



National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program – South East Queensland

1st Quarter Report 2016–17

Released by DAF
RTI Act 2009

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Executive Summary

The nationally agreed *Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program Response Plan 2013–18* (the response plan) was developed to establish a framework to delimit, contain and recommence eradication of red imported fire ants (fire ants) in South East Queensland.

The delimitation phase of the response plan was completed in June 2015 and National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program (the Program) moved to eradication in July 2015.

Under eradication, the Program's 2016–17 Work Plan¹ (the work plan) continues to focus on three key strategies—targeted treatment on planned treatment areas to eradicate infestation, ongoing surveillance to monitor infestation (to facilitate targeted treatment) and movement controls to minimise the risk of human-assisted fire ant spread.

The work plan continues with the concept of a core infested area² (core area). As per the work plan, work within the core area is designed to contain and suppress infestation while the Program works to eradicate infestation outside this area.

The Program is treating areas (planned treatment areas) over two years. Established planned treatment areas inside the core, will receive two rounds of treatment in 2016–17, equating to four rounds over two years. Established planned treatment areas outside the core area will receive three rounds of treatment totalling six consecutive rounds over two years.

To allow for additional treatment to be applied to new high density infestations outside the planned treatment areas the core area was increased. These areas will receive a minimum of two rounds of treatment, and established planned treatment areas affected by an expansion in the core boundary will receive a minimum of two rounds and will received five consecutive rounds over two years.

The 2016–17 treatment season began on 20 September 2016 and progress will be reported next quarter.

Outside the planned treatment areas, almost 385 hectares of new infestation were detected during July–September 2016 and subsequently treated separately under the approved protocol.

The Program has seven odour detection dogs, six operate in the field and one is now used for community engagement purposes (this dog has recently been moved to community engagement after operating in the field). With a number of the Program's odour detection dogs reaching retirement age, three new candidate dogs were sourced from Department of Immigration and Border Protection in 2015–16. Two odour detection dogs were re-homed during the quarter.

On 1 July 2016 the new *Biosecurity Act 2014* and Biosecurity Regulation 2016 were implemented with three fire ant biosecurity zones replacing the restricted area. The fire ant biosecurity zones are areas that are either infested or at risk of being infested and where movement controls for fire ant carriers apply.

The work plan has been developed around the response plan indicative budget of \$19.027 million comprising an approved cost-share allocation of \$16.027 million and \$3 million in supplementary funding plus \$0.466 million carryover from 2015–16, both of which are yet to be confirmed. At 30 September 2016, the Program's expenditure was \$3.528 million.

Following the surveillance undertaken by the Program's odour detection dogs at the Perth Airport, Western Australia from 9–14 May 2016 for browsing ant (*Lepisiota frauenfeldi*)—the pest free area report was endorsed. The final round of surveillance at Belmont, outside Perth Airport is scheduled for December 2016.

¹ Endorsed by the Tramp Ant Consultative Committee (TACC 24) on 27 May 2015

² A subset of suburbs in the fire ant biosecurity zone where the majority of high density infestation is located.

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Summary of Activities

The primary components of the response plan can be broadly grouped into three essential components—treatment³, surveillance and movement controls. Science and community engagement contribute to these three components. Other support functions include information services, administration, and National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program (the Program) policy and management.

An overall view of the activities (including treatment and surveillance) that have been undertaken to date is provided spatially where possible.

A summary of the Program's key activities to be undertaken in 2016–17 is provided in [Appendix 1](#). Progress against the key activities of the work plan is reported quarterly.

TREATMENT

In accordance with the 2013–18 response plan – treatment of small isolated infestations (responsive treatment areas), areas with high density infestation, and areas that are at a high risk of becoming infested (planned treatment areas).

PLANNED TREATMENT⁴

Inside the core infested area (core area) ([Appendix 2](#) outlines the core area)

~18 000 hectares will receive two rounds of treatment per year⁵

Outside the core area

~15 500 hectares three times per year

A further 5000 hectares of new high density infestation will receive a minimum of two rounds of treatment during 2016–17

The nationally endorsed work plan outlined treatment of approximately 90 000 hectares in total, with approximately 25 000 hectares outside the core area be treated three times per year in 2016–17, and approximately 6250 hectares inside core areas to be treated twice. This would be a continuation of treatment in 2015–16, with outside core areas receiving six consecutive rounds of treatment over the two year period and inside core areas receiving four consecutive rounds over two years.

During the treatment planning phase it became apparent that more treatment was needed on new high density infestations detected outside the established treatment areas. To allow for this within the available resources the core area was increased. This resulted in a number of established treatment areas that were outside the core in 2015–16 and received three rounds of treatment being incorporated inside the core and will receive a minimum of two rounds of treatment in 2016–17. Major considerations in the expansion of this boundary included the proximity to the core infested area, proximity to other infested areas and the likelihood of reinfestation even after six consecutive rounds of treatment.

All new treatment areas outside the core will receive a minimum of two treatment rounds and be prioritised for treatment in 2017–18 for further consecutive rounds of treatment. Table 1 (below) documents the changes between the total of treatment area in the work plan compared with the quantum of actual treatment area for 2016–17.

³ Treatment is the primary focus as delimitation was completed in 2014–15.

⁴ A change in the core infested area boundary occurred with changes to infestation density.

⁵ Includes core areas, areas moved into the core and waste facilities that are both within and outside the core area.

The above issue highlights the need to review the timing for the approval of the annual work plan which is currently drafted and approved before the end of the financial year. Considering fire ants are subject to seasonal variations, and the majority of new detections are found from April through to July⁶ this does not fit well with the planning process and the ability to respond to new infestation. Better alignment of planning of treatment and surveillance will need to be considered if the proposed Ten Year Eradication Plan is implemented.

Table 1: Treatment area comparison table

Work Plan area	Actual area after treatment planning completed
Outside core 3 rounds 25 000 hectares per round (75 000 hectares in total)	Outside core (established treatment areas) 3 rounds 15 500 hectares per round (46 500 hectares in total)
Inside core 2 rounds 6250 hectares per round (12 500 hectares in total)	Inside core (established treatment areas) 2 rounds 18 000 hectares per round (36 000 hectares in total)
	Outside core – new areas 2 rounds 5000 hectares per round (10 000 hectares in total)
Total 87 500 hectares	Total 92 500 hectares

Progress

Treatment began on 20 September 2016. Treatment progress for the first quarter 2016–17 will not be provided as treatment had only been underway for eight working days at the end of the quarter. Refer to [Appendix 3](#) for planned treatment areas.

As with treatment undertaken in 2015–16, treatment outside the core will be conducted as a priority, with all teams then tasked to finish treatment inside the core area.

Communication strategies

A comprehensive communication and engagement strategy was developed in the first quarter of 2016–17 and will continue to be implemented throughout the treatment season. This strategy will assist in facilitating the smooth delivery of field operations by gaining support from residents within the treatment areas. Table 2 outlines the key activities undertaken/to be undertaken as part of the strategy.

To further streamline the treatment process the Program has taken the opportunity to change the way staff conduct treatment under the new Biosecurity legislation. Program staff will treat a property (if accessible and safe) on the first visit after making a reasonable attempt to gain consent from the landowner (as prescribed in the legislation).

As part of the communication and engagement strategy, the Program has engaged the local councils within the treatment area to distribute information through their communication channels regarding the treatment regime.

⁶ These months see the greatest number of positive samples diagnosed, during the 2015–16 financial year 24% of all positive detections occurred during May and June alone, and during 2014–15, 31% of positive detections occurred during May and June.

Table 2: Communications and engagement strategy activities

Activity	Message
Notification letters	To residents <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Commencement of treatmento Access to property requiremento Multiple visits for treatment during the season
Letters (distributed by Program staff)	To residents <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Staff conducting treatment in the area
Road signage	In areas of operation <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Treatment activities underway
Facebook advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Targeting residents in suburbs due to receive treatment
Notifications	Emailed to electoral representatives (three levels), council operational contacts and Policelink Operations Manager <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Access support requirement

RESPONSIVE TREATMENT – NEW INFESTATION

Outside the planned treatment areas, 385 hectares of new infestation was detected during the quarter and subsequently treated under the approved protocol (refer to the map in [Appendix 3](#)). Business rules used to calculate the 'area of infestation' continue to be under review.

During the first quarter of 2016–17 there was one significant detection:

- Bracken Ridge in September 2016

A significant detection report was provided to the Tramp Ant Consultative Committee (TACC) providing details on the detection.

The detection is located:

- 13.7 km north-west of the Eagle Farm detection (detected June 2016).
- 10 km north-west of the Brisbane Airport detection (detected May 2015)—cleared after receiving the required treatment and surveillance activities.

Genetic analysis has confirmed that the detection is related to the South East Queensland population of fire ants. As this stage there is no conclusive evidence that indicates how this infestation became established in this area.

Treatment has been conducted and extensive surveillance is scheduled for November 2016.

Diagnostics

During the quarter, 941 ant samples were submitted—716 were diagnosed as fire ant with the majority (81%) having been reported by the public. In addition, 381 photos were submitted for identification—102 were diagnosed as fire ant.

Treatment efficacy assessments

Treatment efficacy assessments are undertaken to routinely monitor the effectiveness in the field of the baits (pyriproxyfen and methoprene) currently used by the Program and to test new products as they become available. There is one bait efficacy assessment in progress.

Sites for future assessments of Distance® Plus⁷ bait are being sought but none were found suitable during the quarter. All multiple-nest sites assessed were unsuitable because of risks to the public or animals, or to the Program through possible movement of fire ant carriers.

Assessment 1 – Distance® Plus (new to the Program)

A Distance® Plus assessment at a site in Willowbank was added in February 2016. In early March, Distance® Plus bait was applied to half the site with Distance® (the Program's standard treatment) applied to the other half of the site for comparison. At the first assessment in early May all marked mounds were still active. A second application of Distance® Plus and Distance bait occurred at Willowbank in May 2016, and an assessment of progress in August 2016 found all mounds still active but with an absence of brood which could indicate the ants are bait effected. This infestation is polygyne and several treatment rounds are likely to be required to eliminate the population.

Bait application at this site will re-commenced during the next quarter with the start of the new treatment season. Following this treatment the site will be inspected again.

No new sites have been identified as suitable for bait assessments.

SURVEILLANCE

In accordance with the 2013–18 response plan – targeted field surveillance will occur in high risk zones and areas of new detections. Most new detections are reported by the public, which is a direct result of community engagement.

The maps in [Appendix 4](#) highlight the areas where surveillance has been conducted during the quarter.

Validation surveillance

During the quarter, validation surveillance (to determine treatment success) undertaken by the Program resulted in all but three of the sites being cleared. The total amount of validation surveillance performed this quarter was over 280 hectares. The majority of the validation surveillance was undertaken by the odour detection dog teams. The areas that were still infested received further treatment as per the treatment protocol.

Delineation surveillance

Delineation surveillance, undertaken by a combination of field teams and odour detection dogs on new detections, covered over 1830 hectares. Additional fire ants were detected during delineation surveillance conducted in one suburb in the Scenic Rim Regional Council area (outside the core area) and this area has been included in treatment for 2016–17 as a new treatment area. Delineation also conducted in a suburb that borders both the Scenic Rim Regional/Ipswich City Council areas (outside the core area) confirmed the extent of the existing high density infestation previously detected through public reports. These areas have also been included as new treatment areas for this year.

No further fire ants were detected during delineation surveillance conducted in two suburbs of the Gold Coast City Council area (outside the core area). These areas are not planned to receive structured treatment during 2016–17.

Targeted surveillance

Targeted surveillance undertaken on potential high risk areas was undertaken by field teams and covered over 1170 hectares during the quarter. Targeted surveillance conducted in the Logan City

⁷ Distance® Plus is a bait new to the Program (pyriproxyfen, plus protein). This product has the same active ingredient as Distance® which is currently used by the Program but with the addition of protein to make it more attractive to fire ant.

Council area (outside the core area) resulted in further infestation being detected and this area has been included in treatment for 2016–17 as a new treatment area. Targeted surveillance conducted in the Lockyer Valley Regional Council area (outside the core area) area did not uncover additional infestation, which is a measure of success of treatment in the vicinity.

Sentinel site areas

Sentinel site areas are used to monitor for the presence or absence of fire ant. A sentinel site area is selected because it provides highly suitable habitat for fire ant, for instance, cleared or disturbed land. The main objective of sentinel sites in 2016–17 is to monitor the extent of the spread of infestation beyond the Program's current operational areas. Selected sites can be immediately bordering treatment areas, some distance beyond treatment areas (i.e. along or beyond the delimitation boundary) or in a nearby suburb that contains suitable habitat, or has been previously infested, but no longer contain infestation.

A delay in identification of surveillance site areas was caused by treatment continuing into mid-June 2016. However 15 sentinel site areas were identified for surveillance during the quarter.

Six have been surveyed with fire ants detected at one during this surveillance season. The detection occurred on a certified organic property in the Scenic Rim Regional Council area. The Program is working with the owner of the property in regards to a treatment plan. The detection is only 325 m beyond the boundary of the fire ant biosecurity zone and 1.4 km to the south east of nearby infestation, which is within nuptial flight distance. Considering proximity to the fire ant biosecurity zone boundary and existing infestation (treated as part of a newly planned treatment activities), this detection does not pose a significant risk to the Program. Further, this sentinel site will provide the Program with a useful tool to monitor and measure the success of treatment in the nearby operational area.

Any that have not been surveyed during this quarter will be undertaken in the next surveillance season in 2016–17.

Odour detection dogs

The Program has seven odour detection dogs, six operate in the field and one is now used for community engagement purposes (this dog has recently been moved to community engagement after operating in the field).

With a number of the Program's odour detection dogs reaching retirement age, three new candidate dogs were sourced from the Department of Immigration and Border Protection in 2015–16.

Two odour detection dogs were re-homed during the quarter. Preparations are underway to retire the community engagement dog.

Passive surveillance activities⁸

During the quarter, 'Aka the fire ant tracker' school education sessions were delivered to approximately 1790 students.

The Royal Queensland Show (the Ekka) was held in Brisbane, in August 2016. Staff and Program volunteers were present at the DAF corporate stand and engaged with approximately 10 000 people over the course of the show.

⁸ To complement the surveillance undertaken by the Program, the community will be encouraged to conduct surveillance, and report suspect ants. There will be increased public education regarding movement controls.

During the quarter, Program staff engaged with approximately 4650 people by having displays at a number of shows, fairs, exhibitions and festivals⁹ during the year's peak show period.

The Program communicated with community organisations and peak bodies regarding the distribution of a fire ant information articles with a reach of potentially over 8000 consumers. Groups included:

- Organisers of the Laidley Show
- Bugs Ed (for school students across South East Queensland (SEQ))
- Bunnings Warehouse (SEQ stores)
- Nursery and Garden Industry Queensland Spring Green Expo

The Program presented to over 60 Australian and international industry representatives in attendance at the Australian Environmental Pest Managers Association in September 2016.

MOVEMENT CONTROLS

In accordance with the 2013–18 response plan – application of agreed protocols and strategies to contain fire ants through movement controls including community engagement, risk management strategies focussed on the high risk restricted area, audits of Approved Risk Management Plans (ARMPs), and inspector's approvals for movement of risk materials¹⁰.

Fire ant biosecurity zones

On 1 July 2016 the new *Biosecurity Act 2014* and *Biosecurity Regulation 2016* were implemented.

Three fire ant biosecurity zones were established under the new *Biosecurity* legislation (refer to map in [Appendix 5](#)). The fire ant biosecurity zones¹¹ are areas that are either infested or at risk of being infested and where movement controls for fire ant carriers¹² apply.

As previously reported, the biosecurity zone was established over the previous restricted area— while a second biosecurity zone was established over the core area and both remain similar in size to the existing core area boundary. Further, a third zone was established over the Brisbane Airport precinct to control a separate incursion of fire ants (conducted as a separate response – *Brisbane Airport Response 2015*).

In October 2015, population analysis of the Brisbane Airport (2015) colony confirmed that the infestation was not related to any known infestations in Queensland, and was a new incursion of fire ants. The potential introduction of a new population of fire ant creates the risk that new genes will be introduced into the currently inbred South East Queensland population, which may lead to increased genetic diversity. It is therefore vital that there is no interaction between the populations to prevent the dispersal of new genetics into the currently inbred South East Queensland population.

Risk assessments

The Regulation prescribes procedures that must be followed when moving or keeping a fire ant carrier. A person may apply to an inspector for a biosecurity instrument permit to authorise non-compliance with a biosecurity zone regulatory provision.

⁹ Locations included: Nursery and Garden Industry Queensland Spring Green Expo, Ormeau Fair, Beaudesert Show, Carindale Green Heart Fair, Environment Trade Expo, Mount Tamborine Springtime Fair, Gatton Show, Centenary Rocks Festival, Laidley Show and National Horticultural and Innovation Expo.

¹⁰ It should be noted, that with the implementation of the new *Biosecurity* legislation on 1 July 2016 that ARMPs and inspector's approvals are no longer applicable. Restricted areas are now fire ant biosecurity zones.

¹¹ Previously known as restricted areas

¹² Previously referred to as restricted items

A risk assessment is to be performed for every valid request for a biosecurity instrument permit. The decision for granting or refusing to grant a biosecurity instrument permit for the movement of a fire ant carrier rests with the compliance inspectors. The decision is based on the availability of practical risk mitigation options that would allow the movement of the carrier with an acceptable level of risk that a viable fire ant colony will not be moved with the carrier.

An information notice, a legislative requirement, is provided to the client outlining the information that has been taken into account, and the reasons for the decision, to grant or refusal to grant the biosecurity instrument permit. The information notice will contain justifications based on scientific principles.

During the quarter, the compliance inspectors conducted 92 risk assessments, resulting in the granting of 91 biosecurity instrument permits. The risk assessments were undertaken on carriers including unprocessed soil, processed soils (blends, composts, topsoils, sands etc), quarry products and mulch.

Generic biosecurity instrument permits were granted for the low risk movements of soil samples to accredited laboratories for testing and for the movement of waste from inside fire ant biosecurity zone 2 to two waste facilities outside the fire ant biosecurity zone that are treated as part of the current waste facility policy.

Two restricted matter permits allowing the movement of live fire ant under controlled conditions were issued during the quarter. One was internally for educational purposes and the other for research purposes.

Compliance checks

Compliance checks are performed to ensure persons are complying with necessary movement controls, being either the risk mitigation measures allowing the movement of the fire ant carrier as outlined in their biosecurity instrument permit, the Regulation or as a general biosecurity obligation.

The source of compliance checks will include:

- Infested sites – known infested site that is reported as involved in product movement
- Suburb monitoring – random checking of clients to ensure they are following the necessary movement controls for the carrier they are moving
- Follow ups – on any previously reported non-compliance that requires another compliance check.

With the introduction of the new Biosecurity legislation in July 2016, the compliance inspectors had a high demand for processing biosecurity instrument permit requests, leaving little time to focus on compliance checks.

Approximately 18 compliance checks were conducted between July–September 2016 predominantly with turf suppliers. All of these businesses were compliant.

Investigations

An investigation is continuing with the infested turf farm at Stockleigh (as outlined in the 2015–16 annual report). The investigation report is in its final stages of completion, with the offence relating to failure to report a suspect fire ant to Biosecurity Queensland within 24 hours. Information provided by the client indicated that turf had been treated in accordance with the fire ant treatment outlined in their approved risk management plan and was supplied to areas outside the restricted area. These areas have now received two rounds of surveillance and no ants have been found.

On 20 September 2016, acting on information provided to the compliance team by a client, inspectors identified an unauthorised movement of soil from fire ant biosecurity zone 1 to a location outside the fire ant biosecurity zones. Inspectors observed the loading of a truck within biosecurity zone 1 and followed the truck to the delivery location. When the driver failed to produce a

biosecurity instrument permit, the truck and its contents was directed to return to the fire ant biosecurity zone where it was unloaded at a waste facility. Further enquiries revealed there had been 12 truckloads of soil delivered previously to this location from biosecurity zone 1. The owner of the land at the delivery location was served a direction to isolate and not disturb the area where the soil from zone 1 had been delivered until July 2017 to allow the Program to bait and carry out surveillance. Investigations are continuing.

Case management

As reported last quarter, a review of the waste facilities that are open to the public is being undertaken to coincide with the implementation of the new legislation. This included the removal of a number of commercial facilities and the addition of a number of council-operated facilities. The current waste facility policy is under review. As part of the review visits were made to waste facilities and Program staff met with State Government representatives from the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection to discuss the regulation of waste, legislative requirements and ERAs¹³/permits. Visits have also been made to different waste facilities and a presentation made to the Queensland Landfill working group.

The compliance inspectors have continued to attend 'pre-start' meetings in the GCCC area¹⁴. These meetings provide the Program with an opportunity to explain the fire ant biosecurity zones and relevant movement controls. Pre-start meetings were held at Coomera.

Extensive planning was undertaken to identify any new areas for treatment during September and May including looking at high incidence of infestation and high density sites.

A presentation was given to the Cement Concrete & Aggregates Australia & Institute of Quarrying Australia members regarding the implementation of the new Biosecurity legislation more specifically biosecurity instrument permit conditions. The Program's presence at this seminar included an information booth staff by science and compliance officers.

Visits were undertaken to outlier detections during the quarter.

Infested property factsheets for industry and farmers/graziers were also developed.

Industry training

Over 30 training sessions were conducted with 885 industry, Council and State Government personnel¹⁵ during the quarter.

Biosecurity Act 2014 transition/implementation

The Program successfully implemented the new Biosecurity legislation which came into effect on 1 July 2016.

In the lead up to and as the new legislation was released, the changes were communicated widely, particularly to the Program's key stakeholders including councils, government representatives and industry. Communicating the changes to the Program's stakeholders will continue to be vital to ensure that they understand their obligations under the new legislation.

¹³ Environmentally relevant activities

¹⁴ The GCCC inspectors (usually a compliance and water inspector) have conducted 'pre-start' meetings at development sites, to explain the Council's testing, any legislative/regulated requirements (e.g. earthworks, sewerage, water main, soil testing, etc) to a variety of stakeholders including developers, civil contractors, civil engineers, landscapers and landowners.

¹⁵ Attendees included representatives from the Australian Defence Force, Lend Lease, SEQ Water (Gold Coast), Brisbane City Council, Brisbane Catholic Education groundskeepers, Heritage Tree Care Services, J&P Richardson Industries, Oxley Creek Catchment Association, University of Queensland (Gatton), Ipswich City Council, waste facility at Stapylton, Nucrush Quarry (Gold Coast), Department of Housing and Public Works and Transport and Main Roads.

BUDGET

The Program's expenditure to the end of September 2016 was \$3.528 million (refer to [Appendix 6](#))—which was 21.39% of the available budget comprised of \$16.027 million approved cost share funding and \$0.466 million carryover of unspent funds from 2105–16. Expenditure was marginally under the projected year to date budget, due partly to timing issues with delivery and payment for bait consignments and other delays associated with ongoing negotiations regarding the provision of the \$3 million supplementary funding from the Queensland Government.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The Independent Review

The final Independent Review Report was considered by the Agricultural Ministers' Forum (AGMIN) on 20 May 2016. The forum agreed that it remains in the national interest to eradicate fire ants and that it is technically feasible and cost beneficial to do so. Ministers agreed to consider funding of a 10 year eradication plan or transition to a management plan for the Program at the next AGMIN meeting. Development of the Ten Year Plan continues.

Preparations are underway for the Agriculture Senior Officials Committee (AGSOC) to inspect the Program's operations on 3 November 2016. The AGSOC meeting will be held on 4 November 2016 in Brisbane.

The group developing the National Tramp Ant Plan will be visiting the Program in the field on 7 November 2016 and will meet the following two days.

