



## Cane Toad Detector Dog Campaign Moreton Island 13th - 18th December 2017

Report on BCC funded Cane Toad Detector Dog Program on Moreton Island 13th-18th

December 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.

### **Wednesday 13th dec -**

#### **Tangalooma Resort**

CTD Dog Tommy, Emma And Becky searched Tangalooma foreshore Grounds, garden and villa areas, nursery and rubbish bin storage areas. The dogs and Steve were accompanied by Scott Oertel and Dane Hansen. A handover to the team, additional information and support materials particularly on the township contacts supplied by Dane improved the delivery of the program.

## Thursday 14th-

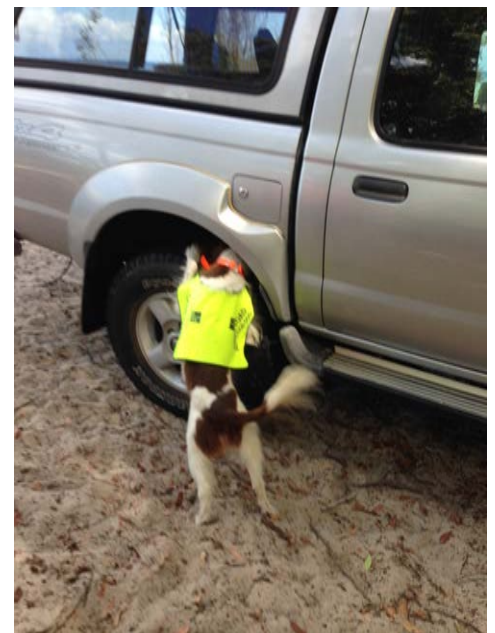
### Western Beach National Parks Campsites -

CTD Dogs searched

- Wrecks Campground
- Ben Ewa Campground
- All occupied Western Beach Campsites up to the large group camping area at Cowan Point just south of Cowan turnoff. **CTD dog Becky located dead cane toad remains** under the wheel arch of a camper's car at site CP22.
- No other indications observed.

The find provided an excellent opportunity to showcase how the dogs work and to reinforce the message of checking gear before arriving on the island. It also reinforces the value of vehicle searches at the mainland barge terminal prior to departing. The dog can work the vehicles quickly with minimum disruption while vehicles are waiting to board. It would be desirable to include this in future programs as a demonstration with a view to routine inspections if a CTD dog was available on a more regular basis.

All campers given the bookmarks, information re toad calls and advice on reporting any toad sightings. The majority of campers indicated they were aware of the toad free status of the island and all were very happy to make their campsites available for the dogs to search.



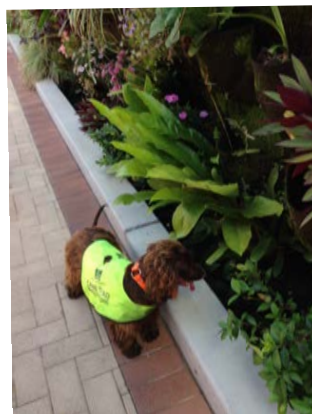
*Becky indicating a toad find.  
(remains only)*

### Tangalooma

CTD dogs searched the recreation lawns area including retaining wall and gardens.

No indications observed.

*Emma checks the hanging gardens*



## Koorungal township

On arrival in the township I met with Tony Williams (ph 0418 980 932) a representative of the Koorungal Residents Association who gave advice on residents with dogs and cats on site and new gardens and buildings. We met at the Fire Station and he was able to supply a map to which we added these details. I had hoped a representative would be able to accompany us on the town search but this at least gave the CTD Dogs visit to the township some recognition with the local association as well as useful information to assist in the safety and efficiency of the visit.

CTD dogs searched

- Refuse Dump
- Residential areas as indicated on the map and those yards where the residents were home and gave permission.
- Township reserve and toilet blocks.
- CTD Dog Becky gave a mild indication on vegetated roadside reserve at the front of 91 Esplanade. GPS Co- ordinates S27 20' 888" E 153 25' 224". No one was home at the time of the search -no information left at site. May be worth following up with owners requesting some ongoing monitoring for toads.



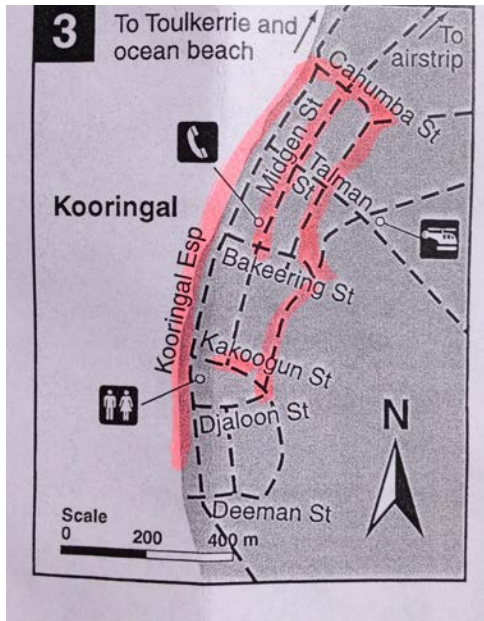
*Emma searches the dump site.*



*Mild Indication site on Koorungal Esplanade*

**eDNA** samples collected from ponds at Koorungal Airstrip and residential garden pond 82 Boondool Street. Other swampy ponds are located to the immediate south east of the township but these are difficult to access and not best use of the time available for the search. eDNA samples could be collected on a separate occasion - it is not an easy access for the dogs without prior planning.

