

Correspondence, Nature

Australia: no price on cutting fire risk

P.J.N. de Bruyn* and A.B. Davies^

*Mammal Research Institute, Department of Zoology & Entomology, University of Pretoria, Private Bag X20, Hatfield 0028, South Africa

^ Centre for Invasion Biology, Department of Zoology & Entomology, University of Pretoria, Private Bag X20, Hatfield 0028, South Africa

David Bowman proposes that elephants should be introduced into Australia as a cost-effective way to control invasive gamba grass, a major source of wildfire fuel (*Nature* 482, 30; 2012)¹. But managing the elephants could prove to be more expensive than, say, launching a fleet of harvesters every year to reduce fire risk. We should start by asking what is likely to work best, regardless of the cost.

To combat the problems caused by invasive aliens, we should implement ecologically sound control mechanisms that have a reasonable probability of success. We can worry about the bill later.

¹ Bowman, D. (2012) Conservation: Bring elephants to Australia. *Nature* **482**, 30.
http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v482/n7383/full/482030a.html?WT.ec_id=NATURE-20120202;