Genetic analysis

The recent purchase by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) of a Next Generation Sequencer (NGS) will provide increased opportunities to examine the genetics of fire ants in Australia. The NGS is likely to provide a more efficient and trustworthy method for genetic analysis, and also provide different information than previous or current sequencing technologies permit.

The NGS will allow for the Program to examine the genome in different ways, and as such demonstrate hypotheses such as reduced genetic fitness within and between populations. The NGS was installed at DAF facilities at the Health and Food Sciences Precinct (H&FSP), Coopers Plains in Brisbane in June 2016. However, due to issues with the information technology infrastructure (ITI) at the H&FSP, active experimentation has been delayed. It is anticipated that the upgraded ITI needed for the NGS will be available for by the end of October 2016—and training of H&FSP personnel (including Program scientists) will begin in November 2016.

Field mobility

A number of existing issues with the Fire Ant Management System (FAMS) need to be rectified before the direct nest injection (DNI) mobile data capture application can progress any further.

Remote sensing surveillance (RSS) research

Submissions for the RFI closed in February 2016. Submissions were reviewed by the evaluation panel at two discussion sessions in March 2016. Due diligence and referee checks of shortlisted market contenders were conducted.

The Evaluation report for the Request for Information: Biosecurity Remote Sensing Research and Development Project (the RFI) has been finalised and shortlisted vendors have been notified of the outcome. The next step of the process is to release the Invitation to Offer—preparation of the documentation and approval briefs are currently in progress.

The research and development project will assess the following:

- Effectiveness of new image capture technologies – Hyper/Multi-spec, Infrared, NDVI, 3D modelling, LIDAR.
- Determine the most effective vehicles (i.e. helicopters, fixed wing planes, drones/ Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) to perform RSS activities.
- Improvements to the existing, or development of new, mathematical algorithm/s to analyse the data provided new image technologies, thereby improving the accuracy and sensitivity of fire ant mount detection, and reducing false positive outputs.

Review of colony point creation

Automation of processes within the map creation system(s) has revealed the need to review the creation, timing and use of 'colony points'—enabling greater accuracy and flexibility in reporting. This project is underway.

OTHER PROGRAM(S)

Yarwun (2013)

The Pest Free Area report for the Yarwun (2013) incursion¹⁶ was drafted during the quarter. The report will be submitted to the National Biosecurity Management Group for endorsement.

Brisbane Airport (2015)

The Brisbane Airport (2015) incursion is being undertaken as a separate response and is reported six monthly.

Browsing ant

Following the surveillance undertaken by the Program's odour detection dogs at the Perth Airport, Western Australia from 9–14 May 2016 for browsing ant (*Lepisiota frauenfeldi*)—the pest free area report was endorsed.

¹⁶ National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program – Yarwun (2013) pest free area report – September 2016

Appendix 1 - Key Program activities

Under eradication, the Program's 2016–17 Work Plan¹⁷ (the work plan) focuses on three key strategies—targeted treatment to eradicate infestation, ongoing surveillance to monitor infestation (to facilitate targeted treatment) and movement controls to minimise the risk of human-assisted fire ant spread.

The Program will concentrate eradication activities on areas outside the core infested area¹⁸ (core area) while continuing to contain and suppress infestation within the core area.

Treatment

The Program will be applying multiple rounds of treatment to high density infestations and high risk areas within static treatment areas referred to as planned treatment areas. These areas will be assessed prior to clearance after planned treatment.

Inside the core area the planned treatment areas will receive two rounds of treatment over two years while outside the core will receive three rounds of treatment per year over two years. However depending on resources, new planned treatment areas identified outside the core area will receive two rounds of treatment.

New infestation

The Program will also respond to new infestation by conducting appropriate treatment in accordance with the agreed protocol beyond the planned treatment areas. These areas will be cleared as per the Protocol - Removal of IS¹⁹ Status²⁰.

The 'area of infestation' is under review. The term 'area of infestation' is misleading as it includes infestation that has been treated but not cleared. The colony point review will consider the reporting of the 'area of infestation'.

Surveillance

The Program will focus surveillance effort on newly detected infestation outside the core area now that delimitation of the infestation in South East Queensland is complete, to ensure eradication is successful and to target treatment effort.

Validation surveillance

Validation surveillance will be undertaken by the Program to verify the treatment of infestation has been effective. Once the second validation surveillance is undertaken (usually by the odour detection dogs but can also be conducted using luring) and no evidence of fire ants are found the colony point(s) become 'inactive' and the infestation is deemed cleared.

Delineation surveillance

The Program will undertake surveillance either by field teams or the odour detection dogs, as per the treatment protocol, out to 100 m on all new detections outside treatment areas, except outlier detections (500 m delineation) will be undertaken.

Targeted surveillance

Targeted surveillance will be conducted on high risk sites in a number of outlying suburbs.

¹⁷ Endorsed by the Tramp Ant Consultative Committee (TACC 24) on 27 May 2015

¹⁸ A subset of suburbs in the fire ant biosecurity zone where the majority of high density infestation are located.

¹⁹ Infested site

²⁰ Protocol – Removal of IS Status was approved by the Tramp Ant Consultative Committee (TACC) in February 2012



Movement controls

Compliance monitoring will focus on high risk industries for long distance, human-assisted movement of fire ant carriers. These industries include bulk soil movements and hay.

Case management

The Case Manager will deliver a coordinating role in identifying where new large scale developments are planned in South East Queensland.

Risk assessments

A person may apply to an inspector for a biosecurity instrument permit to authorise non-compliance with a biosecurity zone regulatory provision.

A risk assessment is performed for every valid request for a biosecurity instrument permit. An Information Notice is provided to the client outlining the information that has been taken into account, and the reasons for the decision, to grant or refusal to grant, the biosecurity instrument permit. The Information Notice will contain justifications that are based on scientific principles.

Compliance checks

Compliance checks will be conducted to ensure persons are complying with necessary movement controls, as outlined in either their biosecurity instrument permit, the Regulation or as a general biosecurity obligation. The source of compliance checks will include:

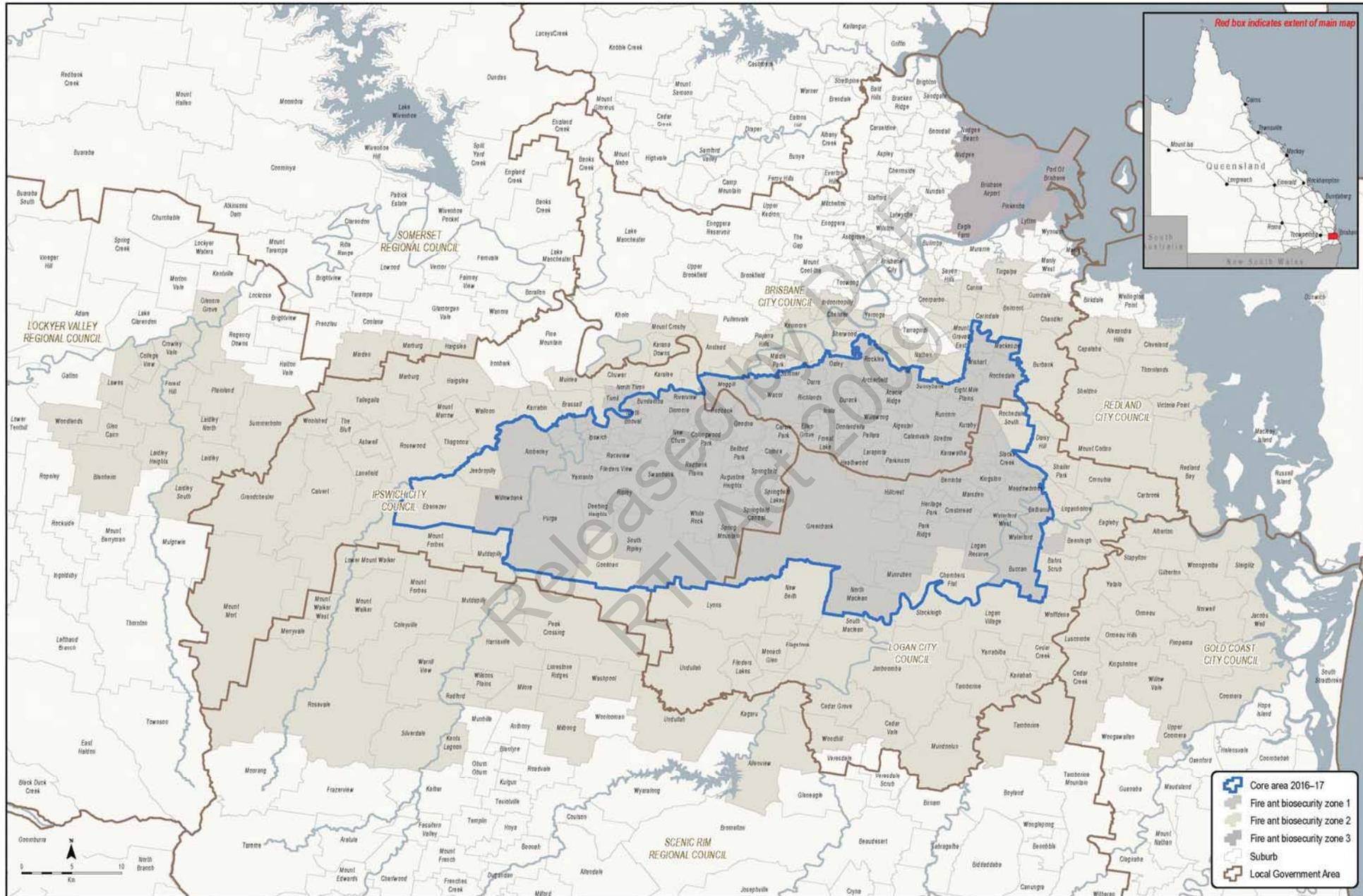
- **Infested sites** – known infested site that is reported as involved in product movement on the BQCC sample submission form
- **Suburb monitoring** – random checking of clients to ensure they are following the necessary movement controls for the carrier they are moving
- **Follow ups** – on any previously reported non-compliance that requires another compliance check.

Investigations

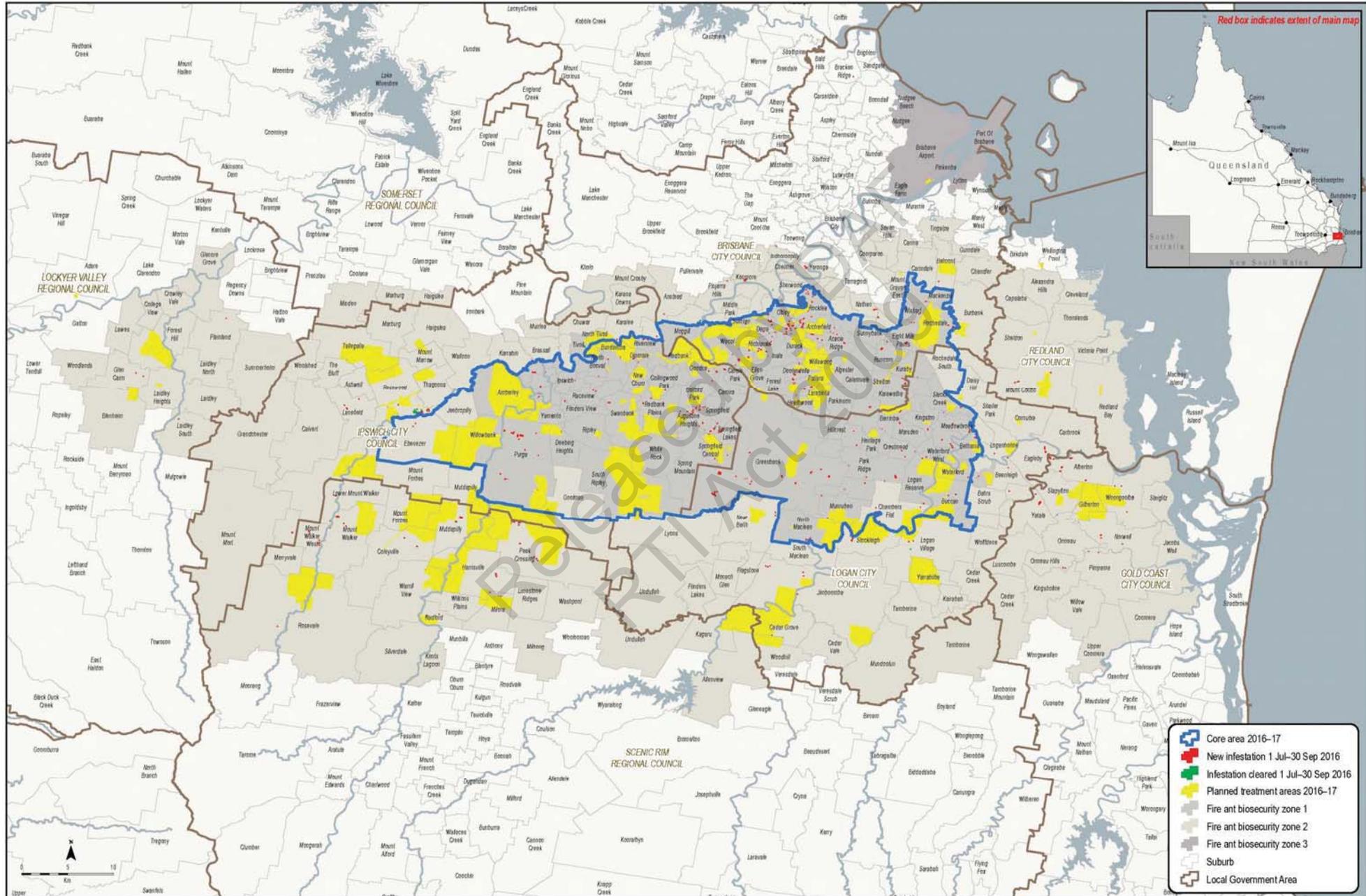
Investigations are performed to appropriately action any serious matters of non-compliance with movement controls.

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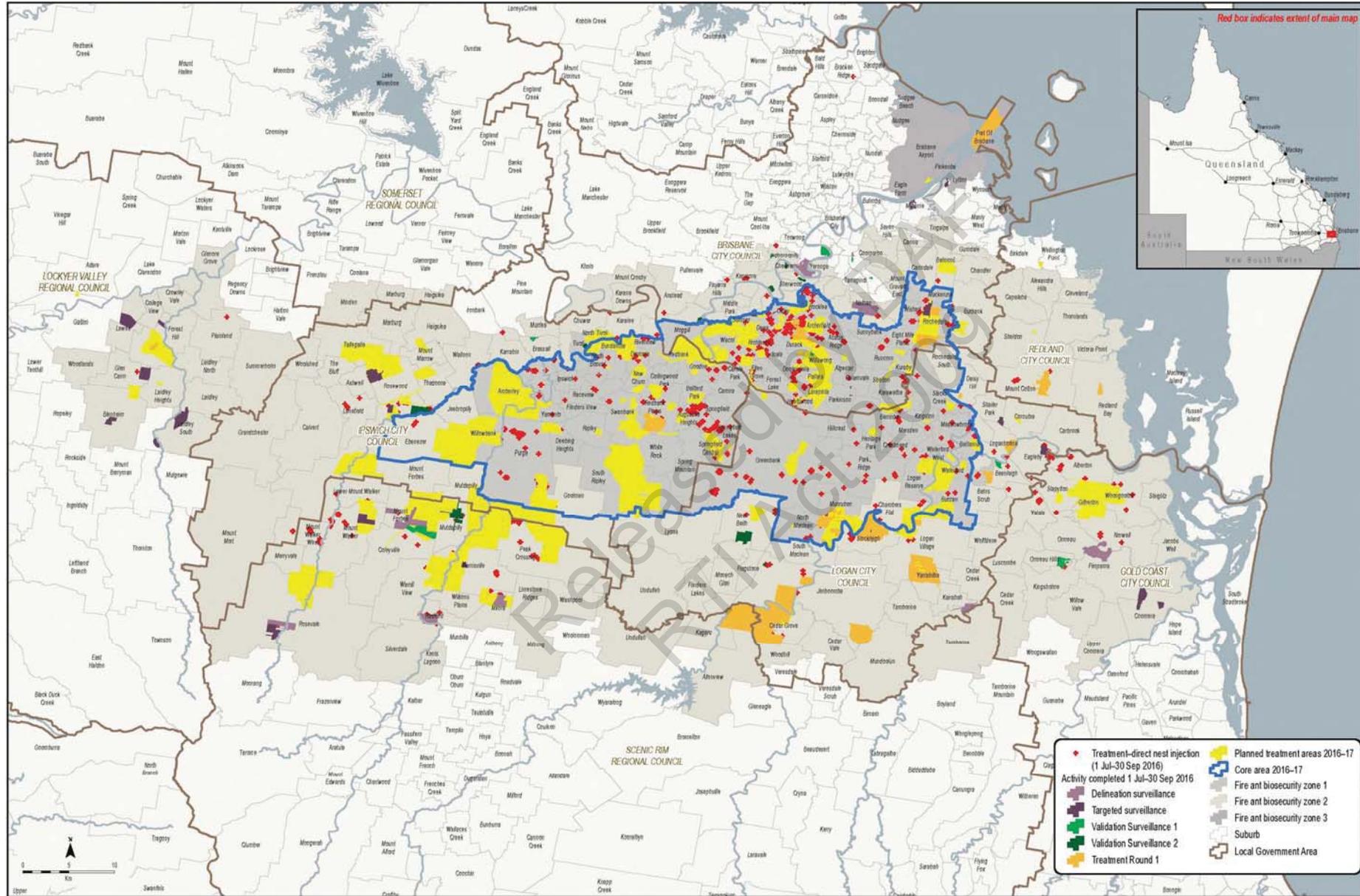
Appendix 2 – Map showing the core area within the fire ant biosecurity zone



Appendix 3 – Map showing areas under treatment - planned treatment areas and new infestation



Appendix 4 – Program activities conducted across the fire ant biosecurity zone(s) 1 July–30 September 2016²¹



²¹ The map is only a representation of the areas where Program activities have been undertaken during the quarter.

Appendix 6 – Financial Report to 30 September 2016

For period ending 30 September 2016

WORK UNITS	2016-17 Initial Budget			Initial Budget	2016-17 Revised Budget			Revised Budget	2016-17 Actual Expenses			Actual
	Labour	Non-Labour	TOTAL	FTE	Labour	Non-Labour	TOTAL	FTE	Labour	Non-Labour	TOTAL	FTE
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000		\$'000	\$'000	\$'000		\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	
Management	226	35	261	2.0	232	36	269	2.0	69	20	89	2.00
Policy, Legislation & Compliance	1,192	65	1,256	13.3	1,226	66	1,293	13.3	327	44	365	13.00
Business Support	629	550	1,179	7.9	647	566	1,213	7.9	166	190	356	7.80
Communications & Stakeholder Engagement	652	250	902	7.1	671	258	929	7.3	142	111	253	6.00
Program Support	1,213	537	1,751	12.4	1,249	553	1,802	12.4	310	169	479	11.40
Field Operations	4,061	1,964	6,026	67.2	4,179	2,022	6,201	67.2	989	203	1,192	59.00
Sub-Total	7,973	3,402	11,375	109.8	8,205	3,501	11,706	110.0	1,997	737	2,734	99.20
Site Lease Charges		326	326		0	335	335			56	56	
Odour Detection Dogs	254	231	485	2.9	261	238	499	2.9	60	61	121	3.00
Chemical Treatments		2,575	2,575		0	2,650	2,650			486	486	
Aerial Applications		1,266	1,266		0	1,303	1,303			131	131	
Sub-Total	254	4,398	4,652	2.9	261	4,526	4,787	2.9	60	734	794	3.00
TOTAL COST-SHARING	8,227	7,800	16,027	112.7	8,466	8,027	16,493	112.9	2,057	1,471	3,528	102.20

Notes:

- 1 2016-17 Initial Budget includes 16.027M approved cost shared funding as per the 2013-18 Response Plan
- 2 2016-17 Revised Budget includes 16.027M cost shared funding as per the 2013-18 Response Plan and \$466K carryover from 2015-16, which is conditional on cost share partners approval.
- 3 FTE figures do not include contract labour staff.



National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program – South East Queensland

2nd Quarter Report 2016–17

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Executive Summary

The nationally agreed *Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program Response Plan 2013–18* (the response plan) was developed to establish a framework to delimit, contain and recommence eradication of red imported fire ants (fire ants) in South East Queensland.

The delimitation phase of the response plan was completed in June 2015 and National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program (the Program) moved to eradication in July 2015.

Under eradication, the Program's 2016–17 Work Plan¹ (the work plan) continues to focus on three key strategies—targeted treatment on planned treatment areas to eradicate infestation, ongoing surveillance to monitor infestation (to facilitate targeted treatment) and movement controls to minimise the risk of human-assisted fire ant spread.

The work plan continues with the concept of a core infested area² (core area). As per the work plan, work within the core area is designed to contain and suppress infestation while the Program works to eradicate infestation outside this area.

The Program is treating areas (planned treatment areas) over two years. Established planned treatment areas inside the core, will receive two rounds of treatment in 2016–17, equating to four rounds over two years. Established planned treatment areas outside the core area will receive three rounds of treatment totalling six consecutive rounds over two years.

As previously reported, to allow for additional treatment to be applied to new high density infestations outside the planned treatment areas the core area was increased. These areas will receive a minimum of two rounds of treatment, and established planned treatment areas affected by an expansion in the core boundary will receive a minimum of two rounds and will received five consecutive rounds over two years.

The 2016–17 treatment season began on 20 September 2016. The first treatment round has been completed equating to over 39 700 hectares. Round 2 treatment began in December 2017 and is continuing.

Outside the planned treatment areas, almost 256 hectares of new infestation were detected during October–December 2016 and subsequently treated separately under the approved protocol.

The work plan was developed around the response plan indicative budget of \$19.027 million comprising an approved cost-share allocation of \$16.027 million and \$3 million in supplementary funding from the Queensland Government plus \$0.466 million carryover from 2015–16.

At 31 December 2016, the Program's expenditure was \$9.055 million.

The final round of surveillance for browsing ant (*Lepisiota frauenfeldi*) undertaken by the Program's odour detection dogs at Belmont, outside Perth Airport, Western Australia was originally scheduled for December 2016. However the surveillance is now likely to occur in February 2017.

¹ Endorsed by the Tramp Ant Consultative Committee (TACC 24) on 27 May 2015

² A subset of suburbs in the fire ant biosecurity zone where the majority of high density infestation is located.

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Summary of Activities

The primary components of the response plan can be broadly grouped into three essential components—treatment³, surveillance and movement controls. Science and community engagement contribute to these three components. Other support functions include information services, administration, and National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program (the Program) policy and management.

An overall view of the activities (including treatment and surveillance) that have been undertaken to date is provided spatially where possible.

A summary of the Program's key activities to be undertaken in 2016–17 is provided in [Appendix 1](#). Progress against the key activities of the work plan is reported quarterly.

TREATMENT

In accordance with the 2013–18 response plan – treatment of small isolated infestations (responsive treatment areas), areas with high density infestation, and areas that are at a high risk of becoming infested (planned treatment areas).

PLANNED TREATMENT⁴

Inside the core infested area (core area) ([Appendix 2](#) outlines the core area)

~18 000 hectares will receive two rounds of treatment per year⁵

Outside the core area

~15 500 hectares three times per year

A further 5000 hectares of new high density infestation will receive a minimum of two rounds of treatment during 2016–17

As reported last quarter the planned treatment areas were reviewed to ensure that new high density infestations detected outside established treatment areas could be appropriately treated. Table 1 (below) documents these changes between the total of treatment area in the work plan compared with the quantum of actual treatment area for 2016–17.

³ Treatment is the primary focus as delimitation was completed in 2014–15.

⁴ A change in the core infested area boundary occurred with changes to infestation density.

