

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Opening of meeting</b>
	The meeting was opened by Chair, Mayor Liz Schmidt, at 1.01pm
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Attendance &amp; Apologies</b>
	<p><b>Attendance:</b></p> <p><b>Council:</b> Mayor Liz Schmidt Cr Kim Farmer Cr Steven Plant TJ Laveti, Executive Manager Infrastructure Services Rowan Corney, Acting Manager Operations Dan Evans, Manager Saleyards Mic Langburne, Environmental Services Coordinator Kathleen Morris, Acting Executive Services Manager (A/ESM) (Minute Taker)</p> <p><b>Representatives:</b> Patrick Scharf (MS Teams)</p> <p><b>Invited Guests:</b> Dr Heather Scott, Gold City Dental Cormac Farrell, Director of EPBC Implementation Sharyn Anisset, Engagement Officer, National Electric Ant Eradication Program Geldof Burns, Engagement Officer</p> <p><b>Apologies:</b> Martin Drydale, Acting Chief Executive Officer Andrew &amp; Toni Bourke Blair Knuth Carl Martel Jenny Black John Brownson Judith Costello Kate Andison Kylie Stretton Liz Miller Neil Angus Connal Burslem, Senior Policy Officer, DCCEEW Peta Ross, Assistant Director Environment &amp; Sustainability (Defence)</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Confirmation of minutes</b>
	Moved: Cr Farmer Seconded: Patrick Scharf
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Declarations of interest</b>
	Nil
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Actions</b>
	As per the attached table
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Matters of discussion</b>
<b>6.1</b>	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b>
<b>6.2</b>	<b>Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water Update</b> Presentation by Cormac Farrell, Director of EPBC Implementation
<b>6.3</b>	<b>Invasive ants – Biosecurity Queensland</b> Presentation by Sharyn Anisset, Engagement Officer, National Electric Ant Eradication Program and Geldof Burns, Engagement Officer

<p><b>6.4</b></p>	<p><b>Council Environment Update</b> Mic Langburne, Environmental Coordinator</p> <p>1080 Baiting program - Concluded</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wild dogs: Charged 5.18 tonne of 20,750 baits</li> <li>- Feral Pigs: Charged 3.31 tonnes or 6,620 baits</li> </ul> <p>Weeds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1 week spraying in Hervey Range: Including giant rat tail grass</li> <li>- Anabranche has been sprayed for Bellyache and Castor Oil, no siam found</li> <li>- Investigations and spray of Siam at Big Bend</li> <li>- Keel bottom reserve sprayed for Siam and Lantana (Noticeable through Defence Land)</li> <li>- Cusack Creek reserve sprayed for Siam weed, no spread identified.</li> </ul> <p>Deer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Letter of support sent for controlled deer shoot in upper Burdekin Region</li> </ul> <p>The trapping program started</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Siam weed was discovered, and stopped</li> </ul>
<p><b>6.5</b></p>	<p><b>DRFA update</b> Rowan Corney, Acting Manager Operations</p> <p>Package Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3 remaining in negotiations</li> <li>- Carry over packages completion expected mid-July</li> </ul>
<p><b>6.6</b></p>	<p><b>Grid Compliance</b> Rowan Corney, Acting Manager Operations</p> <p>Currently undertaking the bi-annual grid inspection program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 50% through the program</li> <li>- Compliance notices issued to landholders</li> </ul> <p><b>Standard drawings are available on the website</b></p>
<p><b>6.7</b></p>	<p><b>Saleyards Update</b> Dan Evans, Saleyards Manager</p> <p>Points for discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 4 Sales through May with over 9,000 head of cattle</li> <li>- Livestock Standstill Biosecurity Plan Draft to review</li> <li>- Funding and Grants Opportunity for Loading Ramps</li> <li>- 2 sales per week (June)</li> <li>- Highlights from the Market Report</li> <li>- <a href="#">Liveweight Market Reports   Charters Towers Regional Council</a></li> <li>- Recent events at the Equestrian Centre were well supported</li> <li>- Cattle Exports update on recent ships</li> </ul> <p>Campdraft Arena</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Beef Producers left the arena in a good state</li> <li>- Agreement to return the arena to the state it was received in</li> </ul> <p>Rodeo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Confirming no sale on the Friday before</li> </ul>
<p><b>7.0</b></p>	<p><b>General Business</b></p>

