



Cane Toad Detector Dog Campaign Moreton Island 20th - 25th May 2017

Report on BCC funded Cane Toad Detector Dog Program on Moreton Island 20th - 25th May 2017. The work was undertaken by Steve Austin using working dogs Tommy, Emma and Becky. The program was funded and supported by BCC, QPWS and Tangalooma Resort with assistance from MIPC Volunteer Christine Sanders. The program uses specialist scent detection dogs to conduct cane toad searches and promote awareness of the Toad Free Status of Moreton Island. Water sampling for eDNA testing was also conducted during the program.

Saturday 20th May -

Tangalooma Resort

CTD Dog Tommy searched Tangalooma Grounds, garden and villa areas, nursery and rubbish bin storage areas. Some mild indications noted which were followed up with visual inspection late evening. No toad located.

Guests and visitors who witnessed the dog working were given information re toad calls and advice re reporting any toad sightings. The majority of guests indicated they were unaware of the toad free status of the island. Many of the staff spoken to were also unaware. BCC brochures were given to guests and staff. Toad calls were also played to assist in identification. Two staff members reported seeing toads at the D block swimming pool a couple of months ago. Fortunately they had photographed the toads which on inspection of the photo showed to be *Litoria nasuta*, the striped rocket frog, a common frog species on Moreton Island. They were given some pointers on toad identification. I did ask them to email me the photo but to date this has not shown up.



Sunday 21st December-

Tangalooma Resort

CTD dogs searched

- refuse areas
- Barge landing
- Storage facilities

No positive identifications observed.



Koorinal Township

CTD dogs Tommy and Emma and Becky searched the

-refuse dump.

-permanent fresh water pools on the edge of the airstrip and eDNA water sample taken at first pool.

-Several home owners were at home and permission was gained to enter and search yards properties on the esplanade and streets adjacent to the rescue services buildings including Talman, Cahumba and Midgen.

TOAD FIND:

- CTD Dog Becky located a reasonably fresh toad carcass on the roadway in Midgen street adjacent to number house number 94. GPS reading (S) 0541756 (E) 6975059
- We spoke with a nearby resident who advised she may have been responsible for the toad getting to Koorinal - she had recently (approximately 3 weeks ago) transported a trailer which was kept

in a Brisbane relative's yard where toads are often seen. She said she had noticed the toad remains on the roadway about 2 weeks ago.

- The dual scent trained dog also indicated a cat trace on the edge of the roadway. The resident also confirmed a domestic cat does live at that address.
- The toad was collected for examination and given to Rangers for storage.
- *Toad in situ Midgen Street, Koorringal*