⁵ Includes core areas, areas moved into the core and waste facilities that are both within and outside the core area.

Table 1: Treatment area comparison table

Work Plan area	Actual area after treatment planning completed
Outside core 3 rounds 25 000 hectares per round (75 000 hectares in total)	Outside core (established treatment areas) 3 rounds 15 500 hectares per round (46 500 hectares in total)
Inside core 2 rounds 6250 hectares per round (12 500 hectares in total)	Inside core (established treatment areas) 2 rounds 18 000 hectares per round (36 000 hectares in total)
	Outside core – new areas 2 rounds 5000 hectares per round (10 000 hectares in total)
Total 87 500 hectares	Total 92 500 hectares

Progress

At 31 December 2016, over 39 700 hectares of Treatment was undertaken.

Treatment Round 1 was completed in December 2016.

Round 2 treatment began in December 2016 and is continuing.

Refer to [Appendix 3](#) for planned treatment areas.

As with treatment undertaken in 2015–16, treatment outside the core will be conducted as a priority, with all teams then tasked to finish treatment inside the core area.

Communication strategies

A comprehensive communication and engagement strategy was developed in the first quarter of 2016–17 and will continue to be implemented throughout the treatment season. This strategy assists in facilitating the smooth delivery of field operations by gaining support from residents within the treatment areas. Table 2 outlines the key activities undertaken/to be undertaken as part of the strategy.

As part of this strategy, the Program has continued to partner with local councils within the treatment areas who assist with the communication of the treatment regime.

As previously reported, in the past field staff have made a reasonable attempt to contact an occupier of a place to obtain consent prior to the visit by for treatment (and surveillance)—preferring a sense of cooperation within the community. This approach changed with the start of the 2016–17 treatment season as it was a time consuming exercise and particularly burdensome with the number of areas scheduled for treatment. The Program’s authorised officers under the new legislation are continuing to make a reasonable attempt to locate an occupier and obtain consent but are using their powers to enter to treat (and survey) on the initial visit providing there is safe access to the property.

A complaints management process has been established to address any issues that may arise and provides clients with appropriate information to allay concerns they may have. This process has shown to be successful with the majority of complainants conceding to allowing treatment to be undertaken on their properties. However, in one instance the issues could not be resolved and

the Queensland Police Service were required to accompany the Program's field staff onto a property to undertake treatment. Any follow-up treatment on the property will be handled in a similar way.

Table 2: Communications and engagement strategy activities

Activity	Message
Notification letters	To residents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Commencement of treatment ○ Access to property requirement ○ Multiple visits for treatment during the season
Letters (distributed by Program staff)	To residents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staff conducting treatment in the area
Road signage	In areas of operation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Treatment activities underway
Facebook advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Targeting residents in suburbs due to receive treatment
Notifications	Emailed to electoral representatives (three levels), council operational contacts and Policelink Operations Manager <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Access support requirement

RESPONSIVE TREATMENT – NEW INFESTATION

Outside the planned treatment areas, 256 hectares of new infestation was detected during the quarter and subsequently treated under the approved protocol (refer to the map in [Appendix 3](#)). Business rules used to calculate the 'area of infestation' continue to be under review.

During the second quarter of 2016–17 there were no significant detections.

Diagnostics

During the quarter, 781 ant samples were submitted—434 were diagnosed as fire ant with 60% having been reported by the public. In addition, 520 photos were submitted for identification—41 were diagnosed as fire ant.

Treatment efficacy assessments

Treatment efficacy assessments are undertaken to routinely monitor the effectiveness in the field of the baits (pyriproxyfen and methoprene) currently used by the Program and to test new products as they become available. There is one bait efficacy assessment in progress.

Sites for future assessments of Distance[®] Plus⁶ bait are being sought but none were found suitable during the quarter. All multiple-nest sites assessed were unsuitable because of risks to the public or animals, or to the Program through possible movement of fire ant carriers.

Assessment 1 – Distance[®] Plus (new to the Program)

A Distance[®] Plus assessment at a site in Willowbank was added in February 2016. In early March 2016, Distance[®] Plus bait was applied to half the site with Distance[®] (the Program's standard

⁶ Distance[®] Plus is a bait new to the Program (pyriproxyfen, plus protein). This product has the same active ingredient as Distance[®] which is currently used by the Program but with the addition of protein to make it more attractive to fire ant.

treatment) applied to the other half of the site for comparison. At the first assessment in early May 2016 all marked mounds were still active. A second application of Distance[®] Plus and Distance bait occurred at Willowbank in May 2016, and an assessment of progress in August 2016 found all mounds still active but with an absence of brood which could indicate the ants are bait effected. An inspection in early October 2016 showed all mounds were still active. A third round of bait (Distance[®] and Distance[®] Plus) was applied around the time of the inspection.

An inspection on 23 December 2016 showed that most mounds were still active and a few inactive. Excavation of two mounds revealed larvae and female alates but no brood which could indicate that the bait is having an effect. The next treatment (fourth) is scheduled for the next quarter.

This infestation is polygyne and several treatment rounds are likely to be required to eliminate the population.

No new sites have been identified as suitable for bait assessments.

SURVEILLANCE

In accordance with the 2013–18 response plan – targeted field surveillance will occur in high risk zones and areas of new detections. Most new detections are reported by the public, which is a direct result of community engagement.

The maps in [Appendix 4](#) highlight the areas where surveillance has been conducted during the quarter.

Validation surveillance

The Program's activities are focused on treatment, therefore validation surveillance was not conducted during the quarter.

Delineation surveillance

Delineation surveillance, undertaken by a combination of field teams and odour detection dogs on new detections, covered over 80 hectares.

Following the detection of fire ants at Bracken Ridge in September 2016 surveillance was undertaken in the area by Green Army⁷ personnel (resources from Conservation Volunteers Australia). No fire ants were found during the surveillance.

During the surveillance activities, the Department's mobile office unit was stationed at key sites surrounding the Bracken Ridge detection with Program staff engaging with approximately 460 local residents in the vicinity. 830 brochures and fire ant ID cards were provided to local businesses in the area for distribution.

Targeted surveillance

Targeted surveillance undertaken on potential high risk areas was undertaken by field teams and odour detection dogs, covering over 35 hectares during the quarter.

Sentinel site areas

Sentinel site areas are used to monitor for the presence or absence of fire ant. A sentinel site area is selected because it provides highly suitable habitat for fire ant, for instance, cleared or disturbed land. The main objective of sentinel sites in 2016–17 is to monitor the extent of the spread of infestation beyond the Program's current operational areas. Selected sites can be immediately

⁷ The Green Army is an Australian Government initiative open to young people including Indigenous Australians, school leavers, gap year students, graduates and job seekers who are looking for employment to develop skills, undertake training and gain experience in the delivery of conservation.

bordering treatment areas, some distance beyond treatment areas (i.e. along or beyond the delimitation boundary) or in a nearby suburb that contains suitable habitat, or has been previously infested, but no longer contain infestation.

Surveillance of sentinel sites was not conducted during the quarter.

Any sentinel sites that have not been surveyed prior to the end of the previous surveillance season will be undertaken during the next surveillance season in 2016–17 (May–June).

Odour detection dogs

The Program has six odour detection dogs, five operate in the field and one is used for community engagement purposes (this dog has recently been moved to community engagement after operating in the field).

One community engagement dog was re-homed during the quarter. Preparations are underway to retire one odour detection dog.

Passive surveillance activities⁸

During the quarter, 'Aka the fire ant tracker' school education sessions were delivered to almost 1200 students.

The Program communicated with local communities by having displays at:

- Garden City Library
- Upper Coomera Community Centre
- Mansfield Neighbourhood Watch community day
- Helensvale

480 brochures and fire ant ID cards were distributed on the Program's behalf by the Moggill Creek Catchment Group, Wagners and Riverside Equestrian Centre.

MOVEMENT CONTROLS

In accordance with the 2013–18 response plan – application of agreed protocols and strategies to contain fire ants through movement controls including community engagement, risk management strategies focussed on the high risk restricted area, audits of Approved Risk Management Plans (ARMPs), and inspector's approvals for movement of risk materials⁹.

Fire ant biosecurity zones

On 1 July 2016, as previously reported, fire ant biosecurity zones were established under the new Biosecurity legislation (refer to map in [Appendix 5](#)). The fire ant biosecurity zones¹⁰ are areas that are either infested or at risk of being infested and where movement controls for fire ant carriers¹¹ apply.

Risk assessments

The Regulation prescribes procedures that must be followed when moving or keeping a fire ant carrier. A person may apply to an inspector for a biosecurity instrument permit to authorise non-compliance with a biosecurity zone regulatory provision.

⁸ To complement the surveillance undertaken by the Program, the community will be encouraged to conduct surveillance, and report suspect ants. There will be increased public education regarding movement controls.

⁹ It should be noted, that with the implementation of the new Biosecurity legislation on 1 July 2016 that ARMPs and inspector's approvals are no longer applicable. Restricted areas are now fire ant biosecurity zones.

¹⁰ Previously known as restricted areas

¹¹ Previously referred to as restricted items

During the quarter, the compliance inspectors conducted 28 risk assessments, resulting in the granting of 28 biosecurity instrument permits. The risk assessments were undertaken on carriers including unprocessed soil, processed soils (blends, composts, topsoils, sands etc), quarry products and mulch.

Generic biosecurity instrument permits continued to be granted for low risk movements of soil samples to accredited laboratories for testing and for the movement of waste from inside fire ant biosecurity zone 2 to two waste facilities outside the fire ant biosecurity zone that are treated as part of the current waste facility policy.

Compliance checks

Compliance checks are performed to ensure persons are complying with necessary movement controls, being either the risk mitigation measures allowing the movement of the fire ant carrier as outlined in their biosecurity instrument permit, the Regulation or as a general biosecurity obligation.

The source of compliance checks will include:

- Infested sites – known infested site that is reported as involved in product movement
- Suburb monitoring – random checking of clients to ensure they are following the necessary movement controls for the carrier they are moving
- Follow ups – on any previously reported non-compliance that requires another compliance check.

Suburb monitoring during the quarter focused on soil movements by Council, quarries, hay producers and civil contractors.

Suburb monitoring also target hay producers in the Ipswich City Council area (Rosewood) and Gold Coast City Council area (Woongoolba). During this activity all clients were informed of the changes to the legislation and their obligations under the Biosecurity Regulation 2016.

Monitoring was also carried out targeting civil construction companies in the Brisbane City Council area (Richlands) and the northern Gold Coast with particular focus on the light rail project.

No major non-compliances were reported in the period.

Investigations

An investigation report into the failure of an infested Stockleigh turf farm to report a suspect fire ant to Biosecurity Queensland within 24 hours was finalised with an advisory letter being issued to the business.

As reported during the last quarter, an investigation has commenced into an unauthorised movement of soil from fire ant biosecurity zone 1 to a location outside the fire ant biosecurity zones. An investigation report has been prepared and will be progressed in the third quarter.

Case management

After multiple attempts were made by field staff to enter to conduct treatment on a property in the Logan City Council area which resulted in the owner repeatedly refusing treatment, this site became a case managed site. By undertaking a coordinated approach the property was eventually treated, with the aid of the Queensland Police Service.

Industry training

Over 21 training sessions were conducted with 677 industry, Council and State Government personnel¹² during the quarter.

BUDGET

The Program's expenditure to the end of December 2016 was \$9.055 million (refer to [Appendix 6](#))—which was 55% of the available budget comprised of \$16.027 million approved cost share funding and \$0.466 million carryover of unspent funds from 2015–16. Expenditure was marginally under the projected year to date budget, due partly to timing issues with delivery and payment for bait consignments and other delays associated with ongoing negotiations regarding the provision of the \$3 million supplementary funding from the Queensland Government.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Ten Year Plan

Ministers agreed to consider funding of a ten year eradication plan or transition to a management plan for the Program at the next Agriculture Ministers' Forum (AGMIN) meeting which is scheduled for July 2017. However, as a decision is crucial for successful implementation of the ten year plan it is anticipated that AGMIN consideration will be undertaken out-of-session in April 2017.

The Program is working with the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture and Water Resources to develop a matrix of skills required on the Red Imported Fire Ant Steering Committee. Nominations for the committee will be sought from jurisdictions in January 2017.

Genetic analysis

Health and Food Sciences Precinct (H&FSP)¹³ personnel (including Program scientists) were trained in the use of the Next Generation Sequencer (NGS) in the first week of December 2016. One of the training examples processed contained fire ant samples. Data from this initial run is currently being analysed, and preliminary information is anticipated in February 2017.

Field mobility

A number of existing issues with the Fire Ant Management System (FAMS) still need to be rectified before the direct nest injection (DNI) mobile data capture application can progress any further.

Remote sensing surveillance (RSS) research

Submissions for the Request for Information closed in February 2016. Submissions were reviewed by the evaluation panel at two discussion sessions in March 2016. Due diligence and referee checks of shortlisted market contenders were conducted.

The Evaluation report for the Request for Information: Biosecurity Remote Sensing Research and Development Project (the RFI) has been finalised and shortlisted vendors have been notified of the outcome. The preparation of the initial draft of Invitation to Offer (ITO) documentation has been finalised, pending review and feedback from Evaluation Panel. However this project will not proceed until the Program's future funding is secured.

¹² Attendees included representatives from the Brisbane City Council (Stafford, Mount Coot-tha, North Zillmere and Eagle Farm), Green Army, Logan City Council (Marsden and Munruben), Impact Homes PTY Ltd., Seymour Whyte Constructions PTY Ltd., Ventia (utilities), Challenge Employment and Training, Queensland Transport and Main Roads.

¹³ Located at Coopers Plains

Review of colony point creation

Automation of processes within the map creation system(s) has revealed the need to review the creation, timing and use of 'colony points'—enabling greater accuracy and flexibility in reporting. This project continues.

OTHER PROGRAM(S)

Yarwun (2013)

The Pest Free Area report for the Yarwun (2013) incursion¹⁴ was endorsed by the National Biosecurity Management Consultative Committee and the National Biosecurity Management Group during the quarter.

Brisbane Airport (2015)

The Brisbane Airport (2015) incursion is being undertaken as a separate response and is reported six monthly.

Browsing ant

The final round of surveillance for browsing ant (*Lepisiota frauenfeldi*) at Belmont, outside Perth Airport was originally scheduled for December 2016. However surveillance by the Program's odour detection dogs will now occur in February 2017.

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¹⁴ National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program – Yarwun (2013) pest free area report – September 2016

Appendix 1 – Key Program activities

Under eradication, the Program's 2016–17 Work Plan¹⁵ (the work plan) focuses on three key strategies—targeted treatment to eradicate infestation, ongoing surveillance to monitor infestation (to facilitate targeted treatment) and movement controls to minimise the risk of human-assisted fire ant spread.

The Program will concentrate eradication activities on areas outside the core infested area¹⁶ (core area) while continuing to contain and suppress infestation within the core area.

Treatment

The Program will be applying multiple rounds of treatment to high density infestations and high risk areas within static treatment areas referred to as planned treatment areas. These areas will be assessed prior to clearance after planned treatment.

Inside the core area the planned treatment areas will receive two rounds of treatment over two years while outside the core will receive three rounds of treatment per year over two years. However depending on resources, new planned treatment areas identified outside the core area will receive two rounds of treatment.

New infestation

The Program will also respond to new infestation by conducting appropriate treatment in accordance with the agreed protocol beyond the planned treatment areas. These areas will be cleared as per the Protocol - Removal of IS¹⁷ Status¹⁸.

The 'area of infestation' is under review. The term 'area of infestation' is misleading as it includes infestation that has been treated but not cleared. The colony point review will consider the reporting of the 'area of infestation'.

Surveillance

The Program will focus surveillance effort on newly detected infestation outside the core area now that delimitation of the infestation in South East Queensland is complete, to ensure eradication is successful and to target treatment effort.

Validation surveillance

Validation surveillance will be undertaken by the Program to verify the treatment of infestation has been effective. Once the second validation surveillance is undertaken (usually by the odour detection dogs but can also be conducted using luring) and no evidence of fire ants are found the colony point(s) become 'inactive' and the infestation is deemed cleared.

Delineation surveillance

The Program will undertake surveillance either by field teams or the odour detection dogs, as per the treatment protocol, out to 100 m on all new detections outside treatment areas, except outlier detections (500 m delineation) will be undertaken.

Targeted surveillance

Targeted surveillance will be conducted on high risk sites in a number of outlying suburbs.

Movement controls

Compliance monitoring will focus on high risk industries for long distance, human-assisted movement of fire ant carriers. These industries include bulk soil movements and hay.

¹⁵ Endorsed by the Tramp Ant Consultative Committee (TACC 24) on 27 May 2015

¹⁶ A subset of suburbs in the fire ant biosecurity zone where the majority of high density infestation are located.

¹⁷ Infested site

¹⁸ Protocol – Removal of IS Status was approved by the Tramp Ant Consultative Committee (TACC) in February 2012



Case management

The Case Manager will deliver a coordinating role in identifying where new large scale developments are planned in South East Queensland.

Risk assessments

A person may apply to an inspector for a biosecurity instrument permit to authorise non-compliance with a biosecurity zone regulatory provision.

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Compliance checks

Compliance checks will be conducted to ensure persons are complying with necessary movement controls, as outlined in either their biosecurity instrument permit, the Regulation or as a general biosecurity obligation. The source of compliance checks will include:

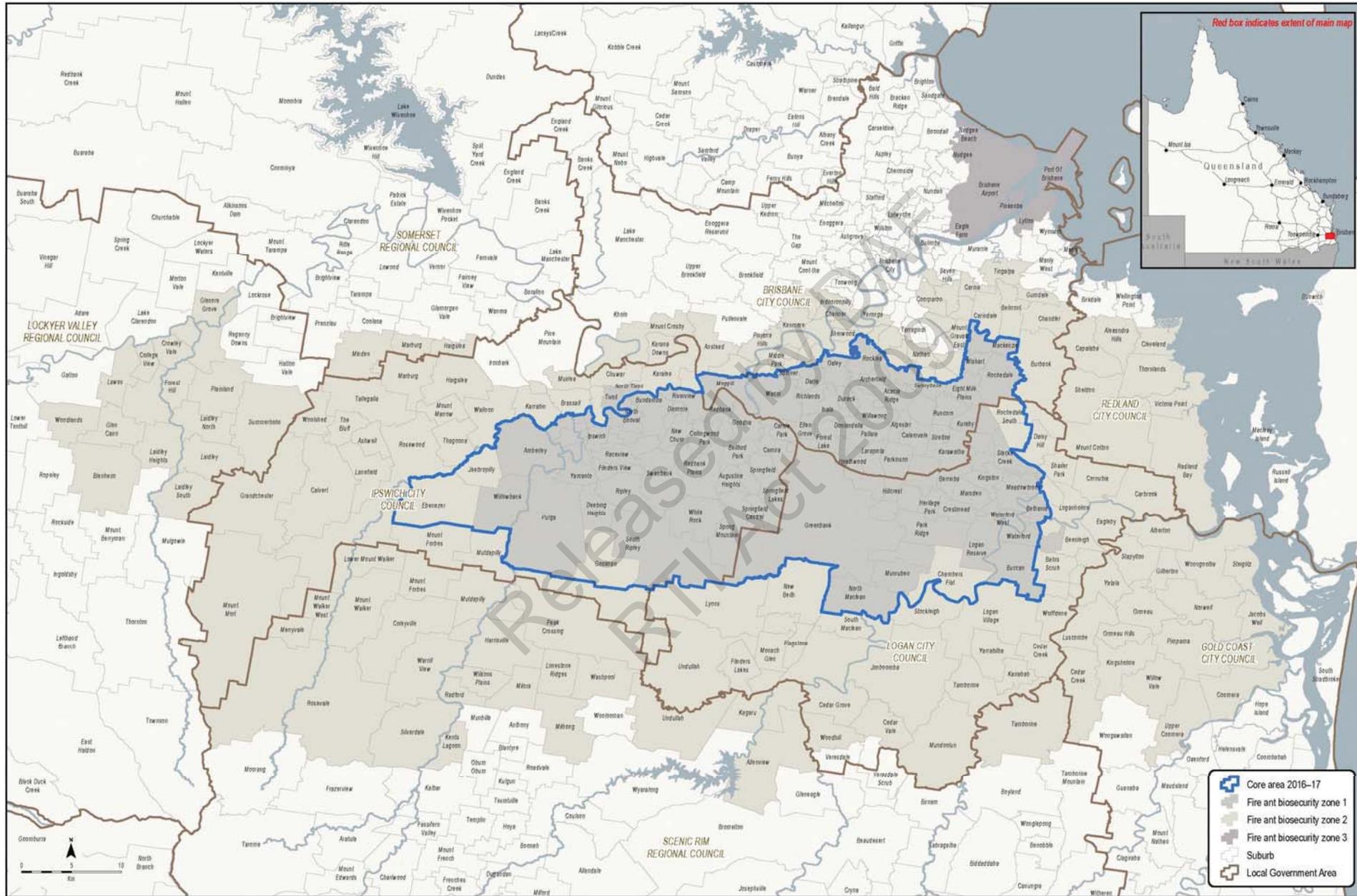
- **Infested sites** – known infested site that is reported as involved in product movement on the BQCC sample submission form
- **Suburb monitoring** – random checking of clients to ensure they are following the necessary movement controls for the carrier they are moving
- **Follow ups** – on any previously reported non-compliance that requires another compliance check.

Investigations

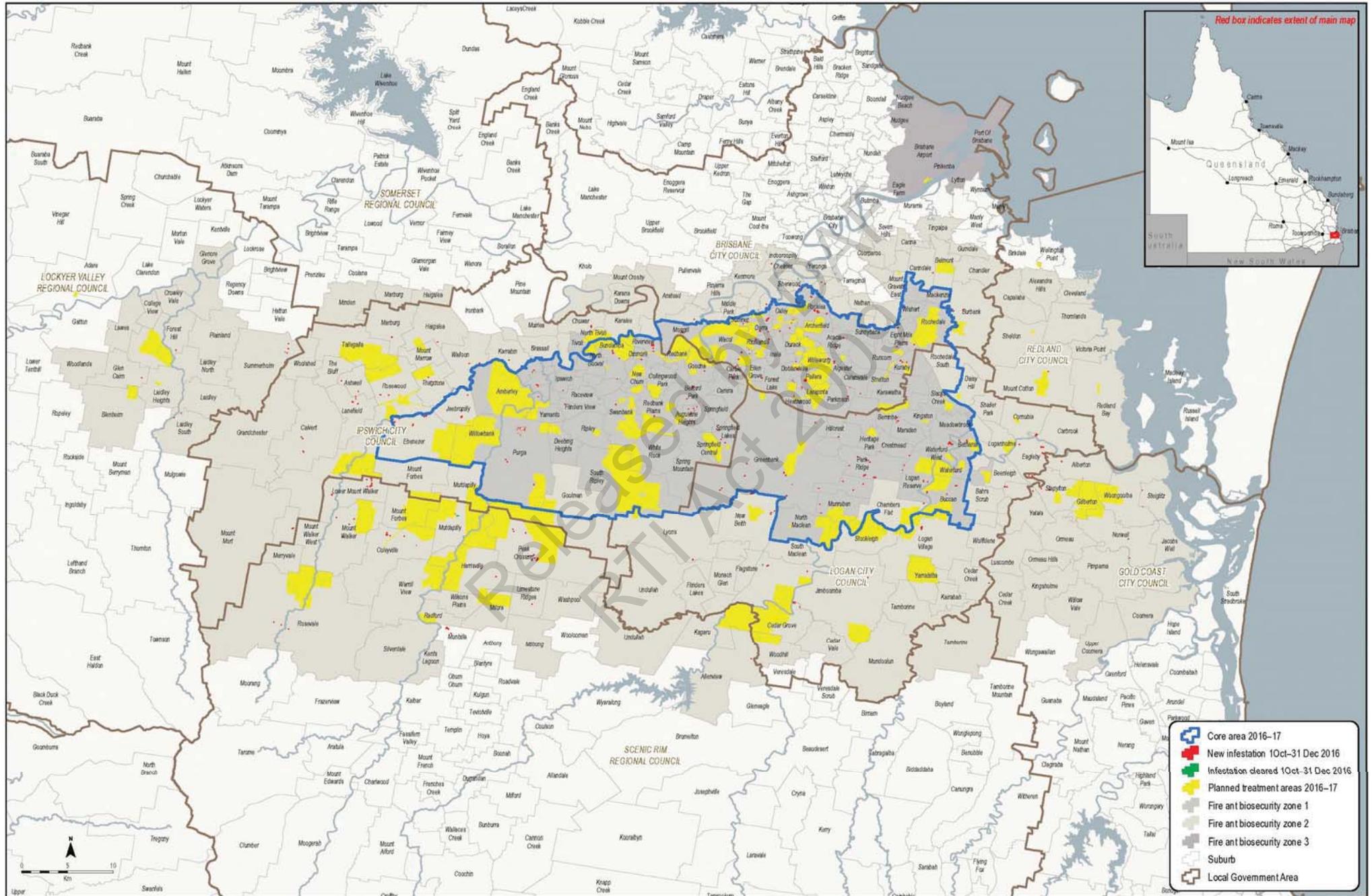
Investigations are performed to appropriately action any serious matters of non-compliance with movement controls.