<b>8.0</b>	<b>Next Meeting</b>
	As per the schedule
<b>9.0</b>	<b>Close of Meeting</b>
	There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 2.47pm

UNCONFIRMED

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Australian Government

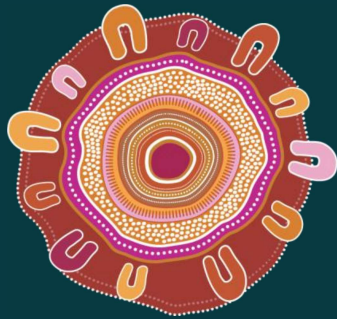
Department of Climate Change, Energy,  
the Environment and Water

# Introduction to environment approvals and continuing use exemptions under the EPBC Act

Cormac Farrell

09/06/2026





## Acknowledgment of Country

Our department recognises the First Peoples of this nation and their ongoing connection to culture and country. We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Peoples as the Traditional Owners, Custodians and Lore Keepers of the world's oldest living culture and pay respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

# Content

- Continuing use exemption amendments – starting with some case studies
- Overview of EPBC Act Reform
- The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*
- Environment impact assessment and approval process
- Tools and resources



# Environment Protection Reform Bill 2025

Environment Protection Reform Bills were passed by the Australian Parliament on Friday 28 November 2025.

These reforms deliver:

- Stronger environmental protection and restoration.
- More efficient and robust project assessments.
- Greater accountability and transparency in decision making.

The changes to continuing use for land clearing took effect immediately. Other parts will activate in tranches during the course of 2026.

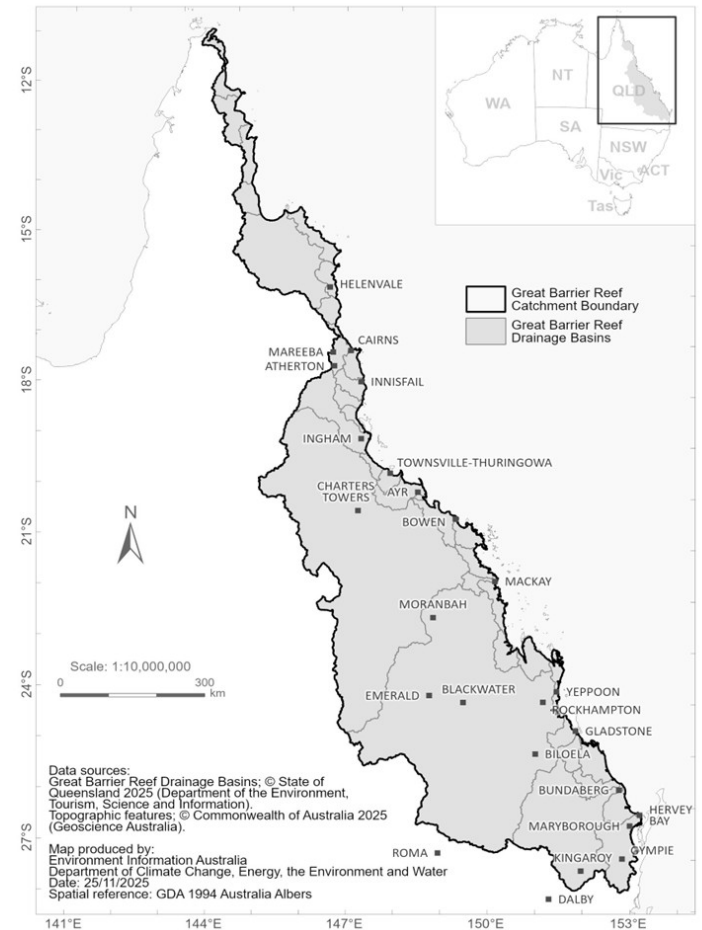
# New provision

A) Not exempt if clearing vegetation within **50 metres** of:

- A watercourse (Water Act 2007 definition),
- A wetland,
- A drainage line in the Great Barrier Reef catchment area.

**Great Barrier Reef Catchment** refers to all river basins that drain into the Great Barrier Reef, as defined in the Queensland Government dataset titled Great Barrier Reef catchment and river basins (scale 1:100,000, dated 5 May 2018).

- The 50 m buffer zone is common for riparian area/streambank vegetation and is consistent with established Queensland Government and Reef 2050 protection standards.
- We will update significant impact guidelines, to help guide when a referral under the EPBC Act is needed and to make clear that clearing of things like weeds and invasive species is not related.



