



Keeping Moreton Island Cane Toad Free

The Keep Moreton Island Cane Toad Free program is an example of collaboration with native title holders, the State Government, environmental groups, residents, businesses, and tourists to protect one of Brisbane's most beautiful natural assets. It integrates communication, education, technology, and science to respond to an extremely high risk that is also extremely likely to occur.

The effectiveness of this program is also demonstrated by the fact that it is proving to be self-sustaining. People are voluntarily searching when they unpack for cane toads and it is scientifically verified that Moreton Island is cane toad free.

About the project

- Collaborative and inclusive.
- Shared responsibility.
- Harnesses science and technology.
- Protects the integrity of significant and pristine natural environments.

Protecting the environmental integrity of Moreton Island from the impact of cane toads

Project name:	Keeping Moreton Island Cane Toad Free
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Project webpage:	https://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/clean-and-green/natural-environment-and-water/biodiversity-in-brisbane/wildlife-in-brisbane/pest-animals-and-invasive-species/cane-toads
Catchment:	Moreton Island
Timing:	ongoing



Dedicated to a better Brisbane

Delivered in collaboration with Moreton Island Protection Committee, Tangalooma Island Resort, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Moreton Island Adventures and the Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation

Categories
Community and Education
Erosion and Sediment Control
Land Management
Litter Clean up
Revegetation
Science and Research
Stormwater
Wastewater
Water Sensitive Urban Design

Why is this project important?

Cane toads are toxic at all stages of life. They cause environmental damage including:

- Poisoning and killing anything that consumes them. (dangerous to birds and reptiles who mistake them for frogs as well as some domestic animals).
- Eating small reptiles, insects, and other amphibians.
- Displacing and out-competing native species for food and resources.

Cane toads also transmit diseases including salmonella. They can cause toxic illness or death to humans if venom is ingested or if their venom enters the eye. Symptoms include:

- Accelerated heartbeat.
- Breath shortness.
- Excessive saliva.

Moreton Island is one of the few locations in South East Queensland that is cane toad free.



Emma sniffing for toads on Moreton Island



Objectives

The objective of this project is to keep Moreton Island free of cane toads. The cane toad is not listed as a species that must be managed under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*, however, the Commonwealth Threat abatement plan requires the protection of offshore islands to prevent cane toad impacts upon native species.

Brisbane City Council employs cane toad detection dogs to sniff out cane toads who may have hidden in vehicles and trailers and made their way to the island.

A comprehensive public education program for Moreton Island residents and visitors through Council's Education Centres.

Monitoring water bodies on Moreton island for evidence of cane toad DNA (microscopic cells from a cane toad).

Outcomes

The only method for cane toads to reach Moreton Island will be via transportation with people travelling to the island from the mainland. With 170,000 visitors to Moreton Island every year and daily barge transportation, the risk is extremely high.

A broad suite of strategies are used to target messaging, education, calls to action, and surveillance in diverse ways, including:

- The use of cane toad detection dogs to undertake surveys of the island during school holidays at Christmas and Easter and to help visitors identify and report cane toads
- The deployment of electronic signs at ferry and barge terminals to communicate the cane toad free status and remind people to check for toads when they unpack
- Residents are provided with information and tools to identify and respond to any accidental transportations of cane toads from the mainland
- Education about the cane toad free status of Moreton Island and cane toad identification is offered through Council's Environment Centres, at Green Heart Fairs, and through social media campaigns
- Water bodies that have salt levels low enough to sustain breeding and potential establishment of cane toads are tested and environmental DNA analysis (eDNA) analysis is undertaken twice yearly to look for microscopic presence of cane toads
- A permanent detection dog is now located at Tangalooma Island Resort to ensure there are no accidental introductions with waste movement and to educate visitors about the risk of cane toads
- Live adult cane toads have made their way to Moreton Island. However, because of the effectiveness of educational and communication strategies, they have been identified and removed