

Quarantine

Principle:

The region is relatively free of many of the invasive species that are present on the mainland. Strict quarantine measures will ensure that new introductions are minimised, and that control of existing species is effective.

Threats to the region's natural resources from introduced species originate mostly from overseas and intra-territory: there is limited direct interstate travel to and from the Islands. The Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) undertakes regular surveys of the region as part of their ongoing programme under the Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy. Pests and diseases not currently present in Australia that may gain entry through the Tiwi Islands have also been identified and recorded as part of the Tiwi Plants and Animals book, which is widely distributed throughout the region. Quarantine procedures for the proposed entry of overseas ships for forestry export are also under development, and legislation is in place to prevent unwanted entries.

The major threat from introduced species is the introduction and re-introduction of exotic species that are currently present on the Northern Territory mainland. While some of these species already occur within the region, their abundance is relatively low, and further introductions are likely to increase the rate of spread. It will also limit the effectiveness of current and proposed control activities. Vectors for the entry of unwanted mainland species have been identified and include barges and barge freight, airline freight and personal luggage, and recreational campers travelling by private vessels.

The recent identification of *Mimosa pigra* along a remote stretch of coastline on Melville Island, and the imminent arrival of cane toads in Darwin has elevated quarantine to an urgent priority.

The Tiwi Land Council has implemented a number of quarantine initiatives including the construction of quarantine facilities at Tiwi Barge premises, the main exit point for freight travelling from the mainland. Proposed infrastructure includes a quarantine washdown bay, and the Land Council is actively pursuing additional funding for the construction of a quarantine

holding area specifically designed to exclude cane toads. Public awareness activities include articles and interviews for local and national news media, and the production and wide distribution of quarantine brochures and bookmarks. The Tiwi Land Council was awarded the 2003 AQIS Regional Quarantine Award for its work in quarantine activities and awareness.

A Cane Toad Action Plan has also been prepared and implemented, and activities include awareness, training, monitoring and reporting. These activities will need to be ongoing to maintain quarantine as a high priority for both residents and visitors, and legislative methods of intra-territory control should be further explored.

Outcome:

Protection of the region's economic and natural resource values from the impacts of inadvertent or unauthorised introductions of exotic species.

Objective:

15. Develop and implement processes that prevent the introduction of new exotic pest species, and the re-introduction of exotic pest species already present within the region.

Recommended Actions:

- 15.1 Support and encourage the expansion of existing AQIS programmes within the region, including training local people in monitoring activities.
- 15.2 Seek and obtain funding support for expanded quarantine infrastructure at Tiwi Barge Service premises on the mainland.
- 15.3 Regularly review and update the Cane Toad Action Plan.
- 15.4 Include quarantine requirements in all tenders let within the region that involve transport of machinery and freight.
- 15.5 Maintain quarantine public awareness and education activities both within the region and on the mainland.
- 15.6 Actively explore opportunities for intra-territory quarantine legislative controls as an urgent priority.
- 15.7 Develop and implement a Quarantine Management Plan for the region.