# New provision

## B) Not exempt if:

- Clearing vegetation on land (anywhere in Australia) uncleared for **15+ years**, and
- Action is **not** a forestry operation.

**Forestry operations** are commercial activities that include planting trees, managing them before harvest, and harvesting forest products such as live or dead trees, shrubs, or ferns. These operations also cover related land clearing, land preparation, regeneration (including burning), and transport activities.

- This amendment does not result in a ban on the clearing activities listed.
- Not being covered by the exemption doesn't mean that the activity can't go ahead - it means if it is likely to be a significant impact, it will need to undergo assessment to proceed.
- The exemption largely remains in place. However, it is difficult to justify a land management activity which involves regular clearing as 'continuous' if the trees have now been in place for 15 years.

## What this means

- This is not a ban on land clearing.
- Landholders can continue pre-2000 land use if it remains unchanged in nature and scale.
- Clearing vegetation near watercourses, wetlands, or drainage lines in the GBR catchment will require assessment and approval if it is going to, or is likely to, have a significant impact on MNES.
- Clearing land that has been uncleared for 15+ years is not exempt and will require **assessment and approval** if it is going to, or is likely to, have a significant impact on Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES).

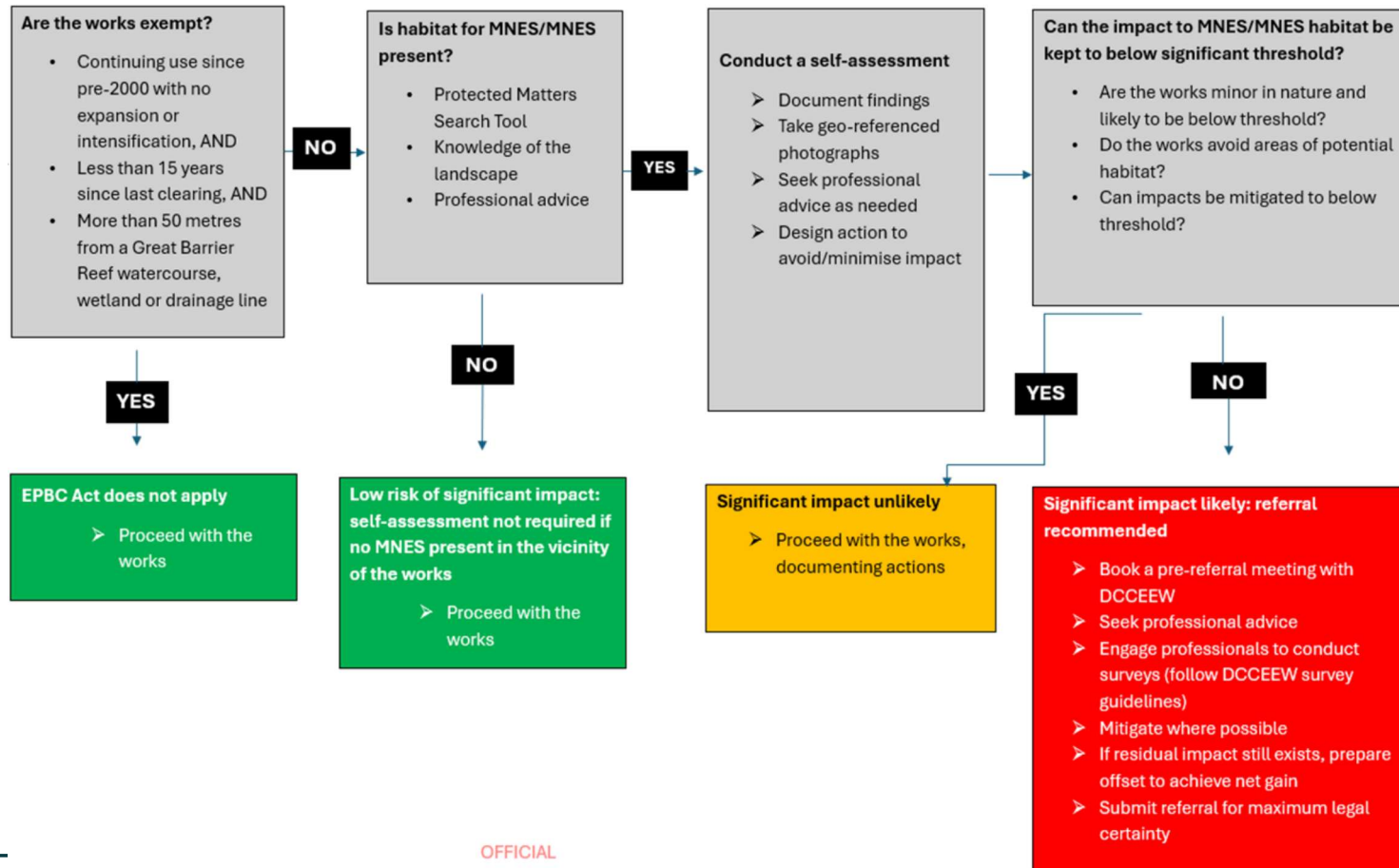
We are continuing to work with industry peak bodies to develop better guidance on when farmers should refer their activities.