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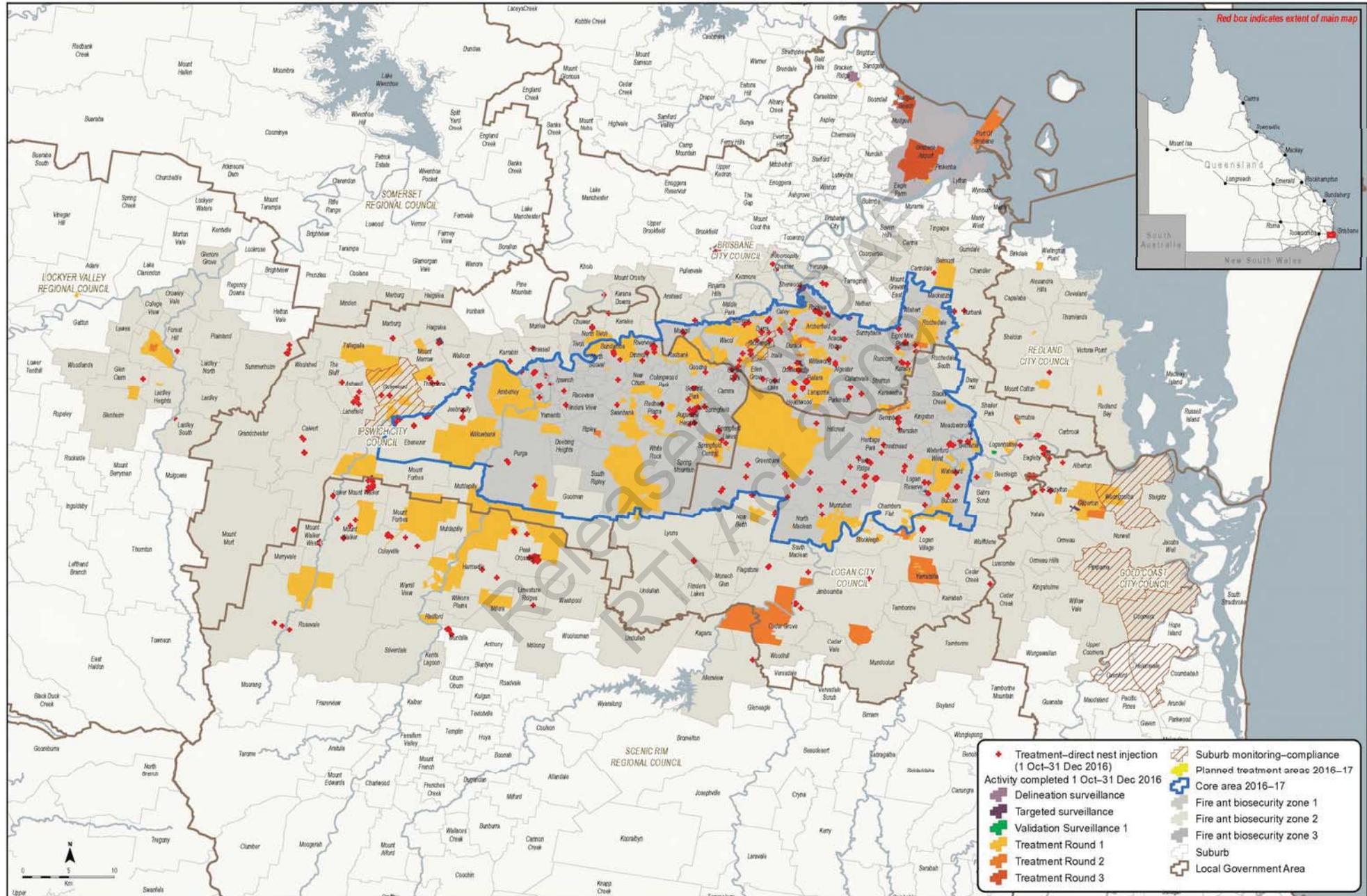
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Appendix 3 – Map showing areas under treatment - planned treatment areas and new infestation



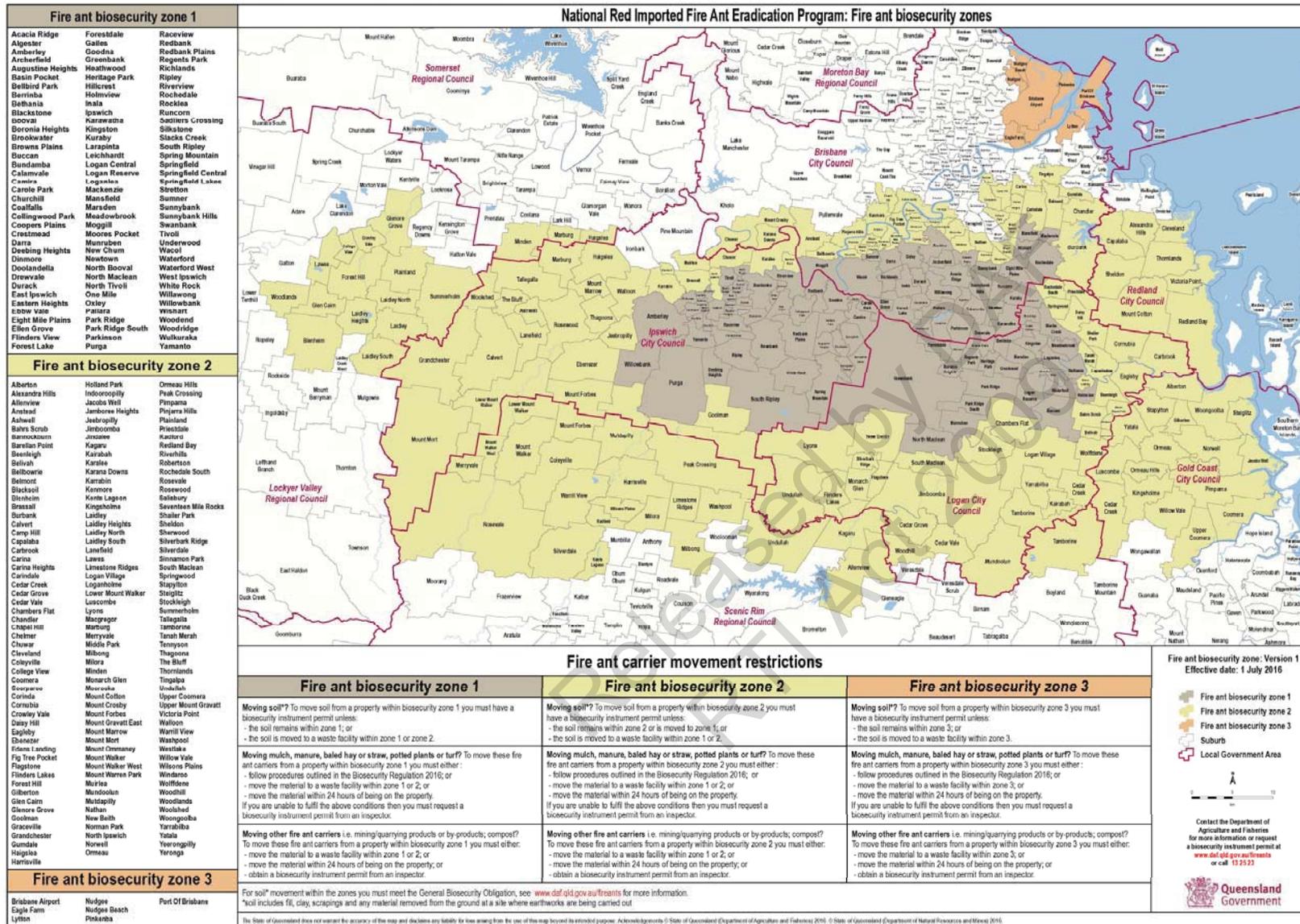
Appendix 4 – Program activities conducted across the fire ant biosecurity zone(s) 1 October–31 December 2016¹⁹



¹⁹ The map is only a representation of the areas where Program activities have been undertaken during the quarter.

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Appendix 5 – Fire ant biosecurity zones – established 1 July 2016



Appendix 6 – Financial Report to 31 December 2016

2016-17 NATIONAL RED IMPORTED FIRE ANT ERADICATION PROGRAM FINANCIAL REPORT												
For period ending 31 December 2016												
WORK UNITS	2016-17 Initial Budget			Initial Budget	2016-17 Revised Budget			Revised Budget	2016-17 Actual Expenses			Actual
	Labour \$'000	Non-Labour \$'000	TOTAL \$'000	FTE	Labour \$'000	Non-Labour \$'000	TOTAL \$'000	FTE	Labour \$'000	Non-Labour \$'000	TOTAL \$'000	FTE
Management	226	35	261	2.0	232	36	269	2.0	129	27	156	2.00
Policy, Legislation & Compliance	1,192	65	1,256	13.3	1,226	66	1,293	13.3	617	108	725	11.95
Business Support	629	550	1,179	7.9	647	566	1,213	7.9	335	314	649	7.90
Communications & Stakeholder Engagement	652	250	902	7.1	671	258	929	7.3	267	210	478	5.00
Program Support	1,213	537	1,751	12.4	1,249	553	1,802	12.4	610	380	990	12.55
Field Operations	4,061	1,964	6,026	67.2	4,179	2,022	6,201	67.2	1932	948	2,880	59.00
Sub-Total	7,973	3,402	11,375	109.8	8,205	3,501	11,706	110.0	3,891	1,987	5,878	98.40
Site Lease Charges		326	326		0	335	335			164	164	
Odour Detection Dogs	254	231	485	2.9	261	238	499	2.9	132	119	252	2.93
Chemical Treatments		2,575	2,575		0	2,650	2,650			1,941	1,941	
Aerial Applications		1,266	1,266		0	1,303	1,303			820	820	
Sub-Total	254	4,398	4,652	2.9	261	4,526	4,787	2.9	132	3,045	3,177	2.93
TOTAL COST-SHARING	8,227	7,800	16,027	112.7	8,466	8,027	16,493	112.9	4,023	5,032	9,055	101.33

Notes:

- 2016-17 Initial Budget includes 16.027M approved cost shared funding as per the 2013-18 Response Plan
- 2016-17 Revised Budget includes 16.027M cost shared funding as per the 2013-18 Response Plan and \$466K carryover from 2015-16, which is conditional on cost share partners approval. \$1.875M supplementary funding from Qld, approved in December 2016 not included in the Revised Budget as it has not been loaded into the financial system.
- FTE figures do not include contract labour staff.
- All amount are rounded to the nearest '000.



National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program – South East Queensland

3rd Quarter Report 2016–17

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Executive Summary

The nationally agreed *Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program Response Plan 2013–18* (the response plan) was developed to establish a framework to delimit, contain and recommence eradication of red imported fire ants (fire ants) in South East Queensland.

The delimitation phase of the response plan was completed in June 2015 and National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program (the Program) moved to eradication in July 2015.

Under eradication, the Program's 2016–17 Work Plan¹ (the work plan) continues to focus on three key strategies—targeted treatment on planned treatment areas to eradicate infestation, ongoing surveillance to monitor infestation (to facilitate targeted treatment) and movement controls to minimise the risk of human-assisted fire ant spread.

The work plan continues with the concept of a core infested area² (core area). As per the work plan, work within the core area is designed to contain and suppress infestation while the Program works to eradicate infestation outside this area.

The Program is treating areas (planned treatment areas) over two years. Established planned treatment areas inside the core, will receive two rounds of treatment in 2016–17, equating to four rounds over two years. Established planned treatment areas outside the core area will receive three rounds of treatment totalling six consecutive rounds over two years.

As previously reported, to allow for additional treatment to be applied to new high density infestations outside the planned treatment areas the core area was increased. These areas will receive a minimum of two rounds of treatment, and established planned treatment areas affected by an expansion in the core boundary will receive a minimum of two rounds and will received five consecutive rounds over two years.

The 2016–17 treatment season began on 20 September 2016. As reported, the first treatment round was completed during the second quarter and equated to over 39 700 hectares. Treatment Round 2 began in December 2017 and is continuing. Completion of Treatment Round 2 has been delayed by wet weather.

Outside the planned treatment areas, almost 250 hectares of new infestation were detected during January–March 2017 and subsequently treated separately under the approved protocol.

The work plan was developed around the response plan indicative budget of \$19.027 million comprised of an approved cost-share allocation of \$16.027 million and \$3 million³ in supplementary funding plus \$0.466 million carryover from 2015–16. In 2016–17 Queensland has provided \$2.575 million of supplementary funding, which will enable the Program to complete all planned treatment.

At 31 March 2017, the Program's expenditure was \$14.758 million.

The final round of surveillance for browsing ant (*Lepisiota frauenfeldi*) undertaken by the Program's odour detection dogs at Belmont, outside Perth Airport, Western Australia was undertaken during the quarter.

¹ Endorsed by the Tramp Ant Consultative Committee (TACC 24) on 27 May 2015

² A subset of suburbs in the fire ant biosecurity zone where the majority of high density infestation is located.

³ Since 2010–11 Queensland has provided supplementary funding of \$3 million each year which is over and above the national cost-share apportionment for the State.

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Summary of Activities

The primary components of the response plan can be broadly grouped into three essential components—treatment⁴, surveillance and movement controls. Science and community engagement contribute to these three components. Other support functions include information services, administration, and National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program (the Program) policy and management.

An overall view of the activities (including treatment and surveillance) that have been undertaken to date is provided spatially where possible.

A summary of the Program's key activities to be undertaken in 2016–17 is provided in [Appendix 1](#). Progress against the key activities of the work plan is reported quarterly.

TREATMENT

In accordance with the 2013–18 response plan – treatment of small isolated infestations (responsive treatment areas), areas with high density infestation, and areas that are at a high risk of becoming infested (planned treatment areas).

PLANNED TREATMENT⁵

Inside the core infested area (core area) ([Appendix 2](#) outlines the core area)

~18 000 hectares will receive two rounds of treatment per year⁶

Outside the core area

~15 500 hectares three times per year

A further 5000 hectares of new high density infestation will receive a minimum of two rounds of treatment during 2016–17

As reported last quarter the planned treatment areas were reviewed to ensure that new high density infestations detected outside established treatment areas could be appropriately treated. Table 1 (below) documents these changes between the total of treatment area in the work plan compared with the quantum of actual treatment area for 2016–17.

⁴ Treatment is the primary focus as delimitation was completed in 2014–15.

⁵ A change in the core infested area boundary occurred with changes to infestation density.

⁶ Includes core areas, areas moved into the core and waste facilities that are both within and outside the core area.

Table 1: Treatment area comparison table

Work Plan area	Actual area after treatment planning completed
Outside core 3 rounds 25 000 hectares per round (75 000 hectares in total)	Outside core (established treatment areas) 3 rounds 15 500 hectares per round (46 500 hectares in total)
Inside core 2 rounds 6250 hectares per round (12 500 hectares in total)	Inside core (established treatment areas) 2 rounds 18 000 hectares per round (36 000 hectares in total)
	Outside core – new areas 2 rounds 5000 hectares per round (10 000 hectares in total)
Total 87 500 hectares	Total 92 500 hectares

Progress

As previously reported, at 31 December 2016 Treatment Round 1 was completed which equated to over 39 700 hectares of treatment.

Round 2 treatment began in December 2016 with the majority of treatment being undertaken. Unfortunately progress was hampered by inclement weather with Treatment Round 2 expected to be completed early in the next quarter.

Refer to [Appendix 3](#) for planned treatment areas.

As with treatment undertaken in 2015–16, treatment outside the core is conducted as a priority, with all teams then tasked to finish treatment inside the core area.

Communication strategies

A comprehensive communication and engagement strategy was developed in the first quarter of 2016–17 and continues to be implemented throughout the treatment season. This strategy assists in facilitating the smooth delivery of field operations by gaining support from residents within the treatment areas. Table 2 outlines the key activities undertaken/to be undertaken as part of the strategy.

Further, a new video was produced and published on YouTube about the Program's treatment program. This video is designed as a further tool to inform residents about the process and what to expect.

Table 2: Communication and engagement strategy activities

Activity	Message
Notification letters	To residents <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Commencement of treatmento Access to property requiremento Multiple visits for treatment during the season
Letters (distributed by Program staff)	To residents <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Staff conducting treatment in the area
Road signage	In areas of operation <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Treatment activities underway
Facebook advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Targeting residents in suburbs due to receive treatment
Notifications	Emailed to electoral representatives (three levels), council operational contacts and Policelink Operations Manager <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Access support requirement

RESPONSIVE TREATMENT – NEW INFESTATION

Outside the planned treatment areas, almost 250 hectares of new infestation was detected during the quarter and subsequently treated under the approved protocol (refer to the map in [Appendix 3](#)). Business rules used to calculate the 'area of infestation' are being reviewed.

During the third quarter of 2016–17 there were no significant detections⁷.

Diagnostics

During the quarter, 907 ant samples were submitted with 59 % reported by the public. Of these samples 510 were diagnosed as fire ant. In addition, 530 photos were submitted for identification and of the resulting samples submitted, 74 were diagnosed as fire ant.

Treatment efficacy assessments

Treatment efficacy assessments are undertaken to routinely monitor the effectiveness in the field of the baits (pyriproxyfen and methoprene) currently used by the Program and to test new products as they become available. There is one bait efficacy assessment in progress.

Sites for future assessments of Distance[®] Plus⁸ bait are being sought but none were found suitable during the quarter. All multiple-nest sites assessed were unsuitable because of risks to the public or animals, or to the Program through possible movement of fire ant carriers.

Assessment 1 – Distance[®] Plus (new to the Program)

A Distance[®] Plus assessment at a site in Willowbank was added in February 2016. In early March 2016, Distance[®] Plus bait was applied to half the site with Distance[®] (the Program's standard treatment) applied to the other half of the site for comparison. At the first assessment in early May

⁷ As per the nationally agreed *Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program Response Plan 2013–2018* the trigger to prepare a significant detection report or SDR for the Tramp Ant Consultative Committee (TACC) occurs when:

- Polygyne colonies or multiple monogyne colonies representing a reproductive infestation beyond the 5 km buffer.
- Human-assisted spread resulting in infestation outside of the restricted area

⁸ Distance[®] Plus is a bait new to the Program (pyriproxyfen, plus protein). This product has the same active ingredient as Distance[®] which is currently used by the Program but with the addition of protein to make it more attractive to fire ant.

2016 all marked mounds were still active. A second application of Distance[®] Plus and Distance bait occurred in May 2016, and an assessment of progress in August 2016 found all mounds still active but with an absence of brood which could indicate the ants are bait effected. An inspection in early October 2016 showed all mounds were still active. A third round of bait (Distance[®] and Distance[®] Plus) was applied around the time of the inspection.

An inspection on 23 December 2016 showed that most mounds were still active and a few inactive. Excavation of two mounds revealed larvae and female alates but no brood which could indicate that the bait is having an effect.

A fourth application of Distance[®] Plus and Distance[®] was carried out in late January 2017.

An inspection in mid-February 2017 showed that the majority of mounds are still active. The number of inactive mounds has increased since the last inspection but as colonies at Willowbank are polygyne there could have been coalescence or movement of nests.

Another assessment of this trial will be conducted in early April 2017 and a fifth application of Distance[®] and Distance[®] Plus applied.

SURVEILLANCE

In accordance with the 2013–18 response plan – targeted field surveillance will occur in high risk zones and areas of new detections. Most new detections are reported by the public, which is a direct result of community engagement.

The maps in [Appendix 4](#) highlight the areas where surveillance has been conducted during the quarter.

Validation surveillance

The Program's activities have been focused on treatment this quarter. However, almost 50 hectares validation surveillance was conducted during the period.

Delineation surveillance

Delineation surveillance, undertaken by a combination of field teams and odour detection dogs on new detections, covered almost 840 hectares.

Targeted surveillance

Targeted surveillance undertaken on potential high risk areas was undertaken by field teams and odour detection dogs, covering almost 140 hectares during the quarter.

Sentinel site areas

The main objective of sentinel sites in 2016–17 is to monitor the extent of the spread of infestation beyond the Program's current operational areas.

Surveillance of sentinel sites was not conducted during the quarter.

Any sentinel sites that were not surveyed prior to the end of the previous surveillance season will be undertaken during the next surveillance season in 2016–17 (May–June).

Odour detection dogs

The Program has nine odour detection dogs, eight operate in the field and one is used for community engagement purposes (this dog has recently been moved to community engagement after operating in the field). Two dogs were validated for operational duties during the quarter.

One odour detection dog retired from active duty during the quarter.

Passive surveillance activities⁹

During the quarter, 'Aka the fire ant tracker' school education sessions were delivered to almost 1720 students.

The Program communicated with local communities by having displays at:

- Ipswich Garden & Plant Expo
- NGIQ¹⁰ – Autumn Trade Expo
- Silverdale Saleyards
- Carrara Markets
- South East Queensland Expo at Jimboomba

1550 brochures were distributed to Council libraries and community clubs.

MOVEMENT CONTROLS

In accordance with the 2013–18 response plan – application of agreed protocols and strategies to contain fire ants through movement controls including community engagement, risk management strategies focussed on the high risk restricted area, audits of Approved Risk Management Plans (ARMPs), and inspector's approvals for movement of risk materials¹¹.

Fire ant biosecurity zones

On 1 July 2016, as previously reported, fire ant biosecurity zones were established under the new Biosecurity legislation (refer to map in [Appendix 5](#)). The fire ant biosecurity zones¹² are areas that are either infested or at risk of being infested and where movement controls for fire ant carriers¹³ apply.

Risk assessments

The Regulation prescribes procedures that must be followed when moving or keeping a fire ant carrier. A person may apply to an inspector for a biosecurity instrument permit to authorise non-compliance with a biosecurity zone regulatory provision.

During the quarter, the compliance inspectors conducted 14 risk assessments, resulting in the granting of 14 biosecurity instrument permits. The risk assessments were undertaken on unprocessed soil, processed soil, mulch including wood chip and green waste, quarry and mining products including gravels/sands and other (vacuum extraction).

Generic biosecurity instrument permits continued to be granted for low risk movements of soil samples to accredited laboratories for testing and for the movement of waste from inside fire ant biosecurity zone 2 to two waste facilities outside the fire ant biosecurity zone that are treated as part of the current waste facility policy.