*Map of Area searched in Koorngal.*



*Map provided by Tony Williams showing locations of town dogs and cats*



## **Friday !5th Decem-ber-**

### **Eastern Beach and National Parks Campgrounds**

CTD dogs searched water bodies and camping areas on the Eastern Beach and North Point including

- Eagers Creek marsh area and adjacent occupied campsites
- Warramgamba brach camping sites ( it was useful to access the Rangers campsite aerial map to locate the correct beach access. Long stay campers on this site were given bookmarks,
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- information re toad calls and directed to the Australian Museum “Frog ID” mobile phone App.
- Spitfire Creek and surrounds
- The lawns and communications buildings at the Cape.
- North Point camping ground
- MIPC Nursery - CTD Dog Becky did show some interest in this area with a marked indication but this may have been a cat indication - could be a good spot for toad or at trap.
- Yellow Patch camping area and fresh water pond.
- Eagers Creek Indigenous site

We spoke with campers in all these locations. Again the majority were aware of the toad free status and many were repeat campers who had encountered the dogs on previous seasonal searches.



*Spitfire Creek.*



*MIPC Nursery*

*Becky searches Campsites and gardens at North Point*



We collected eDNA samples at all accessible sites during this day.

## **Saturday 16th December- Western Beach and Bulwer Township**

CTD dogs searched

- Western Beach Campsites between Cowan and Bulwer, eDNA samples were collected from creeks adjacent to campsites.
- Bulwer refuse dump

- Bulwer Fire Station and yards in Moreton Street and The Strand were residents were home and gave permission.
- Bulwer shop area and Glamping Complex.
- Comboyuro Campground.
- Commercial operators Campsite at Comboyuro

The dogs were welcomed at all these sites. The majority of campers and all residents we spoke with were aware of toad free status. Information bookmarks were distributed at the Campground and to residents,



We also met John Kluba ( ph 0475 563 642) at the Fire Station. John organises a monthly residents and visitors get together at the fire station. He was keen to be involved and would like to feature any information re toads we can provide, We left a stock of bookmarks with him for distribution. He would be an excellent contact for future campaigns.

CTD Dog Tommy did indicate strongly at the rear of one residence - 20 Marsh Street.

Co ordinates S 27 04 442. E 153 22 191. We were unable to locate any evidence of a toad but spoke with the owner who will continue to monitor.

On return to Tangalooma eDNA samples were collected from the seepage pits in front of main resort.

*Toad Indication point 20 Marsh Street Bulwer*

## **Sunday 17th December**

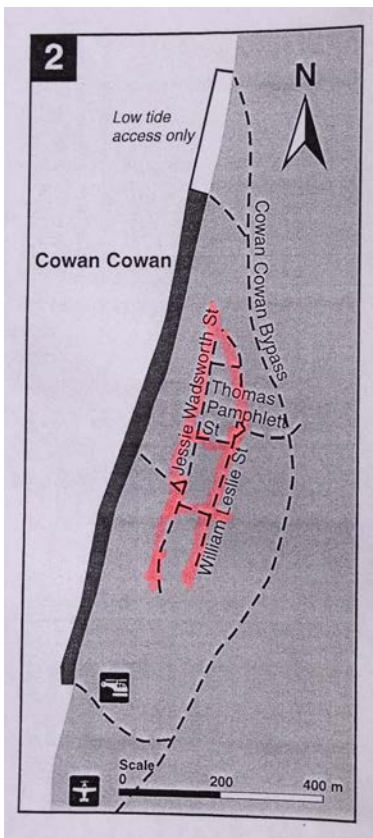
### **Cowan Township**

CTD dogs searched

- Refuse Dump
- All street access in the township and all residences were owners were home and gave permission to search.
- Water samples were taken at first Cowan South Culvert

CTD Dog Emma gave a strong indication on newly mulched garden bed at the northern corner of Thomas Pamphlett and William Leslie Streets. GPS Co- ordinates S27 07 528 E 153 22 017.

No evidence of a toad present. The owners were at home and were given information and will continue to monitor the site. We did not have an available resident to assist with our search in this area.



*Search area at Cowan Cowan.*



*Searching in Bulwer*

## Tangalooma

A final search of gardens and nursery finished the dog searches. I left the moulded toad in the case with Sue Hassard at the Tangalooma Information Centre. I feel it will be most useful for the number of international staff and visitors at Tangalooma.

## Summary and recommendations -

**Toad remains find at Cowan Point Campground** CTD dog Becky found toad remains in the wheelarch of a campers car - clearly killed on the mainland in Brisbane and carried over - details earlier in report.

**2 strong indications Bulwer** 20 Marsh Street

GPS S 27 04 442. E 153 22 191

**Cowan Cowan** Cnr Thomas Pamphlett/William Leslie

GPS S 27 07 528. E 153 22 017

- **Campers** - at this time of year there were campers arriving and no doubt it will become busier closer to Xmas. 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. This is increasing each year with return campers.
- A number of campers were 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. Bookmarks/Brouchures were left at the campsites.

- **Residents** - all 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 .
- **Contacts**- thanks Dane for the list of township contacts. I believe involving the residents was helpful and did give us the opportunity to have them participate in the campaign. As indicated earlier Tony and Denise Williams ( 0418 980 932 ) at Kooringal and John Kluba (0475 563 642) at Bulwer were helpful and it would be useful to again involve them in future searches. Although not on your original contact list John Kluba has given permission for me to pass on his contact details. The Cowan contact Terry McGuire was not available.
- **Signage** - the vehicle signs were excellent in providing instant information to campers and residents when we arrived on site and an easily identifiable reason for the dogs on the island. Thankyou for arranging this long asked for equipment. 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 Kooringal 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.
- **Mapping and reporting** - it would be great to have access to the same BCC maps of the townships as the one supplied by Tony Williams at Kooringal. It would help me identify individual house numbers and better report on the town searches
- **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.
- **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** - 11 sites were tested, the 2 known water bodies at Kooringal and two at the 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