

CANE TOAD FINDS CONTINUE ON MORETON ISLAND

Following excessive hot and dry conditions in the aftermath of catastrophic bushfires, the latest Cane Toad Campaign found no evidence of cane toads on the island. Despite this however, random findings continued prior to this Campaign.

Tuesday, 12th November: Late afternoon, Trevor Hassard of Tangalooma with Cane Toad Detection Dog (CTDD) Reggie, found a cane toad in leaf litter next to a shower at The Wrecks Campground. This was an unexpected find. The shower could not be turned off and the moist conditions with moss and mould obviously attracted the toad.

Sunday, 8th December: Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) Ranger John Merrett, saw a cane toad in his headlights after leaving the southern Tangalooma carpark in the evening. The toad was on the track 30 metres from the gate.

Both toads were secured into plastic bags and frozen. About this time, mulch from the mainland was stockpiled on the beach near the MICAT landing and was being used to firm up very dry, soft and boggy tracks. It's understood that the Tangalooma barge brings QPWS mulch to the Island. If QPWS source cane toad free mulch, is it possible that toads can enter the mulch from Tangalooma's Holt Street Depot?

December 17-22, 2019

Brisbane City Council Cane Toad Detector Dog Campaign

Supported by QPWS, MICAT/Moreton Island Adventures, Tangalooma Resort and Moreton Island Protection Committee (MIPC)

Again the Campaign was undertaken by renowned dog trainer, Steve Austin with his specialised CTDD's Tommy, Becky and Emma. Searches were done throughout the townships, camping grounds, Waste Transfer Stations and Tangalooma. Due to extensive water sampling on the last Campaign, none was undertaken on this occasion. These previous water samples revealed no evidence of cane toads.

The dry conditions during this Campaign increased the frequency of our checking vehicles off the MICAT. With Queensland Police Service (QPS) breathalysing drivers, we worked in conjunction with them to have the CTDD's check vehicles.

MORETON ISLAND CANE TOAD FREE!

Moreton Island is one of Brisbane's major natural assets and one of the few locations in coastal Queensland where cane toads have not established. Any accidental introduction will affect your enjoyment of campsites and waterways and cause serious impacts to local wildlife.



WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PROTECT MORETON ISLAND?

Check for cane toads before travelling and when you unpack. You are likely to find them hiding in firewood, fishing and camping gear, building materials, tyre wells, trailers, and swags.

Keep Moreton Island Cane Toad Free leaflets were handed out. This promotion and association with members of the public are an important part of the Campaign.

Day 1: Tuesday, 17th December

Steve Austin with his dogs, BCC Officers Dane Hansen and Les Murphy, and I met at Tangalooma Resort outside the Education Centre for a CTDD demonstration. To the fascination of resort guests, a dead cane toad was hidden and then found by the dogs. This is always popular and provides information and photo opportunities.

We discussed implementation of a Cane Toad Hotline for easy reporting of cane toad sightings. This is mentioned in more detail in Recommendations (and sample page 5).

The Wrecks Campground was checked, particularly around the outdoor showers where Trevor Hassard found the cane toad in November. Trenches had been dug to assist run off from the showers and washers replaced so the taps could be completely turned off.

The CTDD's indicated around the Waste Transfer Bins at the southern end of the Campground. These were checked again later that night for no findings.

Day 2: Wednesday 18th December

In conjunction with the QPS Breathalysing Unit, we checked vehicles arriving off the MICAT and did a leaflet drop. Following this we attempted to get to Koorinal via Middle Road. However, cars and trailers bogged on the track before the ocean beach prevented us from doing this. With the delay, the tide was too high to travel to Koorinal.

We went to Blue Lagoon Campground and checked about the shower and toilet block, then drove to Comboyuro Campground to check the shower and toilet block there, as well as the tourist operator campsite.