There is the potential for new sources of income if landholders retain vegetation, including retaining trees younger than 15 years old.

For example, an *Enhancing Native Vegetation* method under the Nature Repair Market is currently under development and expected to be available this year.

# How this works in practice



# Agricultural exemption example scenarios

To help explain how agricultural exemptions may apply, we've developed a series of fictional example scenarios. These examples reflect common situations and show how the rules may work in practice.

Explore the case studies to:

- understand agricultural exemptions
- learn what they cover
- identify when approval may still be required.

 <p><b>Minor repairs to farm infrastructure</b></p> <p>CASE STUDY EPBC ACT</p> <p>25 May 2026</p> <p>&gt;</p>	 <p><b>Fencing for grazing management</b></p> <p>CASE STUDY EPBC ACT</p> <p>25 May 2026</p> <p>&gt;</p>	 <p><b>Installing polyethylene pipe for water security</b></p> <p>CASE STUDY EPBC ACT</p> <p>25 May 2026</p> <p>&gt;</p>
 <p><b>Firebreak renewal for bushfire season</b></p> <p>CASE STUDY EPBC ACT</p> <p>25 May 2026</p> <p>&gt;</p>	 <p><b>Internal road maintenance</b></p> <p>CASE STUDY EPBC ACT</p> <p>25 May 2026</p> <p>&gt;</p>	 <p><b>Invasive weed control near a waterway</b></p> <p>CASE STUDY EPBC ACT</p> <p>25 May 2026</p> <p>&gt;</p>

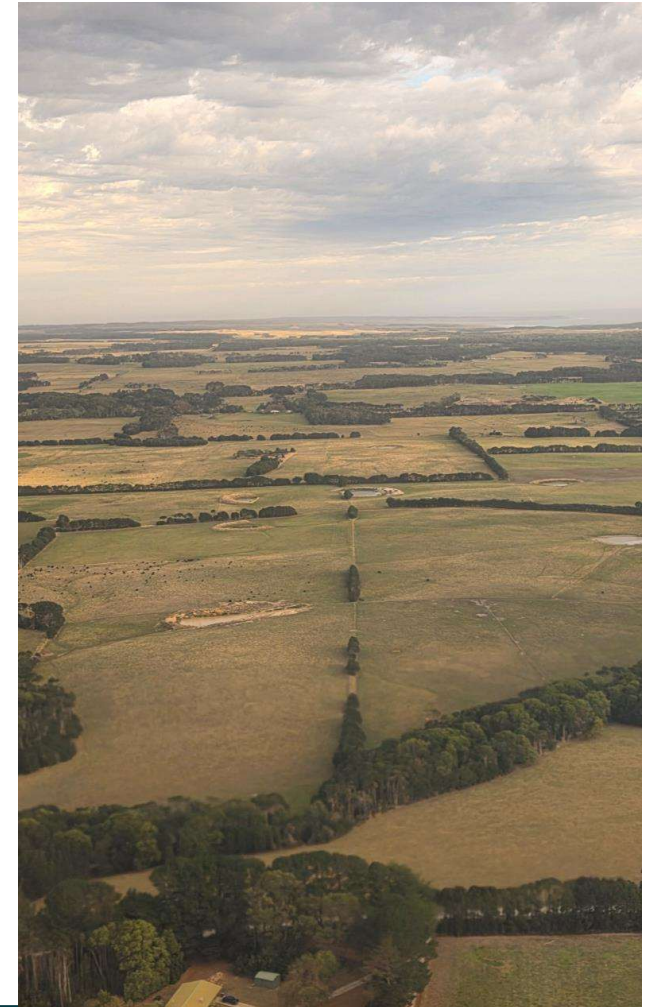
## Let's start with some case studies:

### Minor repairs to farm infrastructure

- A cattle producer in Central Queensland needs to repair a small machinery shed and a fenceline that was damaged during a storm. The shed is located within the existing agricultural footprint.
- The storm also damaged nearby trees. Some of these are unstable and pose a safety risk, therefore they need to be removed. The trees are a common species in the region and do not contain hollows that would provide habitat for wildlife.

