



## 2023 Queensland Audit Office Audit: National Fire Ant Eradication Program

(response update July 2024)

Recommendation ID	Program response	Status (July 2024)	Deliverable	Owner
07	Agree	In progress	National Fire Ant Eradication Program (NFAEP or the program) assurance plan	Executive Program Director
<b>Queensland Audit Office (QAO) audit recommendation</b>				
We recommend the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Strengthen its approach for assessing the progress and outcomes of the National Fire Ant Eradication Program (Chapter 5). Decisions about what to do next should be guided by independent assessments grounded by scientific data and modelling. This should include periodically assessing whether it is technically feasible to eradicate fire ants from Queensland.</li></ul>				
<b>Previous program response (June 2023)</b>				
Implementation Q1 2023/2024 (subject to acceptance of revised national response plan).				
<b>Previous program response (February 2024)</b>				
The NFAEP has expanded the scope of the previous risk management sub-committee to include assurance. The committee comprises independent experts who will oversee the program assurance plan and report to the National Fire Ant Eradication Program Consultative Committee (NFAEP CC) and the NFAEP National Management Group (NMG). A 3-line assurance approach is currently under development. The Fire Ant Response Plan 2023–27 outlines several assurance checkpoints and gates throughout the program’s duration to ensure the vision of eradication remains viable and technically feasible.				
<b>Updated program response (July 2024)</b>				
The NMG approved the NFAEP assurance plan in June 2024. Work has started on establishing the first lines of defence (operational-level risk controls) and sizing projects to determine what level of assurance is required, aligning with the Queensland Government Portfolio and the NFAEP and project assurance framework.				





NATIONAL

# Fire Ant Eradication

PROGRAM

Assessing if it is still technically feasible to eradicate fire ants, and if the NFAEP is achieving its strategic objectives will form part of end of tranche one (Dec 2025) and end of tranche 2 (no later than Jan 2027) reviews.

Recommendation ID	Program response	Status (July 2024)	Deliverable	Owner
08	Agree	In progress	Program business case	Executive Program Director
<b>QAO audit recommendation</b>				
<p>We recommend the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report its progress in eradicating fire ants from Queensland (chapter 5) and the outcomes of its activities. This should include developing and reporting regularly on performance measures that show how well the program is achieving its outcomes, such as the size of the fire ant infestation over time.</li> </ul>				
<b>Previous program response (June 2023)</b>				
<p>Implementation Q1 2023/2024 (subject to acceptance of revised national response plan). The NFAEP has started quarterly reporting via milestone reports endorsed by the Program Board and approved by the NFAEP NMG. The enhanced intelligence capability will facilitate the provision of more comprehensive information for progress monitoring and reporting.</p>				
<b>Previous program response (February 2024)</b>				
<p>The NFAEP is currently enhancing its program-level reporting to ensure it meets the diverse needs of multiple stakeholder groups. An outline of this reporting approach will be provided as part of the NFAEP business case and 2024/2025 work plan approval at the May NFAEP NMG meeting.</p> <p>The NFAEP acknowledges the inconsistency in public reporting in previous years, which has contributed to public perceptions of poor performance, as reflected in the submissions to the Senate Inquiry.</p> <p>Therefore, the NFAEP will use all available tools, including behavioural insights models to ensure the complexity of the NFAEP's performance can be effectively communicated to meet the needs and interests of stakeholders.</p>				
<b>Updated program response (July 2024)</b>				
<p>In June 2024, NMG members received a program update which outlined the strategy to efficiently and effectively deliver the NFAEP work plan 2024–25. This plan includes tailored, localised approaches to operational controls, and further use of new and improved aerial treatment and surveillance methods on a larger scale.</p>				



NATIONAL

## Fire Ant Eradication

PROGRAM

Members approved the introduction of an eradication treatment protection area, which involves the NFAEP conducting responsive treatment up to 2 km inside the planned eradication treatment area. This change will further strengthen the NFAEEP's response to recommendation 6 of the Strategic Program Review (2021).

NFAEP is currently implementing a revised reporting model, focused on ensuring repeatable and reliable information that demonstrates the effectiveness and impacts of its efforts. All outstanding milestone reports are complete.