Compliance checks

Compliance checks are performed to ensure persons are complying with necessary movement controls, being either the risk mitigation measures allowing the movement of the fire ant carrier as outlined in their biosecurity instrument permit, the Regulation or as a general biosecurity obligation.

⁹ To complement the surveillance undertaken by the Program, the community will be encouraged to conduct surveillance, and report suspect ants. There will be increased public education regarding movement controls.

¹⁰ Nursery and Garden Industry Queensland

¹¹ It should be noted, that with the implementation of the new Biosecurity legislation on 1 July 2016 that ARMPs and inspector's approvals are no longer applicable. Restricted areas are now fire ant biosecurity zones.

¹² Previously known as restricted areas

¹³ Previously referred to as restricted items

The source of compliance checks include:

- Infested sites – known infested site that is reportedly involved in product movement
- Suburb monitoring – random checking of clients to ensure they are following the necessary movement controls for the carrier they are moving
- Follow ups – on any previously reported non-compliance that requires another compliance check.

Suburb monitoring during the quarter focused on soil movements—all checks were found to be compliant.

No major non-compliances were found during the period.

Investigations

As reported during previous quarters, an investigation is continuing into an unauthorised movement of soil from fire ant biosecurity zone 1 to a location outside the fire ant biosecurity zones. An investigation report has been prepared and provided to the Biosecurity Queensland Investigations Unit. It is anticipated that the investigation will be finalised by June 2017.

Case management

Officers from the Program visited three organic certified clients to discuss accreditation and treatment plans for their properties. The group identified opportunities within the soil testing process to potentially carry out some scientific residue testing for methoprene.

Industry training

Over 18 training sessions were conducted with 615 industry, Council and State Government personnel¹⁴ during the quarter.

BUDGET

The Program's expenditure to the end of March 2017 was \$14.758 million (refer to [Appendix 6](#))—which was 77.4% of the available budget comprised of \$16.027 million approved cost-share funding, \$0.466 million carryover of unspent funds from 2015–16 and \$2.575 million supplementary funding from Queensland.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Ten Year Plan

Ministers agreed to consider funding of a ten year eradication plan or transition to a management plan for the Program at the next Agriculture Ministers' Forum (AGMIN) meeting which is scheduled for July 2017. A timely decision is crucial for successful implementation of the ten year plan.

The Program continues to work with the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture and Water Resources to develop a matrix of skills required on the Red Imported Fire Ant Steering Committee. Nominations for the committee will be sought from jurisdictions prior to July 2017.

Genetic analysis

Significant delays in processing of fire ant genetic samples have occurred in this quarter. A combination of a personnel injury and the ongoing White Spot of Prawn Response have reduced

¹⁴ Attendees included representatives from the Brisbane City Council (City Projects Office), Somerset Regional Council, Ipswich City Council (Planning and Development, Riverview depot), Redland City Council, Logan City Council (Parks and Maintenance, Marsden), Visionstream Pty Ltd, Powerlink Queensland, Wilsons Excavations & Bitumen.

throughput. Critical samples are still be analysed in a timely fashion, but a back log of lower priority samples is developing.

Field mobility

A number of existing issues with the Fire Ant Management System (FAMS) still need to be rectified before the direct nest injection (DNI) mobile data capture application can progress any further. This work has been prioritised for action in the final quarter of the year, as part of the preparatory activities for the proposed Ten Year Plan.

Remote sensing surveillance (RSS) research

Documentation for the release of the Invitation to Offer (ITO) documentation has been reviewed and finalised by the Evaluation Panel. Documentation has been forwarded to the Department's procurement section in preparation for release. However this project will not proceed until the Program's future funding is secured.

Review of colony point creation

Reference points will replace colony points as the single source of reporting. This enables the Program to report more accurately by cross referencing various datasets. The focus of this process is to determine the most useful format(s) in which to display this information.

OTHER PROGRAM(S)

Yarwun (2013)

As previously reported, the Pest Free Area report for the Yarwun (2013) incursion¹⁵ was endorsed by the National Biosecurity Management Consultative Committee and the National Biosecurity Management Group. The report is currently being professionally printed.

Brisbane Airport (2015)

The Brisbane Airport (2015) incursion is being undertaken as a separate response and is reported six monthly.

Browsing ant

The final round of surveillance for browsing ant (*Lepisiota frauenfeldi*) at Belmont, outside Perth Airport was undertaken in February 2017.

¹⁵ National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program – Yarwun (2013) pest free area report – September 2016

Appendix 1 – Key Program activities

Under eradication, the Program's 2016–17 Work Plan¹⁶ (the work plan) focuses on three key strategies—targeted treatment to eradicate infestation, ongoing surveillance to monitor infestation (to facilitate targeted treatment) and movement controls to minimise the risk of human-assisted fire ant spread.

The Program will concentrate eradication activities on areas outside the core infested area¹⁷ (core area) while continuing to contain and suppress infestation within the core area.

Treatment

The Program will be applying multiple rounds of treatment to high density infestations and high risk areas within static treatment areas referred to as planned treatment areas. These areas will be assessed prior to clearance after planned treatment.

Inside the core area the planned treatment areas will receive two rounds of treatment over two years while outside the core will receive three rounds of treatment per year over two years. However depending on resources, new planned treatment areas identified outside the core area will receive two rounds of treatment.

New infestation

The Program will also respond to new infestation by conducting appropriate treatment in accordance with the agreed protocol beyond the planned treatment areas. These areas will be cleared as per the Protocol - Removal of IS¹⁸ Status¹⁹.

The 'area of infestation' is under review. The term 'area of infestation' is misleading as it includes infestation that has been treated but not cleared. The colony point review will consider the reporting of the 'area of infestation'.

Surveillance

The Program will focus surveillance effort on newly detected infestation outside the core area now that delimitation of the infestation in South East Queensland is complete, to ensure eradication is successful and to target treatment effort.

Validation surveillance

Validation surveillance will be undertaken by the Program to verify the treatment of infestation has been effective. Once the second validation surveillance is undertaken (usually by the odour detection dogs but can also be conducted using luring) and no evidence of fire ants are found the colony point(s) become 'inactive' and the infestation is deemed cleared.

Delineation surveillance

The Program will undertake surveillance either by field teams or the odour detection dogs, as per the treatment protocol, out to 100 m on all new detections outside treatment areas, except outlier detections (500 m delineation) will be undertaken.

Targeted surveillance

Targeted surveillance will be conducted on high risk sites in a number of outlying suburbs.

Sentinel site areas

Sentinel site areas are used to monitor for the presence or absence of fire ant. A sentinel site area is selected because it provides highly suitable habitat for fire ant, for instance, cleared or disturbed

¹⁶ Endorsed by the Tramp Ant Consultative Committee (TACC 24) on 27 May 2015

¹⁷ A subset of suburbs in the fire ant biosecurity zone where the majority of high density infestation are located.

¹⁸ Infested site

¹⁹ Protocol – Removal of IS Status was approved by the Tramp Ant Consultative Committee (TACC) in February 2012

land. Selected sites can be immediately bordering treatment areas, some distance beyond treatment areas (i.e. along or beyond the delimitation boundary) or in a nearby suburb that contains suitable habitat, or has been previously infested, but no longer contain infestation.

Movement controls

Compliance monitoring will focus on high risk industries for long distance, human-assisted movement of fire ant carriers. These industries include bulk soil movements and hay.

Case management

The Case Manager will deliver a coordinating role in identifying where new large scale developments are planned in South East Queensland.

Risk assessments

A person may apply to an inspector for a biosecurity instrument permit to authorise non-compliance with a biosecurity zone regulatory provision.

A risk assessment is performed for every valid request for a biosecurity instrument permit. An Information Notice is provided to the client outlining the information that has been taken into account, and the reasons for the decision, to grant or refusal to grant, the biosecurity instrument permit. The Information Notice will contain justifications that are based on scientific principles.

Compliance checks

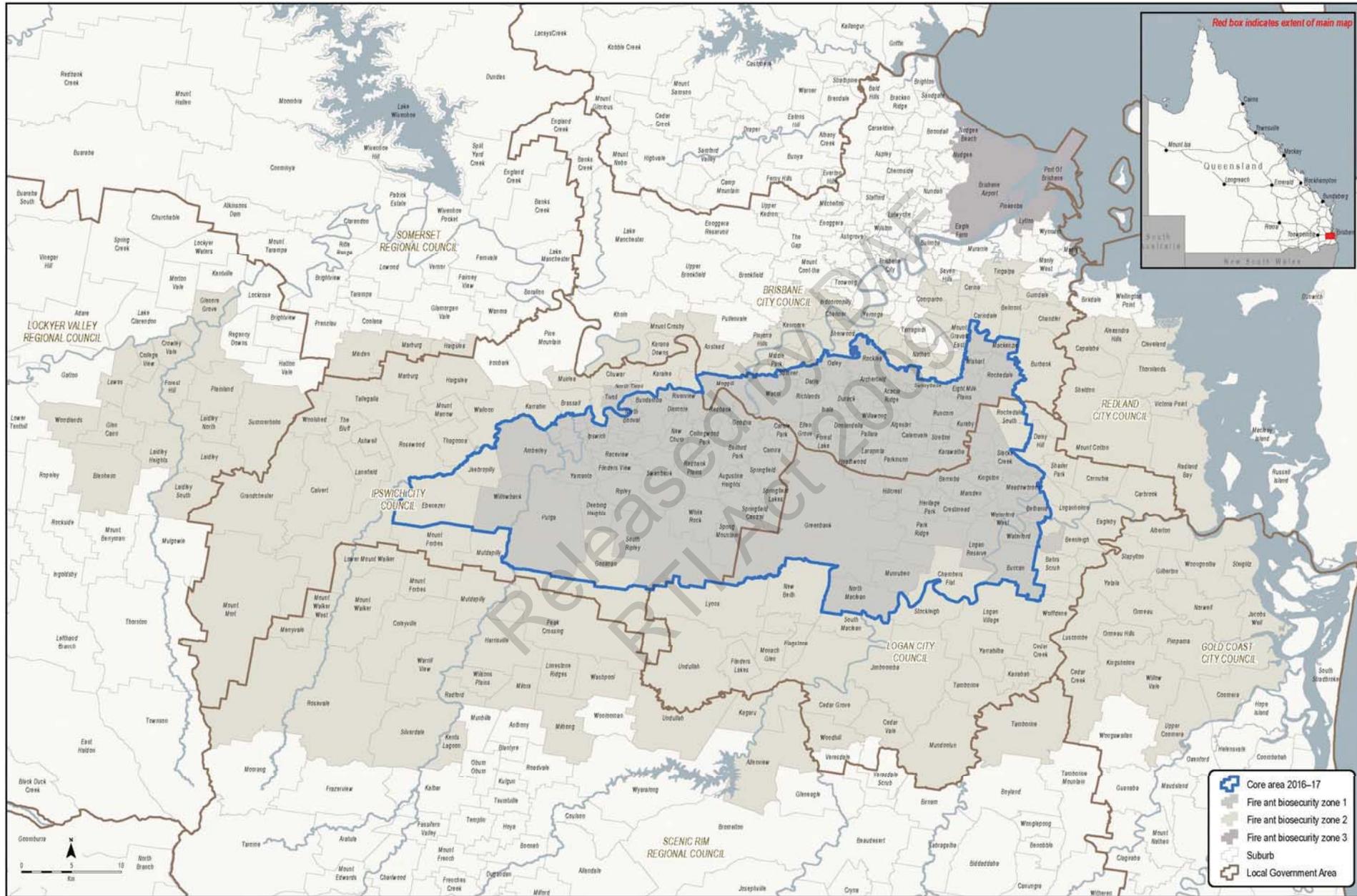
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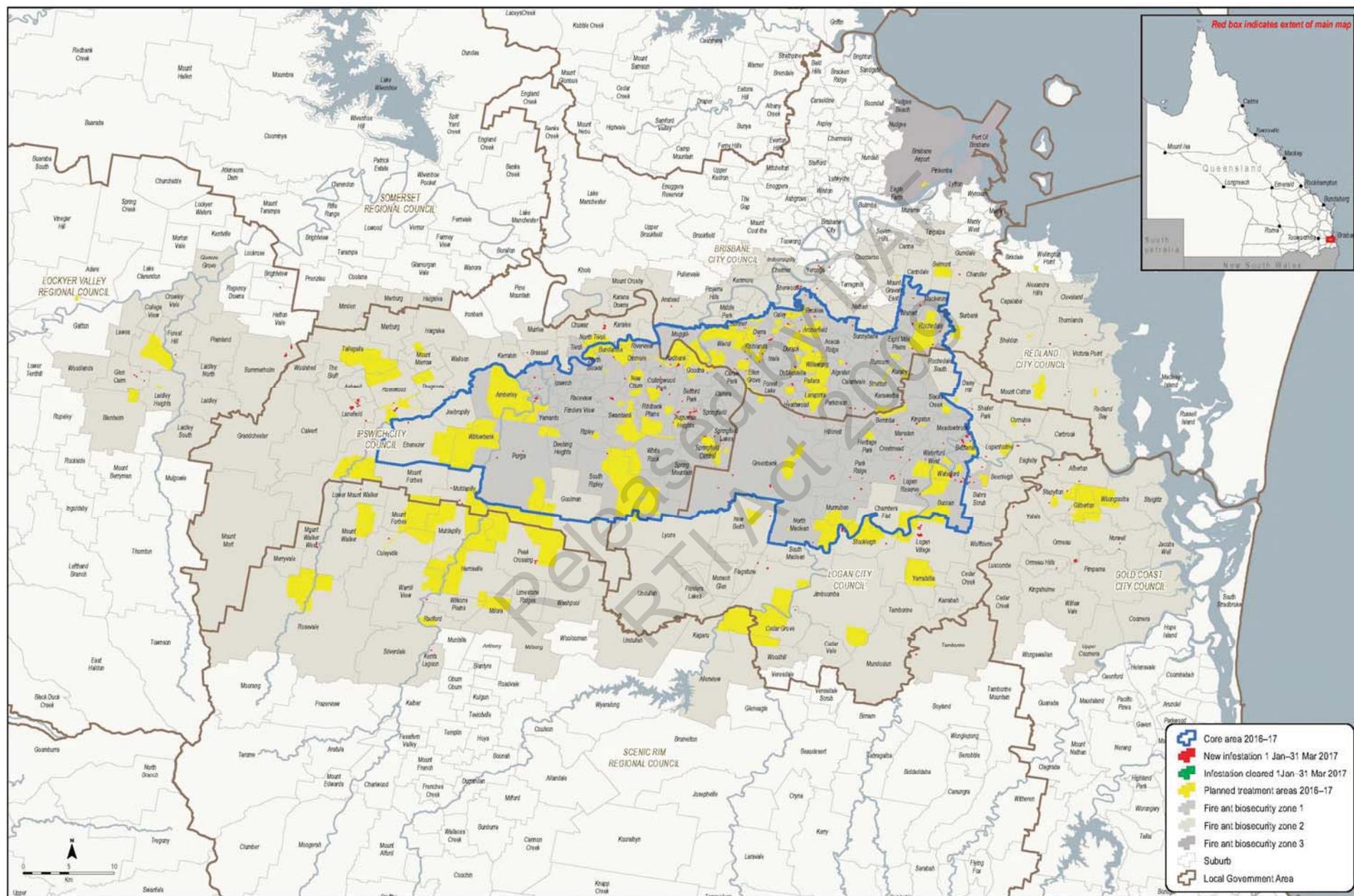
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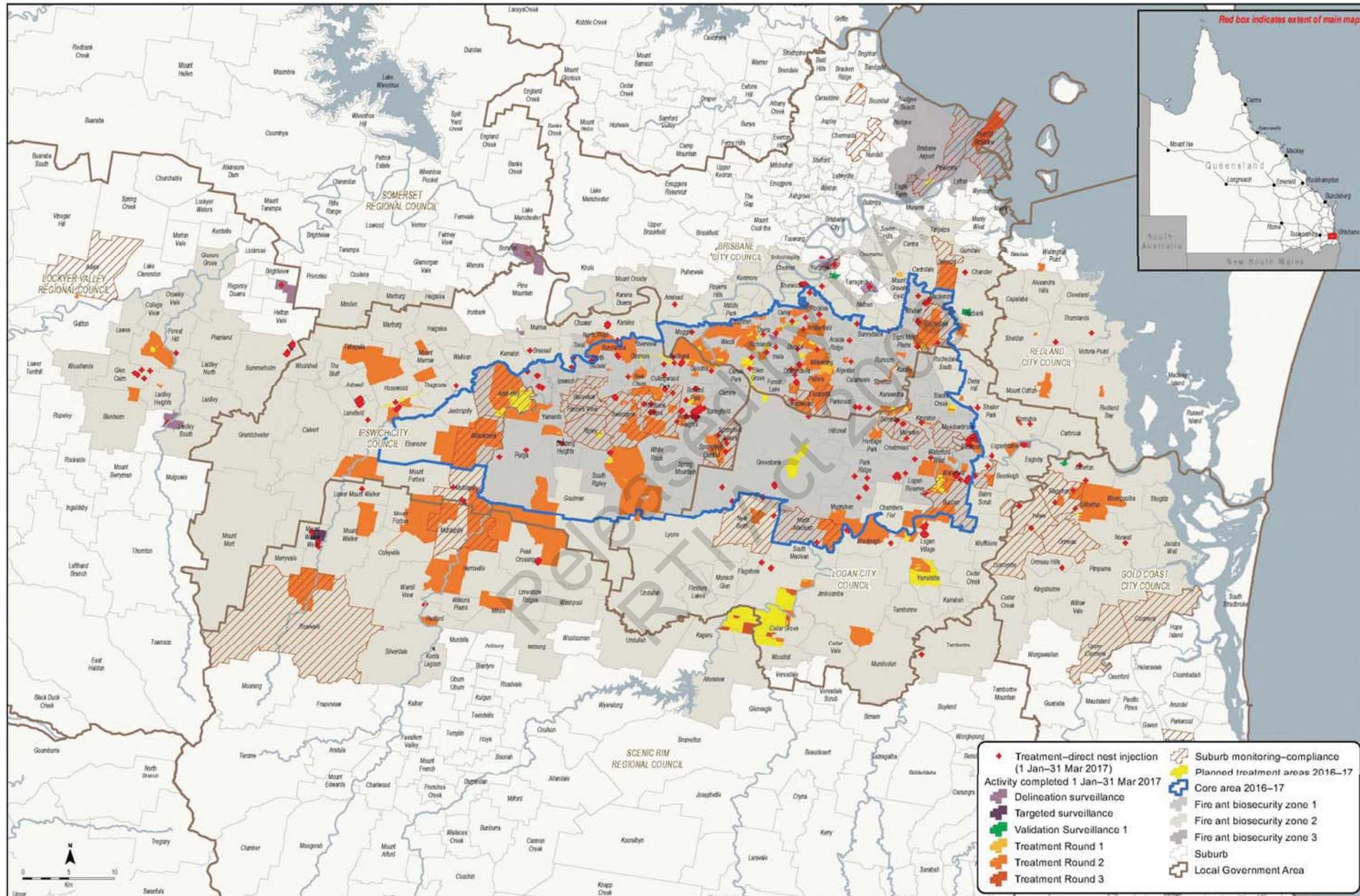
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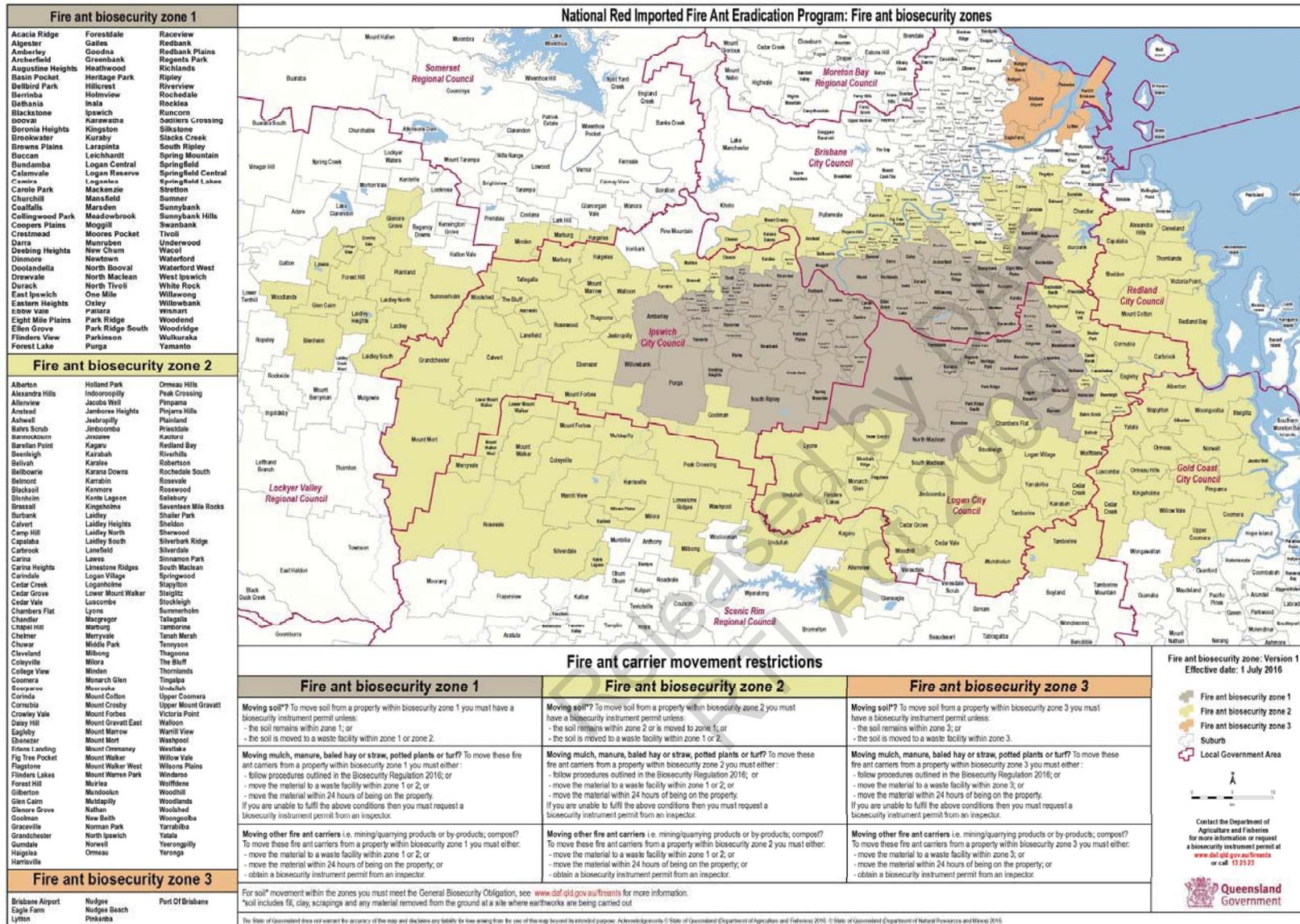


Appendix 4 – Program activities conducted across the fire ant biosecurity zone(s) 1 January–31 March 2017²⁰



²⁰ The map is only a representation of the areas where Program activities have been undertaken during the quarter.