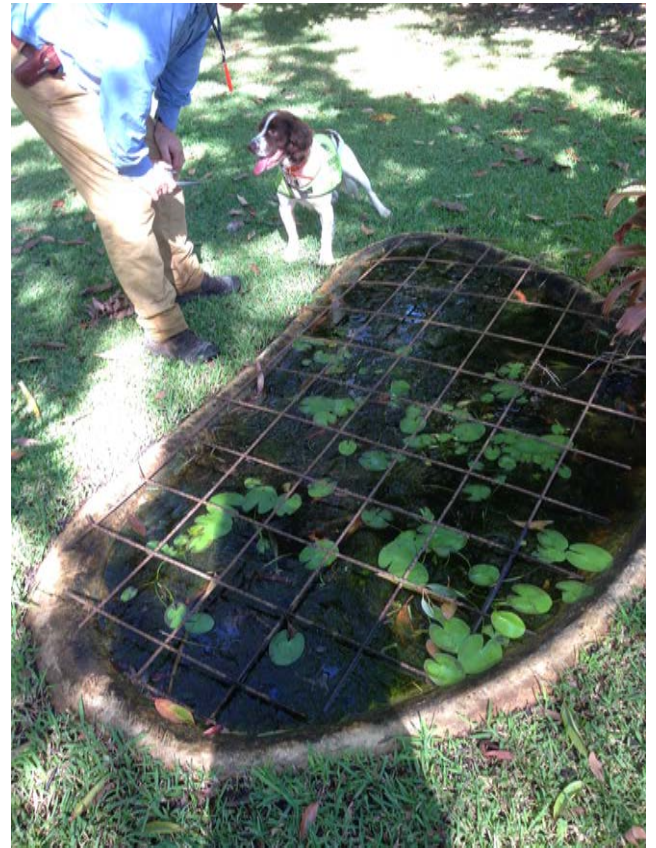
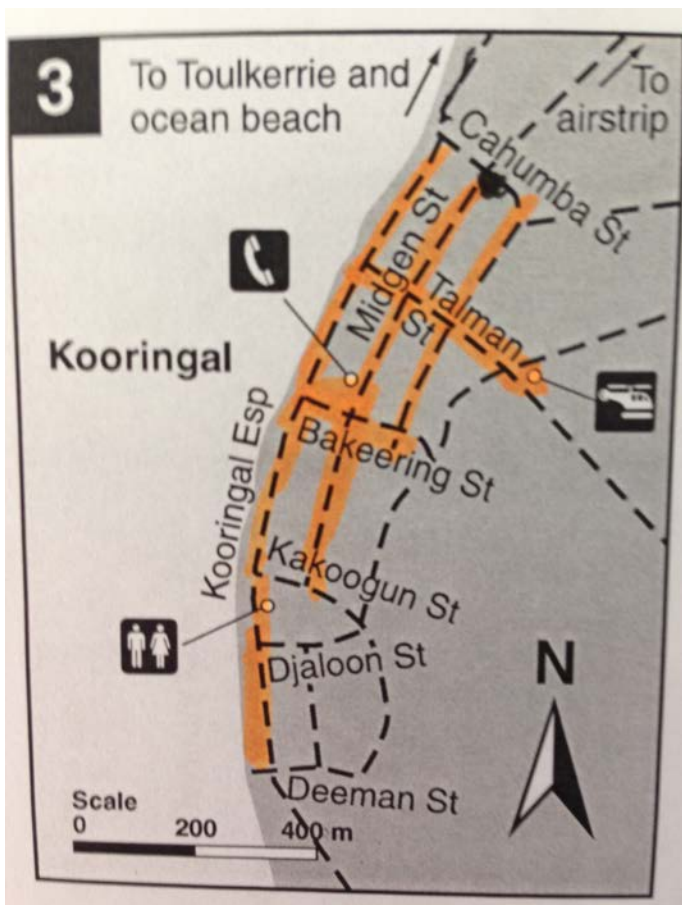


- A second CTD Dog Emma also gave a strong indication in an overgrown damp garden bed in the back street. GPS Reading (S) 0541813 (E) 6974995 The site is difficult to search but would benefit from monitoring.

-All but 2 residents spoken with were aware of the toad free status and none reported any sightings in recent years.



-One garden had a four meter square permanent waterlily pond in the lawn and a second water sample was taken from there.



Monday 22nd May-

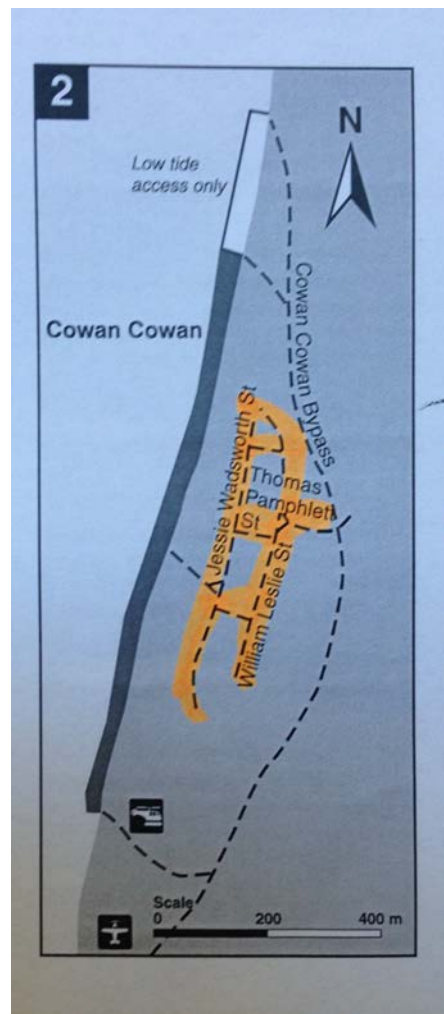
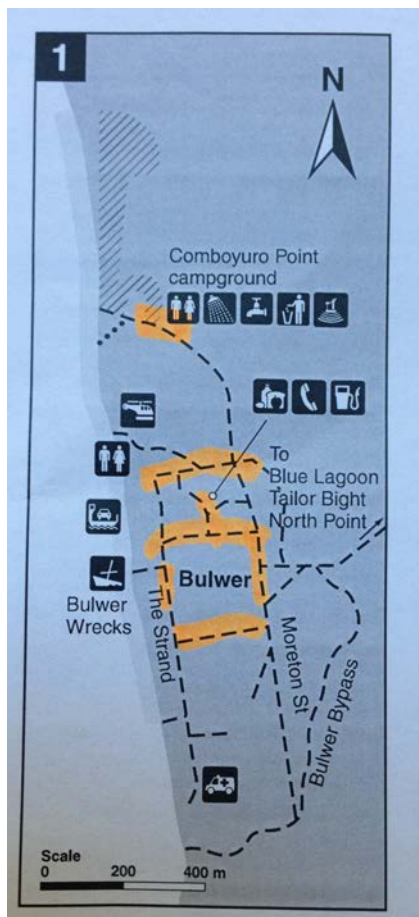
Western Beach Campsites and townships