### No EPBC Act referral is required.

- The proposed activities are limited to routine maintenance within an existing disturbed area and do not involve new clearing, land use change or impacts on Matters of National Environmental Significance. Because the work does not expand the footprint or create new environmental risks, it is considered a routine farm activity.





### **Maintenance of internal roads and firebreaks**

- A pastoral enterprise grades an existing internal track to improve safety and erosion control, and adjacent vegetation is slashed to provide defensible space for bushfire.
- Work occurs on disturbed surfaces and areas that were previously slashed.
- As this is an existing road and there will be no new vegetation disturbance, likely no EPBC referral required as the work does not alter land use or impact MNES.
- De-silting catch drains, box culverts and other erosion control infrastructure would also be considered a continuation of existing use.

### **When an EPBC Act referral might be required:**

- Significant widening (requiring remnant vegetation clearance) and development of new extensions to the internal road network, or cutting new firebreaks through remnant vegetation would not be a continuation of use, and should be subject to a self-assessment.



## Invasive Weed Control

- A farmer plans to apply chemical treatment to declared invasive weeds along a narrow corridor near a waterway.
- Clearing and treatment of weeds is undertaken in a way that ensures no runoff into the waterway, and groundcover is re-established quickly to minimize sediment.
- If MNES are present and will be impacted by the chemical treatment, an EPBC referral may still be required.
- If after a self-assessment the landowner believes that significant impacts on MNES are unlikely, the treatment can proceed without approval. PMST searches, photos and other evidence should be retained.

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### **Routine Adjustments to existing farmed areas**

- A grazing enterprise shifts from fixed stocking rates to rotational grazing to improve pasture health.
- The same would apply to established cropping areas where these are not being expanded
- Changes in management within each system may affect water quality (nutrients/sediment), bank stability, or vegetation, which can degrade ecological character.
- Continues to be exempt from EPBC Act where the activity stays within existing areas, and does not include conversion of listed native grassland ecological communities to exotic pasture or cropping.

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## Roadworks and Transport Infrastructure

A council has maintained a rural road since the 1980s including managing regrowth on the road verges. It now plans to widen the road to accommodate increased traffic from new subdivisions.

Widening is an expansion of the footprint and may affect listed species habitat or increase sediment runoff into GBR catchments.

### **EPBC Act referral may be required.**

A self-assessment is needed to determine whether the widening is likely to have a significant impact on MNES. If impacts are possible, the council may need to refer the action to the Commonwealth.



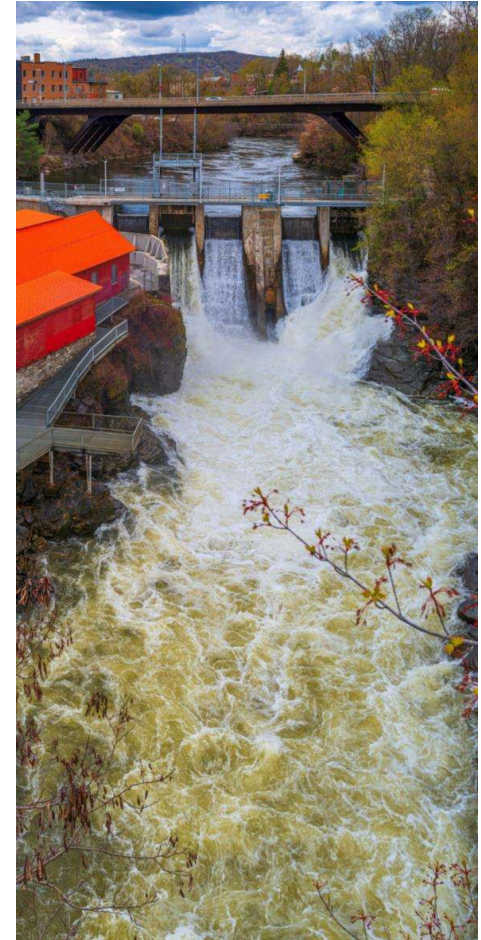
## Stormwater expansion

A stormwater network built in the 1990s is being upgraded to service new residential areas. The upgrade will increase the volume and speed of runoff entering waterways. Maintaining the existing system without intensification or change is exempt under continuing use, however increasing the flow would require a check for significant impacts.