Appendix 5 – Fire ant biosecurity zones – established 1 July 2016



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WORK UNITS	2016-17 Initial Budget			Initial Budget	2016-17 Revised Budget			Revised Budget	2016-17 Actual Expenses			Actual
	Labour \$'000	Non-Labour \$'000	TOTAL \$'000	FTE	Labour \$'000	Non-Labour \$'000	TOTAL \$'000	FTE	Labour \$'000	Non-Labour \$'000	TOTAL \$'000	FTE
Management	226	35	261	2.0	232	57	289	2.0	189	418	607	2.0
Policy, Legislation & Compliance	1,192	65	1,256	13.3	1,282	204	1,486	13.3	922	143	1,065	11.8
Business Support	629	550	1,179	7.9	645	679	1,324	7.9	495	464	959	6.8
Communications & Stakeholder Engagement	652	250	902	7.1	579	411	990	7.3	403	299	702	4.7
Program Support	1,213	537	1,751	12.4	1,308	711	2,019	12.4	916	535	1,451	12.1
Field Operations	4,061	1,964	6,026	67.2	3,996	1,974	5,970	67.2	2880	1588	4,468	58.0
Sub-Total	7,973	3,402	11,375	109.8	8,042	4,036	12,078	110.0	5,805	3,447	9,252	95.3
Site Lease Charges		326	326		0	356	356		0	251	251	
Odour Detection Dogs	254	231	485	2.9	263	342	605	2.9	195	193	388	2.9
Chemical Treatments		2,575	2,575		0	4,030	4,030		0	3,383	3,383	
Aerial Applications		1,266	1,266		0	1,999	1,999		0	1,484	1,484	
Sub-Total	254	4,398	4,652	2.9	263	6,727	6,990	2.9	195	5,311	5,506	2.9
TOTAL COST-SHARING	8,227	7,800	16,027	112.7	8,466	8,027	19,068	112.9	6,000	8,758	14,758	98.3

Notes:

- 1 2016-17 Initial Budget includes 16.027M approved cost shared funding as per the 2013-18 Response Plan
- 2 2016-17 Revised Budget includes 16.027M cost shared funding as per the 2013-18 Response Plan, \$0.466M carryover from 2015-16 and \$2.575M supplementary funding from Qld.
- 3 FTE figures do not include contract labour staff.
- 4 All amounts are rounded to the nearest '000.

**Efficiency and financial audit of the
Eradication of the red imported fire ant
– Yarwun 2013 Response Plan**

May 2015

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RTI Act 2009

Audit:	Efficiency and financial audit of the <i>Eradication of the red imported fire ant – Yarwun 2013</i> Response Plan		
Report Number:	2014/165		
Key Dates:	Audit start: 26/11/2014	Client comments received: 24/03/2015	
	Draft Report issued to client: 11/3/2015	Final report submitted to D-G:	16/04/2015
		Reissued final report to D-G:	25/05/2015
Distribution	Audit and Risk Committee		
	A/Director, Biosecurity Queensland Control Centre		
	Chief Biosecurity Officer		
Approval:			
	Jack Noye	Director-General	/ /
	Simon Griffiths	Head of Internal Audit	/ /

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Executive summary

In accordance with the requirements of the Response Plan - Eradication of the red imported fire ant – Yarwun 2013 (the Response Plan), Protiviti has conducted an efficiency and financial review of the National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program in relation to the Response Plan (the Review). Protiviti is QGIAS's co-sourced partner and has been engaged to work on this Review in accordance with the Standing Offer Arrangement between Protiviti and the Queensland Government (Professional Services 878-13).

In March 2014, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry (DAFF) developed the Response Plan for the eradication of fire ants and to directly address all key criteria specified in the National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement (NEBRA). NEBRA establishes national arrangements for responses to nationally significant biosecurity incidents and outlines cost sharing arrangements for eradication programs. The Response Plan was driven by the declaration of an emergency response by Queensland's Chief Biosecurity Officer on 9 December 2013, following the confirmation of red imported fire ant (*Solenopsis Invicta*) on land, at a shipping port terminal in Yarwun. Biosecurity Queensland conducted delimiting surveillance during the investigation phase and discovered a total of 70 fire ant colonies across five properties. The resulting Response Plan covers the proposed eradication activities by The National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program (the Program) as implemented by Biosecurity Queensland at Yarwun until June 2016 and the subsequent preparation of a pest free area report by 31 August 2016. The response plan was endorsed by the National Biosecurity Management Group (NBMG) on 30 April 2014 and later revised on 12 September 2014, with national cost-shared funding of \$3.804 million to implement the two and a half year eradication program. Subsequently, the Tramp Ant Consultative Committee (TACC), are responsible for analysing, endorsing, developing or rejecting any proposed modification to the course of action based on experience of fire ant in Australia, and to reflect the changing situation and ensure eradication is achieved in the most efficient and effective way possible. The response plan covers the period 1 March 2014 to 31 August 2016.

The key eradication activities include surveillance of identified high risk areas, treatment (including baiting and direct chemical treatments) and compliance monitoring to ensure adherence to movement controls implemented to minimise the spread of the infestation.

Key response activities and objectives for the Program are specifically outlined in the Response Plan. It also identifies performance indicators that are to be used to assess the progress of the response, both in terms of eradication actions and budget. The specific scope of the Review included an assessment of:

- Whether the objectives of the Response Plan were being met as efficiently and cost effectively as expected; and
- The financial data incorporated in prescribed financial statements (refer to Appendix A: Yarwun 2013-2014 Financial Report and Appendix B: Yarwun 2014-2015 Financial Report) based on agreed upon procedures to provide evidence that the financial statements fairly and accurately represent the financial position of the delivery of the Response Plan, and that financial operations have been conducted in accordance with NEBRA.

Assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of the activities specified in the Response Plan involved a Yarwun site visit; examination of annual and quarterly reports; verifying surveillance and treatment schedule compliance; and inspecting movement control compliance activities. Testing of the financial objectives of this review included: reconciliation of transactions to actual expenses claimed for 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 (1 July to 30 September 2014); transaction sample testing; payroll testing; reconciling budgeted expected activity with actual expenses (refer to Appendix C: Yarwun 2013 Indicative Budget) and discussions with Program staff around delivery of the project.

The review identified the following findings and areas for improvements:

- 1) Cost benefit/effectiveness analysis of eradication actions, particularly relating to community engagement efforts and surveillance activities, has not been performed for the Yarwun Response. This may result in the continued operation of suboptimal activities.
- 2) Variance analysis of actual expenses to budgeted expenses is undertaken on a monthly basis, however due to financial system changes and issues surrounding NEBRA eligibility conditions, at the time of the review, detailed budgets have not been loaded into the financial system for the Yarwun Response Plan. As a result, expenses may be inadvertently coded to the incorrect category and not detected. Further, this may result in misinformed business decisions.
- 3) The breakup of the operational component of the budget across the functional area cost collectors used to assign expenditure is not consistent with the format of the response plan budget and reimbursement

claim template. Expenditure from the costs collectors is required to be aligned manually into the reimbursement claim format. This increases the risk of error and misallocation of funds to the incorrect Response Plan budget line item.

- 4) Trend analysis of performance indicators against prior periods is not specifically addressed in the quarterly reports.

During the course of the Review, the following positive practices were also identified:

- The Program has completed eradication activities, to date, in accordance with the timings and manner specified by the Response Plan (refer to Appendix D: Yarwun Treatment and Surveillance Schedule).
- The Gladstone Fire Ant Restricted Area (Restricted Area) was declared as a high risk restricted area with defined movement controls covering a 2km radius from all infested sites (refer to Appendix E: Gladstone Fire Ant Restricted Area). There was evidence that the Restricted Area was adjusted to reflect additional fire ant nest detections.
- All property owners and lessees within the restricted area have developed and are subject to Approved Risk Management Plans (ARMP). ARMP are developed to manage the risks associated with the commercial activity carried on in a restricted area by a person using appropriate risk management techniques to prevent the activity, or the things associated with the activity, from spreading fire ants. The ARMP outlines surveillance and movement control obligations of the property owner and lessee.
- The Program conducts regular inspections of properties within the Restricted Area and performs audits of the ARMP to ensure compliance. All ARMP and properties inspected have been compliant.
- Surveillance and helicopter treatment activities are verified through GPS tracking to ensure that 100% of the Restricted Area has been examined and treated (refer to Appendix F: GPS Surveillance Tracking and Appendix G: GPS Treatment Tracking).
- The Program has adopted its approach to surveillance to better align to the behaviour of fire ants in the Yarwun region. For example, surveillance is now carried out in the cooler months and in the mornings to better detect ant nest locations.
- Bait is used to interfere with the growth and development of ants, thereby breaking the reproductive life cycle of ant colonies. The efficacy of the bait and Direct Nest Injection (DNI) treatment has been verified through scientific research and through continued monitoring of its effects in Yarwun.
- The Program reports on progress against the plan and specifically against the identified performance indicators, including budget on a quarterly and annual basis.
- All transactions are accounted for in the "Actual Expenses" claimed in the financial reports for 2013-2014 and for the first quarter of 2014-2015.
- The assumptions and estimates used to build the budget has contingency built in to account for unforeseen circumstances.
- Total expenses were approximately 14% below the estimated costs in the 2013-2014 financial year. This is within the goal of keeping the annual program expenditure within 5% of the allocated budget. It further demonstrates that while the program has an allocated budget, the Program is still working towards the efficiency objective by reducing costs where possible.
- All substantive testing and data analysis performed on the expenses associated with the Yarwun Project did not show any material variances (refer to Appendix H: Financial Analysis Testing).

Two priority 2 findings and two business improvement processes were identified through the Review and are outlined in the table of Recommendations below. Refer to key for priority ratings outlined on page 4.

Recommendations

The findings were discussed and agreed management actions are highlighted below and explained further in the “detailed findings and recommendations” section of this report.

<i>Ref. #</i>	<i>Recommendations</i>	<i>Priority</i>
1	Cost benefit/effectiveness analysis of eradication activities has not been performed.	P2
2	Variance analysis of actual expenses to budget is not currently performed on a monthly basis within SAP specifically for the Yarwun Response Plan.	P2
3	Investigate amending the format of the Reimbursement Claim template to align to SAP transaction and internal budget descriptions to reduce manual processes	BPI
4	Perform and document trend analysis regarding eradication activities.	BPI

To assist the users of this report to understand the significance of the issues, findings were rated according to the priorities defined below.

<i>Key to Priority Ratings</i>	
Priority 1 P1	A significant weakness which exposes the agency to a material extent in terms of achievement of corporate objectives, financial results or impairment of the agency's reputation.
Priority 2 P2	A moderate weakness, which exposes the agency to a moderate extent in terms of achievement of corporate objectives, financial results or impairment of the agency's reputation.
Priority 3 P3	A minor weakness which does not seriously expose the agency to a material extent in terms of achievement of corporate objectives, financial results or impairment of the agency's reputation.
Business Process Improvement BPI	An opportunity for the business to improve the efficiency or effectiveness of its processes which, if not actioned, does not expose the agency to any material extent in terms of achievement of corporate objectives, financial results or impairment of the agency's reputation.

Detailed findings and agreed management actions

This section outlines detailed findings from the Review in accordance to the approved terms of reference. These findings have been discussed with management, and actions have been agreed to address the issues raised.

Finding	Implication	Recommendations	Priority
<p>1. Cost benefit/effectiveness analysis of eradication activities has not been performed.</p> <p>Currently, the Program undertakes a variety of fire ant eradication activities under the Response Plan. However, there has been no cost benefit or cost effectiveness analysis performed on each of these activities to determine effectiveness, justification and feasibility of eradication activities undertaken to date or to ascertain whether alternative cost effective measures are available. The eradication activities under the Response Plan include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>Surveillance</p> <p>Contractors are hired and led by Program personnel to perform visual inspections of buffer surveillance areas in the 2-4km surveillance zones as well as targeted surveillance of identified high-risk sites outside the 2km Treatment Zone. Verification surveillance is performed by Program personnel to confirm eradication in infested sites. Odour detector dogs are used to examine difficult to reach locations and to perform verification surveillance. Subsequent to the initial detection and investigation, there are three planned surveillance rounds (refer to Appendix D). The first of the buffer, targeted and verification surveillance rounds have occurred.</p> <p>Treatment</p> <p>A helicopter is leased for treatment purposes by broadcasting bait over the Restricted Area. Bait treatment is also applied by Program personnel on foot. There are six helicopter treatment rounds scheduled as per the Response Plan (refer to Appendix D). Four rounds have already been completed. Any identified fire ant nests are also subject to bait application. DNI is then carried out by commercial pest controller (Amalgamated) to eradicate the nest.</p> 	<p>Minimal analysis on fire ant eradication processes may lead to forgone opportunities to more efficiently and cost effectively eradicate fire ants through continued operation of suboptimal activities.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Program should perform a cost effectiveness analysis to ascertain the effectiveness and justification for current surveillance, treatment and community engagement activities. The Program should use the cost effectiveness analysis to drive improvements for future eradication activities under the Response Plan. Learning's from the cost effectiveness analysis should be shared with the South-East Queensland Fire Ants Response. <p>Responsibility: Tramp Ant Consultative Committee (TACC)</p> <p>Implementation date: TBC with TACC</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">P2</p>

Finding	Implication	Recommendations	Priority
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Engagement The Response Plan highlights community engagement activities in order to maintain and build stakeholder relations, keep stakeholders informed and engaged in the response and to encourage public surveillance as well as industry and public compliance with movement controls within the Restricted Area as per developed ARMP. The Program engages with the property owners within the Restricted Area and performs audits to ensure that surveillance activities and movement controls are effective. <p>Cost effectiveness analysis is the exercise of evaluating a planned action, such as the eradication activity, by determining the net value that it will have for the program. Essentially, a cost effectiveness analysis identifies and measures all of the positive and negative factors of the activity to determine whether the planned action is effective. As the Response Plan has been operating for a full year, a cost effectiveness analysis of each of these activities would assist in determining the key actions to be undertaken and focused on in order to meet the proof of freedom target date of 31 August 2016.</p>			
<p>Agreed Management Actions:</p> <p>Efficiency report to be provided to TACC members for consideration and actioning of recommendations.</p>			

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Finding	Implication	Recommendations	Priority
<p>2. Variance analysis of actual expenses to budget is not currently performed on a monthly basis within SAP specifically for the Yarwun Response Plan.</p> <p>The Program is currently reporting to cost share partners on progress against the budget on a quarterly basis. However, at the time of the Review, monthly actual expense against the budget was tracked manually to identify expense trends.</p> <p>After discussions with the Manager, Business Support it was noted that the monthly variance analysis is performed with data from SAP. However, the following factors have prevented the detailed budgets being loaded to SAP to enable the analysis to be performed specifically for the Yarwun Response Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarification and approval was required from NBMG to enable NEBRA conditions to be relaxed so that the salary of National Fire Ant Eradication Program South East Queensland staff who also worked on the Yarwun Response could be applied to the Yarwun project. This was approved in September 2014. • A new Budget Tracking Tool linked to SAP was implemented on 1 July 2014 (four months after Project commencement) and migration of the departmental HR function from SAP to Aurion was required. <p>This is of particular importance for the Yarwun Response Plan as eradication activities are not a year-round process and is performed in blocks at various stages throughout the year. Further, resources are shared between the South East Queensland fire ant eradication program and the Yarwun Response, increasing the risk of inadvertently misallocating funds and expenses. A monthly tracking of actual expenses to budget and variance analysis generated directly from SAP will assist in providing further justification for business decisions on eradication activities. To achieve this, the budget should be loaded within SAP with accurate figures and a variance analysis report should be generated on a monthly basis to ensure misallocation and overspend are identified and dealt with in a timely manner.</p>	<p>Budget overspend and/or misallocation of funds to incorrect codes may occur if tracking of actual expenses to budget is not available directly from SAP</p> <p>Anomalous transactions may not be picked up in a timely manner if regular expense management is not performed.</p> <p>Business decisions may be made based on out of date financial data.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Program should allocate their budget including detailed monthly forecasting as soon as the issues identified have been rectified to ensure an accurate reflection of activities is allocated to the corresponding month. 2. The Program should load detailed budgets as soon as the issues identified have been rectified and use SAP to perform tracking of actual expenses against the detailed budget lines at the end of each month. This will improve financial monitoring and allow the department to react quickly to identify potential overspends as well improvement opportunities <p>3. Responsibility: Sarah Corcoran, A/Director, Biosecurity Queensland Control Centre</p> <p>Implementation date: 30/06/2015</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">P2</p>

Finding	Implication	Recommendations	Priority
<p>Agreed Management Actions:</p> <p>Services delivered within overall budget appropriation, Monthly financial reporting and monitoring of expenditure against detailed budget lines to ensure budget is on track.</p>			
<p>Business Process Improvements</p>			<p>Priority</p>
<p>3. Investigate amending the format of the Reimbursement Claim template to align to SAP transaction and internal budget descriptions to reduce manual processes</p> <p>A reconciliation of transactions to the budget found that the coding used for transactions in SAP (cost element description) did not align with those used within the budget expense description (claim expenditure headings) which are used for reimbursement claims. The DAFF Manager – Business Support Officer is required to manually align various SAP expense categories to a particular budget description for reimbursement claims. For example the budget line category in the Response Plan under the heading “Printing, advertising and community engagement” has a number of SAP costing element descriptions assigned to it that relate to community engagement activities including “Advertising”, “Office supplies and stationary”, and “Rental and hire charges”. The manual process of aligning SAP expense categories to reimbursement claims increases the risk of error. Further, potential performance improvement opportunities may be missed due to incorrect allocation of true costs.</p> <p>The cost element descriptions and claim expenditure headings for operational activities should be aligned to the functional areas in the budget to remove the need to manually allocate transactions and to make it possible to perform timely and accurate transaction reconciliations.</p>			<p style="text-align: center;">(BPI)</p>
<p>4. Perform and document trend analysis regarding eradication activities</p> <p>Biosecurity Queensland reports quarterly on progress against the Response Plan as well as on the identified performance indicators. The report also includes a table of the Key Statistics for the Program. However, there is no further analysis or discussions of trends against previous quarter performance. Examples of trend analysis may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trends on the number of fire ant nest detections by the public versus Biosecurity Queensland surveillance activities; • Trends on colony detections across periods and locations; and • Analysis of the areas examined on foot patrol versus odour detection dogs and the number of detections by technique <p>This would assist in driving business decisions regarding future eradication actions and provide key learning outcomes.</p>			<p style="text-align: center;">(BPI)</p>

Source: National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program – Yarwun 2013 Annual Report 2013-14.

National Cost Sharing								
	2013–14 Budget				2013–14 Actual Expenses to 30 June 3014			
	Labour \$	Non- Labour \$	TOTAL \$	Budget FTE	Labour \$	Non- Labour \$	TOTAL \$	Actual FTE
Management	12,075		12,075	0.17	12,075		12,075	0.17
Operations	25,845	463,882	489,727	0.4	9,996	386,447	396,442	0.15
Compliance	39,765		39,765	0.5	29,324	6,215	35,538	0.37
Community Engagement	11,263	33,550	44,813	0.13	11,263	34,114	45,377	0.13
TOTAL FIRE ANT PROGRAM - YARWUN	88,948	497,432	586,380	1.20	62,657	426,776	489,433	0.82

Source: National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program – Yarwun 2013 1st Quarter Report 2014-15.

2014-15 NATIONAL RED IMPORTED FIRE ANT ERADICATION PROGRAM, YARWUN FINANCIAL REPORT												
For period ending 30 September 2014												
	2014-15 Initial Budget (Response Plan V 1.2)				2014-15 Revised Budget (Response Plan V 2.0)				2014-15 Actual Expenses to 30 September 2014			
	Labour \$'000	Non- Labour \$'000	TOTAL \$'000	Budget FTE	Labour \$'000	Non- Labour \$'000	TOTAL \$'000	Budget FTE	Labour \$'000	Non- Labour \$'000	TOTAL \$'000	Actual FTE
Management	19		19	0.25	19		19	0.25	1		1	0.01
Operations	118	237	355	1.66	67	243	309	1.00	44	40	85	0.52
Compliance	73		73	0.92	73		73	0.92	5	1	6	0.09
Community Engagement	17	41	58	0.20	17	41	58	0.20	2	7	9	0.02
Sub-Total	227	278	505	3.03	176	283	459	2.37	52	49	100	0.63
Chemical Bait Treatments		505	505			688	688				0	
Aerial Applications		229	229			340	340				0	
Efficiency & Financial Audit		17	17			30	30				0	
Contract Field staff	293		293		128		128		124		124	
Sub-Total	293	751	1044		128	1058	1186		124	0	124	
TOTAL FIRE ANT PROGRAM - YARWUN	520	1029	1549	3.03	304	1342	1645	2.37	176	49	225	0.63

Source: Budget figures obtained from the Response Plan – Eradication of the red imported fire ant – Yarwun 2013-17.