CTD dogs searched

- Ben Ewa Campground and western beach Campsites north of Ben Ewa concentrating on occupied campsites and those adjacent to water courses. Very few campers at this time of year.
- All the street access in Cowan Cowan and those gardens where residents were home and gave permission for a search. The area we previously felt would be a hot spot with ponds, undergrowth and frequent watering is no longer there - this big cleared area, recently turfed was thoroughly searched.
- Cowan refuse station
- Bulwer Shop and Glamping compound and some street access areas. A number of unrestrained dogs in the township prevented a more extensive search.
- Comboyuro Point Campground and toilet and refuse Station.
- Rangers station at Ben Ewa



- No toad indications by the dogs were observed.
- All campers were aware of the toad free status of the island, some said they saw signs on the barge, others had seen the sign at the Cape Info centre. All residents were aware, some holiday renters were unaware, all were given advice on toad identification and urged to notify any sightings.
- Water samples were taken at Cowan South Culvert, Cowan refuse Station, CB5 Campsite and Oxbow Creek.



Tuesday 23rd May-

Tangalooma, Wrecks Campground and Eastern Beach

(were accompanied on this day by free lance journalist Jennifer? -visit had been arranged by Steve.)

CTD dogs searched

- Tangalooma Refuse station and barge landing area, kitchen and staff accommodation areas.
- Wrecks Campground - CTD dog Emma gave a positive indication at an old hot spot near the southern beach shower block -GPS reading 0536708 6995432. Thorough searching of the spot did not reveal any evidence of toad.



- CTD dogs also searched the area and campsites adjacent to both the north and south outflows of Eagers Creek.
- Campsites and toilet block in the Blue Lagoon Campground.
- Area adjacent to Blue Lagoon.
- Water sample were taken at Eagers Creek south outlet and 4 sites at Tangalooma identified by Trevor Hassard as containing permanent water.
- No positive indications were recorded in this afternoon session.
- Very few campers around - all were aware of the toad free status, None of the guests we spoke to in Tangalooma were aware that Moreton did not have a toad population.

Wednesday 24th May-

Eastern and Northern Water Bodies.

CTD Dogs searched

- Area adjacent to spitfire Creek



- Cape lawns, car park and Information Centre
- North Point Campground, North Point Nursery
- Yellow Patch Campgrounds.
- A water sample was taken at the creek at the Bulwer Road entrance and the creek was visually inspected. CTD dogs were not used in this location.
- CTD dog searches in this area were limited due to recent 1080 baiting.
- The few campers we spoke to at these campgrounds were all aware of the toad free status of Moreton Island.

Summary and recommendations -

Toad find at Koorinal - CTD dog Becky found a toad carcass in Koorinal Township - details earlier in report.

