their best lamb marking in 10 years.

“This program not only benefits producers and rural communities, but also greatly improves the overall management of total grazing pressure and a positive impact on native flora and fauna with the increase and return of koalas, quolls and other small marsupials on their properties.”

Mr Littleproud said Desert Channels Queensland has an existing program in need of further funding to eradicate prickly acacia – a pest plant now estimated to be present on 23 million hectares of the Mitchell Grass Bioregion, which is home to 25 rare and threatened species.

“We don’t need to reinvent the wheel but invest in already successful and important initiative like the *Prickly Acacia Eradication Program* which aims to eliminate core, seeding producing areas of prickly acacia from the northern Lake Eyre Basin,” he said.

“Areas with broad-scale infestation have poor production values due to the shading and competition effect of this tree. These areas also pose challenges to stock mustering and general property management.

“It’s estimated that the weed control cost on affected properties exceeds \$100,000 per year and – after more than four years of drought – this cost is another expense producers are unable to absorb.

“With this in mind, I strongly support the provision of federal government funding through Landcare to manage these two programs to reduce pest impacts on the environment and bolster land productivity in Maranoa.”

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