BUDGET SUMMARY										
Description TOTAL	2013/14 (4 months)	2013/14 % of Total	2014/15 (12 months)	2014/15 % of Total	2015/16 (12 months)	2015/16 % of Total	2016/17 (2 months)	2016/17 % of Total	TOTAL	% of Total
Labour (including contract Operations staff)	62,657	13%	303,624	18%	1,129,732	70%	18,560	30%	1,514,574	40%
Operating	426,776	87%	1,341,721	82%	478,491	30%	42,517	70%	2,289,507	60%
BUDGET	\$ 489,433		\$ 1,645,345		\$ 1,608,223		\$ 61,077		\$ 3,804,081	

BUDGET DETAIL										
	2013/14	2013/14	2014-15	2014/15	2015-2016	2015/16	2016-2017	2016/17	Totals	% of Total
	Total Salary & Oncosts (4 months)	% of Total	Total Salary & Oncosts (12 months)	% of Total	Total Salary & Oncosts (12 months)	% of Total	Total Salary & Oncosts (2 months)	% of Total		
LABOUR										
Operations	9,996	2%	194,545	12%	1,058,608	94%	0	0%	1,263,150	33%
Communications	11,263	2%	17,267	1%	8,823	1%	1,503	2%	38,856	1%
Compliance	29,323	6%	73,300	4%	55,994	5%	13,834	23%	172,451	5%
Management	12,075	2%	18,511	1%	6,306	1%	3,222	5%	40,114	1%
TOTAL LABOUR	\$62,657	13%	\$303,623	18%	\$1,129,731	70%	\$18,559	30%	\$1,514,571	40%
OPERATING										
Travel (Other)	9,923	2%	20,000	1%	14,000	1%		0%	43,923	1%
Motor Vehicles Hire	1,287	0%	3,000	0%	2,500	0%		0%	6,787	0%
Travel - allowances (Treatment)	1,747	0%	13,514	1%		0%		0%	15,261	0%
Travel - allowances (Surveillance)		0%	21,182	1%	107,212	7%		0%	128,394	3%
Travel - airfares (Treatment)	696	0%	6,000	0%		0%		0%	6,696	0%
Travel - airfares (Surveillance)		0%	3,500	0%	17,500	1%		0%	21,000	1%
Accommodation (Treatment)	8,353	2%	26,079	2%		0%		0%	34,432	1%
Accommodation (Surveillance)		0%	32,009	2%	155,170	10%		0%	187,179	5%
Vehicles (Treatment)	2,378	0%	9,088	1%		0%		0%	11,466	0%
Vehicles (Surveillance)		0%	23,394	1%	125,872	8%		0%	149,266	4%
Printing, advertising and community engagement	27,694	6%	40,845	2%	37,720	2%	12,517	20%	118,776	3%
Uniforms/safety supplies	483	0%	7,500	0%	2,500	0%		0%	10,483	0%
IT Contractors		0%	5,000	0%	5,000	0%		0%	10,000	0%
Chemicals (Bait, DNI, Chemical)	255,425	52%	688,378	42%		0%		0%	943,804	25%
Diagnostic/Genetic Testing Incl. freight		0%	6,760	0%	6,760	0%		0%	13,520	0%
Freight, cartage and postage	11,879	2%	60,059	4%		0%		0%	71,938	2%
Helicopter Charter	106,368	22%	339,904	21%		0%		0%	446,272	12%
Office Supplies	303	0%	290	0%	237	0%		0%	830	0%
Office lease		0%	2,000	0%	800	0%		0%	2,800	0%
Phones & IT Charges	240	0%	3,220	0%	3,220	0%		0%	6,680	0%
Efficiency and financial audits		0%	30,000	2%		0%	30,000	49%	60,000	2%
TOTAL OPERATING	\$426,776	87%	\$1,341,722	82%	\$478,491	30%	\$42,517	70%	\$2,289,508	60%
Grand Total (Labour & Operating)	\$489,433		\$1,645,345		\$1,608,222		\$61,076		\$3,804,079	
Variance \$	\$ -		\$ -		\$ 1		\$ 1		\$ 2	

Source: Response Plan - Eradication of the red imported fire ant – Yarwun 2013 (Table 7)

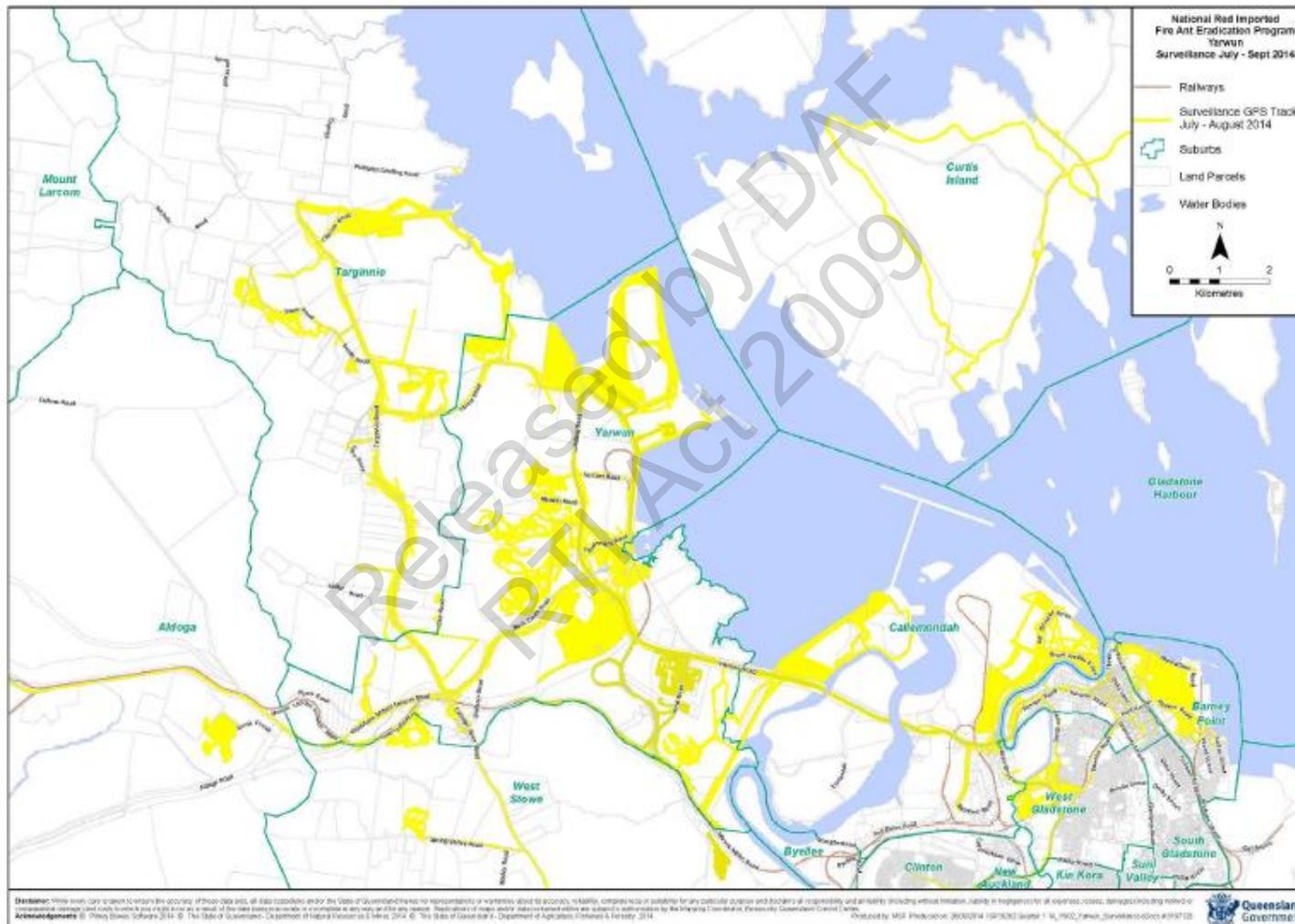
	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16
July		Buffer & target surveillance Dog verification surveillance	Buffer & target surveillance Dog verification surveillance
August			
September		Treatment Round 3	
October			
November		Treatment Round 4	
December	Detection		
January	Initial aerial treatment		
February		Treatment Round 5	
March	Treatment Round 1		
April		Treatment Round 6	
May	Treatment Round 2		
June			Verification surveillance

Gladstone Fire Ant Restricted Area DECLARATION NOTICE

<p>Contact the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry for further information Log on to www.daff.qld.gov.au/fireants or call 13 25 23</p>	<p>Declaration Notice (declared under section 40 of the Plant Protection Regulation 2002) The Director-General of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry declares that the area defined in the map is a high risk restricted area. This declaration comes into effect on 12 November 2014 and replaces all previous restricted area declaration notices for fire ants in Gladstone. The movement restrictions mentioned in sections 53, 48 of the Plant Protection Regulation 2002 apply to the high risk restricted area.</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Restricted Items</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Soil</td> <td>Mulch</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Manure</td> <td>Bark</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hay</td> <td>Pot plants</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Potting media</td> <td>Turf</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sleepers/logs</td> <td>Gravels</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Poultry litter</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>*Soil will require an Inspector's Approval before being moved into an unrestricted area. Log on to www.daff.qld.gov.au/fireants for details</p>	Restricted Items		Soil	Mulch	Manure	Bark	Hay	Pot plants	Potting media	Turf	Sleepers/logs	Gravels	Poultry litter		<p>Requirements for</p> <p>Commercial operators</p>	<p>High Risk Restricted Area</p> <p>In this area movement of restricted items requires an Approved Risk Management Plan or an Inspector's Approval to move these items off a property. Log on to www.daff.qld.gov.au/fireants for details.</p>	<p>National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program Gladstone Fire Ant Restricted Area Version 2 Effective Date: 12 November 2014</p>
Restricted Items																			
Soil	Mulch																		
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Disclaimer: While every care is taken to ensure the accuracy of these data sets, all data contained within the State of Queensland makes no representation or warranty about its accuracy, reliability, completeness or suitability for any particular purpose and disclaims all responsibility and all liability (including without limitation, liability in negligence) for all expenses, losses, damages (including indirect or consequential damages) and costs to which you might incur as a result of the data being inaccurate or incomplete in any way and for any reason. Publications of maps and/or data contained within are subject to authorisation by the Mapping Coordinator, Biosecurity Queensland Control Centre.
Acknowledgements: © Pitney Bowes Software 2014. © The State of Queensland - Department of Natural Resources & Mines 2014. © The State of Queensland - Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry 2014.
Produced by: MAF - Produced on: 22/10/2014 - 08:16:05 - Year017_Version2_RA_Declaration_Map_Ant01001011

Source: National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program – Yarwun 2013, 1st Quarter Report 2014–15



The following procedures were performed to evaluate the validity of the expenditures associated with the Yarwun project and are summarised as follows:

1. Period Tested: 2013/2014 financial year (1 March 2014 – 30 June 2014) and 2014/2015 financial year (1 July 2014 – 30 September 2014).
2. Reconciled Yarwun financial reports with actual expenditures for the Yarwun Project.
3. Verified if the Yarwun Project was within 5% of the budget.
4. Selected a sample of expense transactions (focusing on material accounts and extrapolating a sample of transactions over all other minor accounts) to verify:
 - Amount;
 - Description;
 - Ensure transaction occurred in the correct accounting period; and
 - Confirm that the transactions related to the Yarwun Project.
5. Performed data analysis over payroll to ensure expected and scheduled treatment activities reconciled to actual payroll expenses.
6. Verified employee's position level and pay classification to a treatment round.

The following observations were noted:

- For the 2013/2014 financial period actual expenses totalled \$489,433 which reconciled to the 30 June 2014 financial statement. Total expenses were approximately 14% below the estimated costs in the 2013-2014 financial year. This is within the goal of keeping the annual program expenditure within 5% of the allocated budget.
- For the 2014/2015 financial period actual expenses totalled \$224,644 which reconciled to the 30 September 2014 financial Report (immaterial rounding differences of \$356). A total of 14% of the budget has been consumed in the first quarter.
- For the 2013/2014 financial period, approximately \$408,352 (96% of operating expenses) was verified to source documents and found no material errors. The largest material accounts for 2013/2014 financial year were:

Item	Expense Amount	Percentage of Operating Expenses
Chemicals (Bait, DNI)	\$255,425	52%
Helicopter Charter	\$106,368	22%

- For the 2014/2015 financial period, approximately \$136,776 (80% of operating expenses) was verified to source documents and found no material errors. The largest material account as at 30 September 2014 was:

Item	Expense Amount	Percentage of Operating Expenses
Contractors	\$124,156	73%

- For both audited periods, performed a data analysis of payroll which incorporated the number, position level and duration for team members attending to schedule treatments over the audited period. No material variances identified. A further substantive test was performed on one treatment site and verified source documents to their position, level of pay and scheduled treatments. No material variances identified.

Tramp Ant Consultative Committee Meeting No. 26

AGENDA

Wednesday, 4 May 2016

Location: Queensland Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry, Primary Industries
Building, 80 Ann Street, Brisbane

Time: 0900–1600 (AEST)

Time	Item	Presenter/Discussion
0900–0915	Opening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome • Confirmation of agenda 	Kim Ritman
0915–1015	NRIFAEP – SE Queensland <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent review update 	Bill Magee
1015–1030	Morning tea	
1030–1230	NRIFAEP – SE Queensland <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current status update • Quarterly reports – endorsement • 2016–17 Work Plan – endorsement 	Sarah Corcoran
1230–1315	Lunch	
1315–1445	s.73 irrelevant information	Gary J Morton Sarah Corcoran Sarah Corcoran Sarah Corcoran Chris Hollingdrake
1445–1515	NRIFAEP – Brisbane Airport <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current status • SITREP format endorsement 	Sarah Corcoran
1515–1545	Other business	
1600	Meeting Close	Kim Ritman

Tramp Ant Consultative Committee (TACC)

TACC No. 26 – Brisbane
4 May 2016, 9 am – 2:30 pm

Draft Minutes

Participants		
Name	Organisation	Party
Kim Ritman (Chair) Sally Troy	Department of Agriculture and Water Resources	C'wealth
Julie Quinn	Department of Environment	C'wealth
Andrew Sanger	Department of Primary Industries	NSW
Nigel Ainsworth	Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources	VIC
Sarah Corcoran	Department of Agriculture and Fisheries	QLD
Mark Ramsay	Department of Primary Industries and Regions	SA
John Van Schagen	Department of Agriculture and Food	WA
Lionel Hill (Dial-in)	Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment	TAS
Leonie Cooper (Dial-in)	Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries	NT
Observers		
Kerry Scarlett (Secretariat) John Nielsen (Secretariat) Cameron McDonald (NMG Secretariat) Bill Crowe (OSP) John Gray (Dial-in)	Department of Agriculture and Water Resources	C'wealth
Bill Magee (Chair)	Independent Review Panel	
Chris Hollingdrake (presentation on EA communication activities) Sharon Janssen (Secretariat)	Department of Agriculture and Fisheries Independent Review Panel / Department of Agriculture and Fisheries	
Heather Leeson Sharon Janssen Ross Wylie Chris Hollingdrake Gary Morton Christine Horlock (from 12:30 pm)	Department of Agriculture and Fisheries National tramp ant eradication programs	QLD
Apologies		
Ben Hoffmann	CSIRO	N/A
John Robertson Louise Morgan	Department of Agriculture and Fisheries	QLD
Michelle Roden	Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries	NT
Alison Mcinnes	Department of Territory and Municipal Services	ACT

Purpose

1

The purpose of this meeting was to consider updates on the progress of the National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Programs (NRIFAEF) in south-eastern Queensland and at Brisbane Airport, Queensland, and the s.73 irrelevant information

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1. Opening of Meeting

Welcome and roll call

The Chair opened the meeting at 9:10 am AEST. Participants were welcomed and names were recorded. The chair reminded participants that proceedings are to remain confidential, and that proceedings are recorded for minute taking purposes and the recording is destroyed upon finalisation of the minutes. The Chair introduced Bill Magee, Chair of the Independent Review of the National Red imported Fire Ant eradication Program for SE Queensland.

Confidentiality requirement

Participants were reminded that proceedings are to remain confidential, and that proceedings are recorded for minute taking purposes and the recording is destroyed upon finalisation of the minutes. The Chair asked participants if they had any conflicts of interest to declare. None were declared.

Papers distributed prior to the meeting:

1. Agenda
2. National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program – SE Queensland
 - Agenda paper – 2015-16 update and 2016-17 Work Plan
 - 1st, 2nd and 3rd Quarter Reports
 - 2016-17 Work Plan and Indicative Budget

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4. National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program – Brisbane Airport
 - Agenda paper – Current Situation
 - Situation Report 1

2. Update on the NRIFAEP (SE Queensland) Independent Review

The Chair of the NRIFAEP Independent Review Panel, Bill Magee, presented an overview on the outcomes of the Review.

In December 2014, the Agricultural Minister's Forum agreed to commission and fund an independent review of the National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program (SEQ Program), outlining options for achieving eradication or long-term containment of red imported fire ant (RIFA) in South East Queensland (SEQ). A Panel was appointed in 2015 to review the current operations of the SEQ Program, provide advice on the success of the Program's efforts to delimit the SEQ infestation and provide advice on strategies for the future direction of the SEQ Program.

In accordance with the terms of reference, Part 1 of the Review focussed on the current operations of the Program, to provide advice on the success of the Program's efforts to delimit the SEQ infestation, and to provide preliminary advice on the future direction of the program. Part 2 involved scenario modelling to provide advice on options for eradication, containment and/or management of RIFA.

The Panel found that it is still technically feasible and in the national interest to eradicate RIFA. The modelling and the panel report provides the evidence to support this. The Panel recommends the continuation of the eradication program. The Panel noted the expertise that Queensland has established in relation to tramp ants and how the SE Queensland expertise has contributed to other eradication responses in Australia and the need to preserve this expertise.

The Panel found in the absence of an adequately funded eradication program the impacts of RIFA will surpass the combined effects of many of Australia's worst invasive pests currently estimated at \$964.36m per year. The Panel's view is that the current budget is insufficient to achieve eradication. A constant (long-term) budget commitment is needed to introduce efficiencies and optimise plans to achieve eradication. The modelling indicates that within 5 years there would be a 92% reduction in the number of infested sites. To achieve eradication, the Panel estimates the overall cost of the Program to be approximately \$38M per annum for up to 10 years, comprised of \$24M for treatment and surveillance activities; and \$14M for other critical eradication activities undertaken by the program. The \$38M recommended budget is still less than the 2003/4 cost shared budget of over \$43m, at the height of initial SEQ eradication program.

Other key findings include:

- Increasing canine surveillance up to 22 dogs to help validate RSS and declare eradication success;
- Ensuring the SEQ Program has the capacity to increase the number of compliance officers if required;
- Increasing community engagement activities and coordinating activity with the proposed increased treatment operations;
- A number of technical and scientific recommendations regarding baits and application;
- Maintaining and improving the SEQ Program's information systems to enable real time reporting;
- Establishing a permanent standing body for Tramp Ants in the future.

The Panel has recommended to review triggers for the future eradication plan.

- Trigger 1. New infestation discovered that is beyond the capacity of the SEQ program to treat. For example, this might include a large number of multiple infestations detected in a local government area that has not previously been infested.
- Trigger 2. There is a significant reduction in the efficacy of the baits used by the Program, as demonstrated by Science monitoring trials, and there are no effective alternative baits available. A robust repeat survey model will be needed to provide confidence for a proof of freedom assessment.

The Panel recommended either repeat survey, and/or spatially explicit models, noting that the program has the data collection systems available to validate success. For most ant eradication projects, a period of two years without detection has been used as a rule of thumb to declare success.

Based on information from the United States, if we are not successful in eradication in Australia, people (and our healthcare system) will bear the cost of about 140 000 medical consultations and 3 000 anaphylactic reactions, estimated each year.

RIFA pose a significant environmental risk. Any ground dwelling animals, for instance kangaroos and echidnas, (as well as household pets) are potentially at risk of being stung by RIFA and having their numbers reduced and in some cases, extinction should be expected.

RIFA will encroach on our way of life, this includes:

- Sporting activities (e.g. found in soil for cricket wickets).
- Recreational activities: BBQ in the parks, school fetes, treated RIFA beside a shrine of remembrance just before ANZAC Day 2015.

In summary the Panel concluded that:

- there is a small window of opportunity left to eradicate RIFA and that this review sets out a compelling case for unified national action to fund the continuation of the eradication program in South East QLD.
- the Port of Brisbane and the 2006 Yarwun incursion eradications have for the first time demonstrated the effectiveness of the insect growth regulator (IGR) baiting and direct nest injection techniques in an eradication program for RIFA.
- on-ground application of these treatments in the SEQ Program has now provided practical evidence of the treatment strategy's efficacy. The proven efficacy of these tools, combined with the modelling results, are key factors underpinning the Panel's recommendation that eradication remains technically feasible.
- the attributes of RIFA as an invasive pest combined with the devastating potential impacts on agriculture, environment, human health and social amenity support the case for decisive action now.

NSW acknowledged the assistance provided by Queensland to the Port Botany RIFA incursion.

In response to SA the Panel chair explained that analysis and advice indicates that RSS is effective and conservative at 38% ~~sensitivity and reduces to 0% over time.~~ ~~Ross Wylie~~ The SEQ Program provided clarification that the reference to 70% RSS arose from work in experimental plots ~~by Craig Jennings~~. Once testing in the field commenced real-time data became available.

VIC supports repeat surveys and good modelling because over time the number of nests will increasingly diminish and if good modelling or a good understanding of what is expected to be found is not available then progress of eradication would be difficult to determine.

The Commonwealth is of the view that to deal with the increasing number of border detections there is a need to increase industry awareness of the risks associated with tramp ant and other pest incursions. Nationwide communication in addressing awareness is essential as this is not just a Queensland problem.

The Commonwealth ~~commented that~~ suggested a three pronged approach; firstly working off-shore internationally to achieve better treatments of containers, better identification of risk material and better protocols to realise the risk of tramp ants coming from infested countries; secondly finding better ways of intercepting at the border and thirdly how to deal with incursions at the border.

The Committee agreed to look at ways of engaging with Health. Discussions at NBC at which Environment was a participant looked at ways of engaging Health, Transport and Infrastructure as the impacts on social amenities, human health and the environment were greater than on agriculture. Those areas are to provide more information about impact and potentially about mechanisms in their areas that help to mitigate impact but more from a human and environment response. NSW also believes that there are also business impacts. The Committee agreed to explore ways to engage Health and other agencies.

The Commonwealth Department of Environment commented that the review of the SEQ Program dovetails with a review of the Threat Abatement Plan currently underway, due 2016/17.

3. National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program – South-East Queensland

~~Qld The Program~~ provided an update on the program’s current status, and a PowerPoint presentation for the proposed 2016-2017 Work Plan. The eradication program has returned to ~~full treatment eradication mode in 2015-16~~ following delimitation of the infested area based on modelling by Monash University. ~~The levels of infestation in To plan treatment activities the restricted the restricted area had was been~~ divided into an ~~core infested area (core area) and inner and the area~~ outside ~~the~~ core, with three treatment applications being applied ~~over two years in the to high density infestation, disturbed land and high risk areas~~ outside core and two treatments ~~over two years for the~~ inside ~~the~~ core. Treatments had been applied to 85,000 hectares of the infested area before 4 May 2016, with 5000 hectares remaining to be treated.

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Higher than usual ground temperatures had allowed treatments to continue well into May. ~~An alternative new~~ bait being trialled (Distance Plus) ~~was expected to may~~ allow treatments to continue into the winter months, in contrast to the previous treatments which could only be applied between September and May. Successful introduction of Distance Plus ~~was expected to might~~ enhance the program’s efficiency.

Use of detector dogs continue to play a critical role for the program from both operational and public relation perspectives and it was noted that they had also been deployed to Sydney, Darwin and Perth for RIFA and browsing ants, respectively. Five dogs were reported to be due for retirement in 2016, with additional dogs being trained to replace them. Remote sensing surveillance had ceased due to the technology used becoming obsolete; new technology was being investigated. Sentinel sites and public engagement was being used as an interim surveillance measure until new RSS technology became available.

The program’s ~~Compliance and Monitoring section was reported to have has~~ engaged effectively with business stakeholders to promote a shared responsibility for fire ants and continued to prevent the long-distance movement of RIFA, with no evidence of long-distance spread detected. ~~The Compliance and Monitoring section did make two new detections from within the existing restricted area, and worked collaboratively with the Gold Coast City Council to ensure the Commonwealth Games development site has remained free of RIFA.~~ The program has also been supported by a comprehensive communications campaign that has been in place since the start of the 2015-2016 treatment season. The campaign included a well-received community engagement process that assisted QDAF’s ability to enter properties to carry out RIFA surveillance and treatments. RIFA detections ~~made through this program~~ decreased ~~with after~~ multiple visits to infested properties, demonstrating treatment efficacy.

Commented [A1]: This is incorrect, not sure what it refers to.
Commented [A2]: This is 2 different projects. 1. Working with GCCC as the area is new to the restricted area and there is a lot of development and 2. Scoping was conducted at the C’wealth Games Athlete’s Village site.

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~~Qld The Program~~ also gave a presentation on the 2016-2017 work plan. The work plan ~~aimed to shrink the infested area by treating from the outside in though application of three treatments per site of high density, disturbed and high risk areas outside the core area per year, use of surveillance, and containment and compliance measures to prevent human assisted spread is a continuation of the 2015-16 eradication plan under the framework of the approved 2013-18 Response Plan. As per the response plan the~~ 2016-2017 ~~work plan was calculated to be is~~ \$19.027 million, with \$16 million to be cost shared and \$3 million to be provided by Queensland in addition to its cost-sharing contributions ~~or an alternative source~~. Surveillance would continue to focus on ~~outside theer~~ core area, ~~s through public engagement passive surveillance~~ and use of sentinel sites, facilitating outside-in eradication. Surveillance would also focus on susceptible industries, including turf farms, new development sites and agricultural production in the Lockyer Valley. New Legislation (Biosecurity Act) would

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enter effect on 1 July, with restricted areas to be redesignated biosecurity zones. ~~The new zones used under the new legislation would also expand the area considered by the eradication program restricted area.~~ Program support was being improved through development of a new dashboard, facilitating real-time reporting of the program's progress. Queensland anticipated AGMIN approval of the NRIFAEP South-East Queensland independent review and had costed a planned ramp-up of the program, identifying areas where additional resources were needed, including additional personnel, improved information systems with field mobility, and research and implementation of upgraded remote sensing technology. Queensland also noted the need to support the South-East Queensland program through public relations, including the success of the Yarwun eradication and the role the public have played in reporting RIFA.

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WA sought clarification regarding the number of detections shown on maps distributed with the meeting papers. QLD reported that the map showed all ant nests detected between 2008 and 2016 and that ~~these nests had been successfully treated~~ all nests are treated as they are detected. QLD also noted that the area occupied by RIFA nests was the equivalent of approximately 1% of the total infested area.

