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Key actions

The strategy proposes that 10 key actions will be implemented over the next five years:

- i. Continue **research and biological surveys** to identify high value biodiversity assets and potential locations for targeted conservation programs.
- ii. Identify and prioritise species at high risk from cane toads and develop and implement **protective management programs**.
- iii. Apply best practice **techniques and standards for the short term control** of cane toads in high value areas, including access to appropriate cane toad **identification, euthanasia and disposal** information and support services.
- iv. Review and strengthen **quarantine procedures**, including intrastate quarantine inspection/auditing of road, air and ship freight and tourism companies, and strengthening the use of quarantine checkpoints, including mobile checkpoints.
- v. Build on awareness of 'hitch-hiker' cane toads and implement procedures to prevent the establishment of satellite populations, including **reporting of cane toad sightings and rapid response measures**.
- vi. Facilitate and support appropriate **research into the long term biological control** of cane toads, including the use of parasitic lungworms and taste aversion learning by native predators.
- vii. Support a Stakeholder Reference Group to ensure that relevant State and Commonwealth government agencies and community groups are aware of management and research progress and



- recommended actions, and relevant groups are able to **contribute and access information** as required.
- viii. Build on the existing Freecall **telephone service** to create an integrated information and reporting service, supported by a shared **reporting database and GIS system**.
 - ix. Review **information** on cane toad impacts, management options, safe handling, identification, reporting, euthanasia and disposal.
 - x. Build on a cane toad **education program** including demonstration materials, student handouts and a teacher resource kit. The program will address different age groups and audience types, including Aboriginal communities and areas with and without the presence of cane toads.

A major review of the strategy is proposed after the first five years, to determine whether the objectives and key actions remain valid over the remainder of the strategy's 10-year timeframe.



Public consultation

The draft Cane Toad Strategy for Western Australia has been developed by the Department of Environment and Conservation, in consultation with a Kununurra-based Stakeholder Reference Group. Membership of this group includes State Government organisations, local authorities, key community groups, the tourism sector, Indigenous groups, the horticultural sector and biosecurity groups.

Input from all organisations and individuals into the draft Cane Toad Strategy for Western Australia is very welcome. The draft strategy is open for public comment for six weeks until 25 June 2009. All submissions will be considered and a final strategy will be released prior to the 2009/10 wet season. Written comments should be sent to:

Community Cane Toad Coordinator
Department of Environment and Conservation
PO Box 942
KUNUNURRA WA 6743
or emailed to corrin.everitt@dec.wa.gov.au

The draft strategy will be used to guide actions to manage cane toads until the final strategy is released.

Further information

The full version of the draft Cane Toad Strategy for Western Australia is available online at
www.dec.wa.gov.au,
www.canetoads.com.au or
www.thelastfrontier.com.au

Please phone the Community Cane Toad Coordinator at DEC Kununurra on (08) 9168 4200 for further information or to obtain a hard copy of the draft strategy.

Photo front: Some native mammal species, such as the grassland melomys, are known to avoid the poison glands of cane toads.

Draft Cane Toad Strategy
for Western Australia:
Have your say



Department of
Environment and Conservation

Our environment, our future





Cane toads arrived at the Western Australian border in early 2009, although they are not likely to reach any towns in the Kimberley until the 2009/10 wet season.

The State Government has developed a draft Cane Toad Strategy for Western Australia to coordinate efforts to reduce the impact of these poisonous pests, and you are invited to have your say.

The new, 10-year strategy will replace the operational strategy that government agencies have been working to since 2005, which focused on actions before cane toads reached our State. The draft strategy allows for new information to be incorporated as it unfolds and emphasises the critical role of partnerships between government and community-based organisations in fighting cane toads within Western Australia.

The impact of cane toads

Cane toads are an invasive species thought to be responsible for the decline of many species across northern Australia, including northern quolls and goannas, mainly due to poisoning. Cane toads may also compete with native species for habitat and food resources, but these impacts are much harder to determine. Many of the impacts on Australia's biodiversity are anecdotal, and detailed research on the impacts of cane toads is currently being undertaken by a variety of institutions and other groups. Cane toad poison glands may also present a risk to domestic animals and may impact on the aesthetic value of many of Western Australia's pristine areas.

Efforts to date

The State Government has invested more than \$13 million in the fight against cane toads: establishing a field-based cane toad team, strengthening quarantine measures, conducting a major campaign to raise public

awareness about cane toads and funding several research programs to investigate long-term solutions to the control of cane toads.

In Western Australia, the community response to the threat posed by cane toads is unprecedented, with well organised and dedicated community groups working with the State Government to physically prevent the entry of toads into the State. Two key community action groups, the Kimberley Toad Busters and Stop the Toad Foundation, have worked for more than three years, conducting toad busting expeditions to the front line, facilitating the involvement of thousands of volunteers and raising community awareness of the cane toad issue.

Despite these efforts, the spread of cane toads cannot be stopped by any methods currently available. While promising research to find a means of controlling cane toads will continue, efforts are now focused on ensuring that local communities are prepared for the arrival of cane toads; appropriate short-term control programs are implemented where needed; and that measures are taken to ensure new populations of toads do not establish elsewhere in Western Australia ahead of the main front.



Major objectives

The draft strategy has five major objectives:

1. To protect biodiversity and social and economic values using appropriate means, including targeted manual cane toad control measures.
2. To minimise the likelihood of new populations of cane toads through improved quarantine and surveillance measures.
3. To build control capacity through improved scientific knowledge and biocontrol techniques.
4. To enhance communication, coordination and collaboration of cane toad information and management.
5. To enhance community and industry awareness and understanding of cane toad impacts and management requirements.