



Our Ref:

25/12/0005

Your Ref:

Enquiries:

Direct Line:

Standing Committee on the Environment and Energy

PO Box 6021

Parliament House

Canberra, ACT 2600

Dear Committee Secretariat,

STANDING COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO CONTROLLING THE SPREAD OF CANE TOADS

Thank you for the opportunity to provide insight into the concerns faced by the people of Port Hedland relating to the spread of cane toads through North West Australia. Fortunately, to date, the march of the cane toad has not reached Port Hedland's doorstep but with the ongoing infiltration of the Kimberley region, and unless dramatic intervention occurs, Port Hedland's biodiversity will be at threat.

Each year the Town of Port Hedland receives numerous calls from concerned residents relating to the possible identification of cane toads in the community. Luckily, to date these concerns have been the result of misidentification where residents have mistakenly identified, and sometimes killed, native frog species. This highlights not only the concern and vigilance of the community but clearly demonstrates a significant lack of knowledge regarding cane toad identification which places other, commonly mistaken, frog species at risk.

Though most cane toad calls are a case of mistaken identity, cane toads have in the past been found in our region. On three occasions, toads have been located in Port Hedland as a result of them hitchhiking amongst plants (palms) or turf transported from the Kimberley or Darwin. Though instances of this are infrequent, it highlights another significant issue relating to biosecurity control measures on items transported from areas where toad populations are present.

It is with great interest that we monitor the results of the hard work undertaken by groups such as the 'Kimberley Toad Busters', and others, in preventing the infestation across the top end. Unfortunately, even with their ongoing efforts, it is highly likely that the toad march will continue on its current course down the Western Australian coast and across the state. It is evident though that the efforts of conservation groups in removing toads from the environment has slowed the pest's progression through the region considerably.

Port Hedland has a long history of very active environmental groups operating in the area protecting the biodiversity of the region. With that said however, introducing additional work such as toad eradication would stretch any volunteer agency beyond its capabilities and resources. To that end it is requested that Federal and State Government consider increasing grant funding opportunities to

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community volunteer environmental groups that intend to use funds towards toad eradication programs. Support from state agencies such as the Department of Water & Environmental Regulation and the Department of Parks and Wildlife towards training/education, coordination, logistics and resources would also benefit any program immensely.

A strengthened, state coordinated, focus on community education must also be considered. Ensuring that the public is aware of how they can play a part in preventing/removing the toad threat to the environment, correct identification of cane toads to prevent the removal of non-target species and publicising the actions of volunteer environmental group's thus potentially increasing volunteer numbers should certainly be a primary focus for any Federal Government cane toad initiatives.

The Town of Port Hedland will continue to always operate with the best interests of the community and the environment at heart but support must be forthcoming to enable any true impacts to be made.

Should you require any further information regarding this matter please contact [REDACTED]
Manager of Environmental Health and Community Safety, on [REDACTED] or
[REDACTED]

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Manager Environmental Health &
Community Safety

11/01/2019