VIC sought clarification as to why there was an area in the centre of the infested area with nil detections. ~~QLD The Program~~ clarified that this area was a military area, part of which was a live firing range, and that the area was covered by trees and unsuitable habitat for RIFA. QLD advised ~~there are that the programs providing had~~ ongoing engagement with the Australian Defence Forces stationed in Brisbane and Amberley, noting that ~~these programs this~~ could be improved. ~~QLD The Program~~ also noted that aerial ~~surveillance imagery was is being~~ used to monitor development works on Defence estate, which allowed targeted surveillance of at-risk habitat (disturbed areas).

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The Chair asked for information on the prevailing winds in the Amberley area, noting that if prevailing winds were westerly it could assist aerial dispersal. ~~QLD The Program~~ noted that 90% of alates are dispersed downwind of the source in the USA and that this had not been observed here, ~~with human movement seeming to be more important~~. ~~QLD The Program~~ also noted that there was evidence of RIFA dispersing independently of prevailing wind direction from the Yarwun incursion.

The Commonwealth (Environment) asked what the confidence rate was for sentinel sites and public reporting as a surveillance measure. ~~QLD The Program~~ stated that research demonstrated that ~~these methods had historically provided a detection confidence rate of 60-70% of all RIFA detections over the period 2002-2010 were on sites which had experienced some form of major site disturbance in the previous 1-3 years. Residential and industrial development and roads accounted for 78% of this disturbance. Such areas of major soil disturbance are selected as sentinel sites. Approximately 70% of all new detections of RIFA over the past several years have been made by the public.~~

The Commonwealth (Department of Agriculture Water Resources, DAWR) noted that the distribution of RIFA detections closely matched road networks in some areas and asked whether ~~QLD the Program~~ was liaising with roadworks to monitor disturbed sites and movement of roadwork plant, and the efficacy of movement controls.

QLD-The Program advised that there was a good working relationship that included consideration of roadwork plant with agencies developing road and rail networks in QLD. Regarding movement controls, QLD-the Program advised that there was good compliance and that infestations on disturbed land appeared to be due to RIFA preferentially infesting favourable habitat independently of humans. **The Commonwealth (DAWR)** also asked for the rationale on changing the buffer area from 500 metres to 100 metres around high-density infestations and clarification of the risk assessment process for treating new nests with direct nest injection. QLD-The Program advised that the buffer area was changed in 2015-16 after consultation with TACC to maximise the amount of targeted treatment to improve financial efficiency that can be applied with the current resources. It was noted that given infestations tended to be more persistent towards the centre within the core area and at that in such situations the this stage the core is more likely to be suppressed than eliminated. QLD-The Program also advised that the risk assessment process considered public safety and allowed baiting options to be used in areas of high nest density where injections are less appropriate. **The Commonwealth (DAWR)** also asked about habitat modification along main roads, such as plantings of specific plants. QLD-The Program noted that prophylactic targeted treatment baiting of disturbed areas was used to reduce the suitability of disturbed areas address this issue and that replanting options were unlikely to be of benefit.

WA asked for clarification on the relationship between RIFA detected on Defence Estate and RIFA in south-east Queensland generally. QLD-The Program advised that detections made at RAAF Amberley and Army sites in south-east Queensland were not related and that there was a close working relationship with environmental health officers, including coordination of flight operations.

NSW asked whether QLD-the Program had considered a risk creator-pays system, with Councils to require prophylactic-bait treatments to be implemented as part of the approval program for new development. QLD-The Program stated that a-is concept similar program was had been considered at a national level with no resolution. It was also, but noted that the baits necessary were not necessarily approved in Queensland for use outside the eradication program. QLD-The Program also noted the need to maintain a single regulatory body for treatment, as opposed to other countries where RIFA treatments had been de-centralised making treatments more difficult to achieve.

The Chair considered the recommendations for the NRIFEP – SEQ Agenda Paper.

- a.) That the TACC notes that the National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program in South East Queensland (SEQ Program) is on track in 2015–16 to meet the four performance indicators as set out in the SEQ Response Plan.

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The TACC noted the NRIFAEP SEQ is on track to meet the four performance indicators.

- b.) That the TACC endorses the National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program – South East Queensland 1st, 2nd and 3rd Quarter Reports for 2015–16.

The Commonwealth (DAWR) sought clarification as to why these reports were submitted for endorsement simultaneously instead of sequentially through the year. QLD-The Program clarified that the delay in distributing the reports was due to operational demands of running multiple tramp ant incursions, noting that information required for the reports was being collected on-time; that delays were associated with collating the reports, and noted that all previous reports had been submitted on-time. **The Commonwealth (DAWR)** sought further clarification regarding resource allocation, noting each response was funded separately. QLD-The Program clarified that resources were limited across the program. **SA** asked if the reporting requirements could be simplified to reduce resource cost of producing the reports. **The Chair** noted the need for timely reporting and that changes to program priorities and/or format would be appropriate and sought clarification from the TACC as to the reporting requirements. QLD-The Program noted that the timing of reports for each program were historic, noting Brisbane Airport program had six-monthly reporting requirements. **SA** suggested that the six monthly

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could be kept substantial and the quarterly reports kept to an executive summary. QLD The Program also noted that the new dashboard system, once implemented, would assist production of the reports.

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The TACC endorsed the quarterly reports and **recommended** that the quarterly reporting be maintained, with six-monthly reports to retain the current format and that intervening reports would be executive summaries only and deal with issues by exception.

c.) That the TACC endorses the work plan for 2016–17 with an indicative budget of \$19.027 million to deliver operations, as outlined in the nationally approved response plan.

The TACC endorsed the work plan.

d.) That the TACC agrees to recommend to the National Management Group continuation of the National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program in South East Queensland in 2016–17 at a cost of \$19.027 million.

Commented [A5]: My notes indicate that the Chair requested the cost be broken up into \$16.027 of NCS + \$3M

The Commonwealth (DAWR) sought clarification that the budget did not include funding the recommended ramp-up of operations. QLD The Program clarified that the budget did not consider additional costs to fund ramp-up activities.

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SA sought clarification as to the cost-shared component of the \$19.027 million funding. QLD The Program clarified that the cost shared component was \$16 million, with an additional \$3 million expected to be contributed by the QLD government, noting that if QLD did not provide the additional \$3 million that additional funding would be sought via the TACC.

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The TACC endorsed that the NRIFAEP for SE QLD continue.

e.) That the TACC agrees to recommend to the National Management Group the carry-over of unspent budget of \$642,000 from 2014–15 to 2015–16 to enable the SEQ Program to continue eradication activities.

The Commonwealth (DAWR) sought clarification as to why there was an under spend. QLD The Program stated that the underspend was due to the budget allocated to remote sensing contractors not being spent, and savings from moving premises, and that it had not been possible to spend the money due to seasonality. **The Chair** sought clarification as to whether the under spend had already been spent as part of the 2015-2016 budget. QLD The Program noted that the under spend had been considered in addition to the 2015-2016 budget but needed to clarify if the money had been used to make up the shortfall in funding from WA. **The Chair** noted that additional information was needed from NMG to consider whether the unspent money could be rolled over into the future budget.

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The TACC noted that an out-of-session paper to NMG would be provided by QLD the Program, containing detail on the budget underspend for NRIFAEP, with the NMG secretariat to seek advice on governance regarding carry over of unspent budget, and that approval to carry over the budget underspend was **not agreed**.

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5. National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program – Brisbane Airport

The Chair considered the recommendations of the NRIFAEP – Brisbane Airport Agenda paper:

- a) That the TACC endorses the revised Brisbane Airport (2015) Response Plan (Attachment A) to include the provision of in-kind support from the Commonwealth as requested by the National Biosecurity Management Group (NBMG), with an indicative maximum cost-shared budget of \$914,240.

The Chair sought clarification as to why the response plan needed endorsement, as it was his understanding it had been agreed. ~~QLD-The Program~~ stated that while the Response Plan was endorsed, there was confusion surrounding the funding, as it was QLD's understanding that the budget could change if the Commonwealth was able to contribute in-kind resources. The Commonwealth stated that its understanding was that the Response Plan was agreed with a maximum budget amount allocated to it, and that an agreement had been made that the Commonwealth would seek to contribute resources to the program if possible, but that the Response Plan was not contingent on the Commonwealth providing resources. The Commonwealth also noted that the revised Response Plan had not been received and was unclear between the original and amended plans. ~~QLD-The Program~~ stated that it had been provided a week previously¹ and that no additional funding was being sought, with only minor amendments. The Chair proposed that the revised Response Plan be considered out of session.

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The Commonwealth noted that text in the NRIFAEP-SE QLD work plan included text to the effect that the NRIFAEP – Brisbane Airport is contingent on NRIFAEP - SE QLD. The Commonwealth stated that the response

¹ The TACC secretariat's records were reviewed independently and it was found an amended Response Plan for NRIFAEP – Brisbane Airport had not been received.

programs were separate and not contingent on each other, and did not note the contingency of the Response Plans. **The Chair** proposed that QLD and the Commonwealth discuss this text out of session.

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The Commonwealth also requested that detail for eligible costs for the NRIFAEP – Brisbane Airport program were not as clear as the Yarwun response program, and noted that monthly reports requested by the Commonwealth for the NRIFAEP – Brisbane Airport program had not been received. **QLD The Program** stated that it was unclear what information was needed by the Commonwealth and that it was not clear until March that the Commonwealth is the Combat jurisdiction, and that the content of the monthly reports would be clarified bilaterally out of session. The Commonwealth also noted that investigation into what resources could be provided to the NRIFAEP – Brisbane Airport program were being finalised, which was noted by **QLD the Program**.

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The Commonwealth (Environment) asked for clarification for progress of the Brisbane Airport program, noting there had been delays in application of treatments. **QLD The Program** clarified that treatment times can be shortened to 8 weeks but noted 10-12 weeks is desirable, and that progress would depend on ground temperatures. **QLD The Program** noted that the current warm weather supported continuing treatments and that the situation would be monitored, that there had been prophylactic treatments applied and community engagement. **The Chair** sought clarification in how confident the approach was, with **QLD the Program** affirming the response was appropriate.

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The Chair also noted the need for more timely discussion with TACC issues, noting that this incident regarded a new genetic strain of RIFA that had implications for the NRIFAEP – SE QLD response. **QLD** noted the Response Plan had been developed and delivered within two weeks and also noted that resourcing issues had affected been underestimated for the compliance efforts required for this response.

Commented [A13]: I'm not quite sure this is exactly what Sarah said. I wrote down "compliance had been underdone in the plan". My notes show, "resourcing was tight/difficult but that compliance was completed anyway".

The Commonwealth suggested that the provision of Commonwealth Staff may provide an opportunity for **QLD the Program** to rebalance the response budget, noting that the Commonwealth resources could assist compliance activities by preventing the need to re-deploy staff. **QLD The Program** clarified that the budget was an up-to budget but noted there could be savings from the in-kind support and accommodation provided by the Commonwealth. **The Chair** suggested that this issue could be considered out-of-session with consideration of the amended Response Plan.

The Chair noted that there had been challenges with the multi-jurisdiction response and acknowledged the rapid response by QLD, and that the expertise available for a rapid and predictable response was valued.

The Chair proposed that the recommendations made in the NRIFAEP – Brisbane Airport Agenda Paper be amended so that the TACC:

- a.) Notes the progress of the response at Brisbane airport and that re-scheduling of operations will not compromise the success of the response.

The TACC supported the Chair's amended recommendation and **noted** progress of the eradication at Brisbane airport and that re-scheduling of operations did not compromise the success of the incident.

- b.) Notes the NFIRAEP – Brisbane Airport Response Plan has been adjusted and will be considered out of session.

The TACC supported the Chair's amended recommendation and **noted** the NFIRAEP – Brisbane Airport Response Plan has been adjusted and will be considered out of session.

- c.) Notes the Commonwealth has identified resources that could potentially be deployed to the NRIFAEP – Brisbane airport response and are working with QLD to resource the eradication.

The TACC supported the Chair's amended recommendation and **noted** the Commonwealth has identified resources that could potentially be deployed to the NRIFAEP – Brisbane airport response and was working with QLD to resource the eradication.

d.) Endorses the format of the six-monthly report, which follows the report format of the Yarwun response plan.

The TACC supported the Chair's amended recommendation and endorses the format of the six-monthly report, which follows the report format of the Yarwun response plan.

6. Summary of TACC Actions and Outcomes

Independent Review of the National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program (NRIFAEP)

The TACC:

NOTED the presentation by the Chair of the Independent Review Panel.

SUPPORTED of the Review's findings in their entirety.

National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program in South East Queensland (NRIFAEP – SEQ)

The TACC:

NOTED that the NRIFAEP SEQ is on track in 2015–16 to meet the four performance indicators as set out in the SEQ Response Plan.

ENDORSED the NRIFAEP SEQ 1st, 2nd and 3rd Quarter Reports for 2015–16.

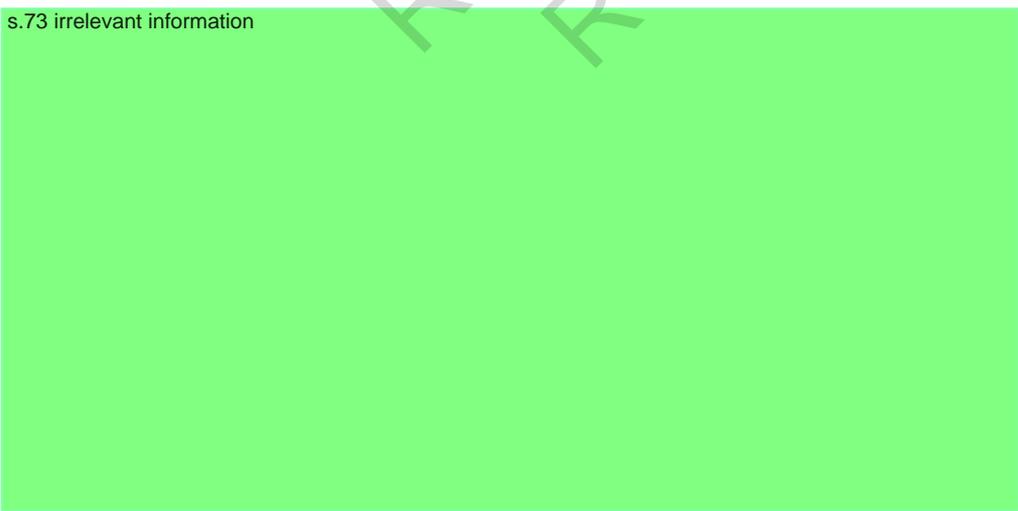
ENDORSED the work plan for 2016–17 with a total indicative budget of \$19.027 million (\$16 million cost shared, \$3 million from Queensland Government or an alternative source) to deliver operations, as outlined in the nationally approved Response Plan.

AGREED to a new format for future reports, with six monthly reports to retain the current format and quarterly reports to focus on exceptions to the work plan for brevity.

ENDORSED a recommendation to the National Management Group (NMG) for continuing the NRIFAEP SEQ in 2016–17 at total cost of \$19.027 million (\$16 million cost shared, \$3 million from the Queensland Government or an alternative source).

NOTED Queensland The Program will provide a paper out of session providing detail of the proposal to roll-over and use the 2014–15 budget underspend, with NMG Secretariat to provide governance advice for the proposal.

s.73 irrelevant information



s.73 irrelevant information

Commented [A14]: Needs to be qualified – relatively or for a time – as they become very conspicuous when they start stinging.

Commented [A15]: Or some other qualification

NRIFAEP – Brisbane Airport

The TACC:

NOTED progress of the response and that rescheduling of operations will not compromise the success of the program.

NOTED that the Response Plan has been revised and will be considered out-of-session.

NOTED that the Commonwealth is working with Queensland to make resources available to the [SEQ-Brisbane Airport](#) program.

ENDORSED the format of the six-monthly report, which was based on the Yarwun report format.

	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	DUE DATE	PROGRESS
1	Explore ways to engage other agencies, including the Department of Health and other agencies , in emergency responses where there are on-going risks to human health, agriculture, environment and social amenities.	Chair and TACC Secretariat	Prior to next TACC meeting	In progress
2	Provide an executive summary only in future NRIFAEP SEQ quarterly reports.	Queensland	ASAP end of first quarter 2016/17 .	On-going
3	Provide an out-of-session paper containing a detailed proposal to roll-over and use the 2014–2015 budget underspend	Queensland	ASAP	In progress
4	NMG Secretariat to provide advice on governance relating to the proposal from Queensland to use under-spent money in the NRIFAEP SEQ budget.	NMG Secretariat	ASAP following receipt of out-of-session paper from Queensland	In progress
5	Provide advice on the governance regarding Action item 3 above.	NMG Secretariat	15 May 2016	In progress
6	Provide TACC with updates regarding development of the First Points of Entry Surveillance Policy and its implementation.	Commonwealth	Next TACC meeting	In progress
7	Provide TACC Secretariat with the revised Brisbane Airport RIFA Response Plan to circulate.	Queensland	ASAP 6 May 2016	In progress
8	s.73 irrelevant information			

Commented [A16]: Isn't this the same as 4 above?

s.73 irrelevant information

9

s.73 irrelevant information

7. Suggested advice/recommendations to NMG

The NMG agenda paper arising from this meeting will be drafted and endorsed out-of-session by the TACC and provided to the NMG.

8. Other business

QLD sought clarification from the Commonwealth regarding surveillance activities that could be undertaken at the Port of Brisbane, as it had been identified as a potential weak point and that the Commonwealth would take the lead in working with the Port of Brisbane on surveillance. **The Chair** noted that a draft policy was being developed regarding surveillance at first ports of call that considered tramp ants in addition to other pests and was funded through the Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper. **The Commonwealth** noted surveillance activities for tramp ants were being performed but that activities had been limited in the previous 6-12 months due to resourcing. **The Commonwealth** agreed to provide an update regarding port surveillance policy development to the TACC, with QLD noting the utility of this work to support proof of freedom for NRIFAEP programs.

The Commonwealth provided a summary of discussions regarding the National tramp ant plan at a National Biosecurity Committee meeting a week previous. The NBC was concerned regarding the number of recent tramp ant incursions and raised questions regarding surveillance required to establish proof of freedom for the NRIFAEP – Port Botany response. The NBC proposed using a national surveillance plan that considered early detection, delimiting and proof of freedom requirements. The NBC noted QLD held the key capacity for such activities and that this would benefit Australia in providing response to tramp ant incidents. The NBC also noted the need for engagement with industries associated with high risk tramp ant pathways and the need for preparedness allowing better early detection of tramp ants. **The Commonwealth** suggested that the TACC would be an appropriate committee to consider recommendations on tramp ant preparedness and surveillance to NBC and offered to take the lead on providing any information for TACC consideration.

9. Next meeting

No date was set for the next meeting.

10. Close

The meeting was closed at 2:30 pm (AEST).

Tramp Ant Consultative Committee

Meeting No. 27

AGENDA

Thursday, 18th August 2016

Time: 1100–1215 (AEST)

Time	Item	Presenter
1100-1105	1. Opening <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome/meeting protocol• Confirmation of agenda	Chair
1105-1120 1120-1145	2. s.73 irrelevant information	
1145-1155	3. NRIFAEP Yarwun <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Declaration of freedom	Sarah Corcoran
1155-1200	4. Suggested advice/recommendations to NBMG	Chair
1200-1205	5. Other business	Chair
1205-1215	6. Summary of TACC outcomes and actions	Chair

Tramp Ant Consultative Committee (TACC)

Teleconference No. 27

Final Minutes

18 August 2016

Attendees

TACC Representatives		
Name	Organisation	Party
Deb Langford (Chair)	Department of Agriculture and Water Resources	C'wealth
John Gray	Department of Agriculture and Water Resources	C'wealth
Julie Quinn	Department of Environment	C'wealth
Scott Charlton	Department of Primary Industries	NSW
Nigel Ainsworth	Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources	VIC
Sarah Corcoran	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	QLD
Geoff Raven	Department of Primary Industries and Regions	SA
Marc Widmer	Department of Agriculture and Food	WA
Lionel Hill	Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water & Environment	TAS
Leonie Cooper	Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries	NT
Alison McInnes	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate	ACT
TACC Secretariat		
Kerry Scarlett	Department of Agriculture and Water Resources	C'wealth
Veronica Lee		
Observers		
Chris Clowes	Department of Agriculture and Water Resources	C'wealth
Darren Peck		
Heather Leeson	Department of Agriculture and Fisheries	QLD
Gary Morton		
John Robertson		
Geoff Kent		
Brian Thistleton	Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries	NT
Apologies		
Mark Ramsay	Department of Primary Industries and Regions	SA
Julie Quinn	Department of Environment	C'wealth
Ben Hoffman	CSIRO	CSIRO

1. Opening of Meeting

Welcome and roll call

The Chair opened the meeting at 11:00 am AEST. Participants were welcomed and names were recorded.

Confidentiality requirement

Participants were reminded that proceedings are to remain confidential, and that proceedings are recorded for minute taking purposes. No conflict of interest was declared.

Papers distributed prior to the meeting:

- Agenda
- s.73 irrelevant information
- [REDACTED]

Purpose of the meeting

The purpose of this meeting is to:

- s.73 irrelevant information
- [REDACTED]
- receive an National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Programme (NRIFAEP) update – Yarwun declaration of freedom.

s.73 irrelevant information

[REDACTED]

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RTI Act 2009

The Chair sought an update from QLD on the NRIFAEP, Yarwun.

- The final round of surveillance was completed in June 2016 with no detections.
- All activities have been reported via quarterly reports and the 2015–2016 annual report which was distributed to TACC members.
- A media event will be planned announcing area freedom. Restricted area requirements will be removed.

The Chair sought comments from TACC member's on the NRIFAEP, Yarwun update.

- **The Commonwealth** asked whether a joint media release would be appropriate.
 - QLD agreed a joint media release would be beneficial and will provide their draft media release for the Commonwealth to consider.
- **TACC members** all congratulated QLD on the success of the NRIFAEP in Yarwun.

3. Discussions/Conclusions of TACC

ACTIONS

1. s.73 irrelevant information
2. Update the NMG paper to reflect the changes outlined above and provide the paper to the NMG for consideration.
3. s.73 irrelevant information
4. Coordinate a joint media release on the eradication of red imported fire ant from Yarwun, Queensland.

OUTCOMES

That the TACC:

s.73 irrelevant information

AGREED that a five year nationally cost-shared response plan should be drafted.

s.73 irrelevant information

NOTED that Queensland have commenced discussions with a research ecologist, Dean Anderson, from Landcare New Zealand, to analyse and model data collected by the programme to assist with predicting when eradication might be achieved.

s.73 irrelevant information

AGREED to provide the paper to the NMG for consideration, with the following minor adjustments to be included:

- s.73 irrelevant information
- additional information added to the background section regarding the success of the programme to-date
- timelines for the completion of the modelling work (estimated at mid-October) and the development of a five year response plan
- point 1g) re-worded to 'that modelling costs, up to \$50 000, be cost-shared between contributing jurisdictions.'

NOTED the update from Queensland regarding the NRIFAEP, Yarwun, including that the final round of surveillance was completed with no detections and a media event will be held to announce the eradication of red imported fire ant from Yarwun.

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4. Suggested advice/recommendations to NMG

That the NMG:

NOTES the following:

- s.73 irrelevant information
- that Queensland has ensured that the goal of eradication is not compromised, while a decision on the national cost-shared programme is being made, by funding existing staff levels until 31 December 2016;
- s.73 irrelevant information

AGREES to the following:

- s.73 irrelevant information
- the preparation of a response plan for up to five years (until 30 June 2021) for consideration by the NMG;
- that eradication modelling be undertaken and the results incorporated into the proposed response plan;
- that NMG be asked to consider cost-sharing of modelling costs, up to \$50 000, by contributing jurisdictions;
- to consider the response plan when it is fully developed.

5. Other business

There was no other business.

6. Next meeting

TACC agreed that its next meeting should be held when required.

8. Close

Meeting closed at 11:55 am AEST.

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