In Bulwer we checked the surrounds of the shop, glamping, adjacent residences, and the Waste Transfer Station. We then went to Cowan to check the Waste Transfer Station before heading back to Tangalooma. We checked the southern carpark and the track to the residences where the cane toad was recently found. There were no indications from the dogs in the dry conditions.

Day 3: Thursday 19th December

The day was mostly spent checking all the residences above Tangalooma Resort and the remainder of the track to the houses where the Cane Toad was found. Again, the weather was hot and dry with no indications from the CTDD's. We spoke to some residents and holiday makers who said they'd seen no toads. Leaflets were left at all residences.

The gardens were then checked at the southern end of Tangalooma Resort. We met the afternoon barge and continued our vehicle check and leaflet drop to vehicles coming off the MICAT.

Day 4: Friday 20th December

Again we checked vehicles off the morning MICAT in conjunction with the QPS Breathalyser Unit. There were two indications from scent on tarps over trailers from the CTDDs – one was from Cairns, the other Brisbane. We then checked campsites at Cowan Point Campground. It was decided that checking of further campsites was unnecessary due to it being too dry with vegetation burnt out from recent fires.

We checked drains and the northern gardens of Tangalooma Resort, then vehicles off the afternoon MICAT.

Day 5: Saturday 21st December

We managed to reach Koorinal, checked the Waste Transfer Station and a house in Midgin Street where a resident had asked to have his property looked over. Again with such dry conditions searches proved to be fruitless.

MICAT Terminal

The MICAT Terminal continues to be a hotspot for Cane Toads. In six searches of the Terminal from January to April in 2019, MIPC members collected 154 toads. The threat will always be that they can be transported from here to Moreton Island. Despite increased signage and publicity at the MICAT Terminal, previous recommendations to erect a barrier on fencing to exclude Cane Toads have not taken place.



Cane Toads collected at the MICAT Terminal 17th January, 2020



Cane Toads collected at the MICAT Terminal 28th January, 2020





RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Preventative action culling Cane Toads at the MICAT Terminal should continue.
2. Cane Toad fencing should be erected at the MICAT Terminal.
3. Future Campaigns should work with the local knowledge of the townships resident's associations. Bulwer, Cowan and Koorngal associations should be advised prior to all Campaigns, asked if there's been sightings and where searches could best be directed. All reports and information should be sent to resident's associations and BCC should receive feedback.
4. A Cane Toad Hotline to BCC should be established with procedure along the lines of the draft leaflet on the following page.
5. All shipments of mulch, woodchip, landscape materials and plants to the Island should be stored in a cane toad free area and checked by a CTDD.
6. Ideally, a CTDD should check vehicles waiting to board or exit the MICAT.
7. When doing vehicle checks, we've been noticing increasing numbers of cats and dogs in residents and holiday maker's vehicles. We also see dogs, and evidence of dogs from boats on the beaches. The CTDD's have been finding cat and dog kills of wildlife – mainly curlews, doves, frogs and giant skinks.

Are cats and dogs in townships or anywhere on the Island in keeping with objectives of the National Park? Would it be in the best interests of the National Park to ban all cats and dogs by a target date, say 2025?

**KEEP MORETON ISLAND
CANE TOAD FREE!**

**WHAT YOU CAN DO
IF YOU SEE A CANE TOAD**

-  **1 Take a photo
with your
mobile phone**
-  **2 Catch the toad.
Secure in a bag**
-  **3 Note time
and location**
-  **4 Send photo
and info to
BCC Hotline**

**Brisbane City Council or
Moreton Island Rangers
will contact you further**

*Public involvement – possible bookmark leaflet to be used with a **Cane Toad Hotline** phone number
Previous BCC leaflets of a cane toad photo noting identifying features should be used on the front*

Thanks to Brisbane City Council for this important initiative in continuing the Cane Toad Campaign and promoting public awareness, MICAT and QPWS for their support, and Tangalooma. Hopefully the “Cane Toad Free Status” of Moreton Island can be maintained for future generations.

Greg Curtis

Moreton Island Protection Committee (www.moretonisland.org.au)