- **Campers** - at this time of year there were few campers available to engage with but it was noted that almost all were aware of Toad Free Status - most indicating they saw information on the barge and signage on the island.
- A number of campers are away from their campsites at the time of the searches. It would be good to post information at the toilet blocks in the formal campgrounds to notify campers about the program.
- **Residents** - most residents surveyed were aware of the toad free status. Few renters had seen information. Some rentals still have the old "Nifty" fridge magnets and it would be good to re-issue a similar magnet to remain in the rentals. Information about the program on the notice boards in the townships would also be worthwhile.
- **Signage** - many people surveyed stated they were made aware of the toad status by the signs at Cowan township and in front of the Wrecks Campground (Barge Landing). Additional signage at the Koorinal and Bulwer and on the barge itself would assist. Perhaps the addition of a short message or mention of the toad free status and what to do if you find a toad could be included in the information videos on the barge and Tangalooma ferries.

- **Tangalooma** - many Tangalooma guests and staff were unaware of the Toad Free Status. Signage may not be appropriate at the resort but it would be useful if awareness of the toad free status and the need to be vigilant was part of the staff orientation program. All staff were extremely helpful during our searches and contributed to the program's ease of delivery. The management of toad access points and the monitoring of suitable breeding areas at Tangalooma is impressive with relevant grounds and maintenance staff aware of the need for vigilance. As a volunteer I appreciate the ongoing support for the program that is contributed Tangalooma.
- **Communication** - It was again disappointing to learn of another previous toad find at Koorinal in the Council Reserve (Public Toilet area) so late in the program. On discussion with the rangers this turned out to be a find back in June 2016 well before this search and the last CTD Dog December 16 program. A copy of the email sent to BCC Officers at the time of the find by Moreton Island Park Ranger in Charge Terry Christensen has again been forwarded to Council Officers. I presume this information was not known to the current BCC officer at this time or prior to the Dec program (perhaps the email being sent to an officer no longer in that role?) Again this would have led to a much more targeted approach to the Koorinal searches had the information been available to the search team. It would be useful to formalise a reporting protocol or communication strategy so all stakeholders had the relevant information to act efficiently.
- **Koorinal** township is clearly a hot spot for introduction with a number of toads being found there in recent years. It would be important to document all potential breeding sites in and around the township and use this area to trial toad traps. This area should receive maximum attention in further programs.
- **It was useful to have 3 trained CTD Dogs available for searches but I feel we need to use the dogs more effectively by**
- **Targeting recent find areas** to maximise the effectiveness of the search.
- **Co-ordinating searches in the townships** to access resident's yards., particularly important in Koorinal. At present we only search yards where the owner is available or has previously given permission to access and search. This is due not only to privacy issues but also because we need to secure residents dogs to ensure the safety of the CTD dogs and handlers. In fact on this occasion searches in the Bulwer township were limited due to a number of unsecured dogs.
- This could in part be improved if a township resident was available to accompany the search or liaise with the team prior to the search. This allows us to target recent possible sources of introduction and gives us better access to properties to assist searches and arrange containment of township dogs. It could perhaps be raised at the Residents Association meetings and a contact person delegated to assist the search.
- **Vehicle Searches** - by the CTD dogs of vehicles coming onto the island would be an effective means of getting the message to campers no visitors to check their equipment as well as targeting the introduction of hitch hiking toads. This could be done prior to the vehicles boarding the barge at Fishermans Island or if a dog was stationed on the island it could be managed with the dog coming aboard at the landing or by stopping the cars on the beach. The procedure is very quick and any vehicle on which the dog showed an indication could be moved from the line up for

a more thorough search without holding up the flow of traffic. A trial or demonstration of this procedure in future CTD dog searches is recommended and should be planned with relevant stakeholders prior to the next program.

- **eDNA Monitoring** - 12 sites were tested, the 2 known water bodies at Koorringal and one Tangalooma site previously tested and 9 new sites around townships and camping sites. Refer to notes and maps on separate documentation already submitted.
- In all locations the CTD Dogs attracted favourable attention and provided an opportunity to discuss the importance of being alert to toad sightings and calls, possible introduction scenarios and the correct handling of toads. Continuing with regular campaigns would contribute maintaining the toad free status of Moreton Island.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the program.

Christine Sanders

MIPC Volunteer