Increased flows out of the stormwater system may impact nationally protected matters downstream, such as the GBR.

### **EPBC Act referral likely to be required.**

A self-assessment is needed to determine whether the expansion is likely to have a significant impact on MNES. If impacts are possible and cannot be avoided or mitigated in anyway, the council may need to refer the action to the Commonwealth.



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## Agricultural land use:

A landholder has grazed cattle on a property since the 1970s. They now apply to council for approval to clear additional woodland for improved pasture.

Although the grazing is exempt, attempting to clear new pastures is not exempt from the EPBC Act. There is now also an exemption test within 50m of a drainage line in the GBR catchment.

### **EPBC Act self-assessment is required.**

A self-assessment is needed to determine whether the new clearing is likely to have a significant impact on MNES. If impacts are possible and cannot be avoided or mitigated in anyway, the council should recommend that the landholder refer the action to the Commonwealth. This may be the case even if the clearing is allowable under state legislation.

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## ***The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)***

We are responsible for the administration of environment referrals, assessments and approvals under the EPBC Act.

- Australia's national environment law.
- Protects nationally significant animals, plants, habitats and places.
- Ensures potential negative impacts on nationally protected matters are considered before changes in land use or new developments are approved.



New Holland Mouse (*Pseudomys novaehollandiae*) listed as *vulnerable* under the EPBC Act ©Doug Beckers

## Nationally protected matters regulated by the EPBC Act

- Nine Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES)
- Actions on Commonwealth land or by Commonwealth agencies acting overseas



Threatened species  
& ecological  
communities



Migratory  
species



Ramsar wetlands



National  
Heritage places



World Heritage  
properties



Commonwealth  
Marine Area



Protection of the  
environment from  
Nuclear actions



Great Barrier  
Reef Marine Park



Protection of Water Resources  
(CSG, large coal mines & all  
types of unconventional gas)

## Potential impacts

Potential impacts will depend on several factors, for example:

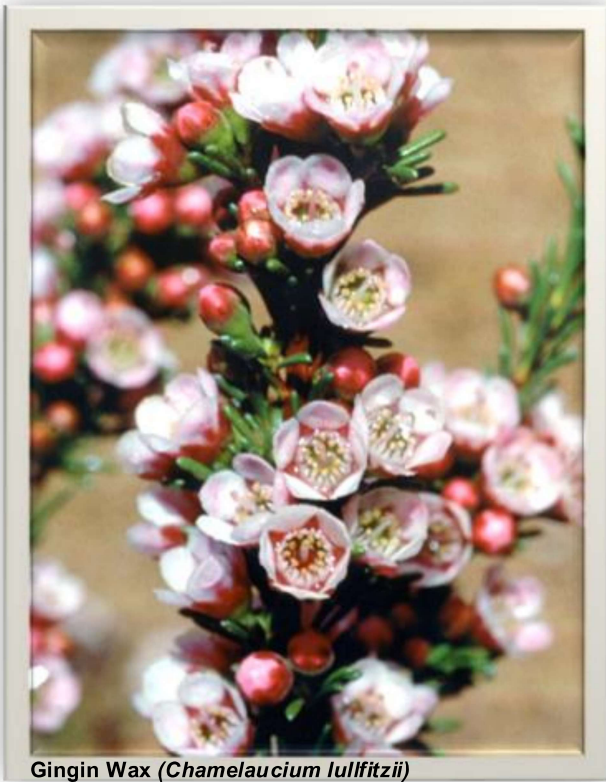
- nature of the project
- scale of the project
- intensity of the project
- duration and frequency of operations
- environment's sensitivity, quality, size and habitat connectivity in the project area

Importantly, you must consider what avoidance and mitigation measures can be included in the proposed project to reduce potential impacts to the environment.



Eastern Curlew (*Numenius madagascariensis*)

## Self-assessment



Use our free tools and resources (discussed later) for self-assessment.

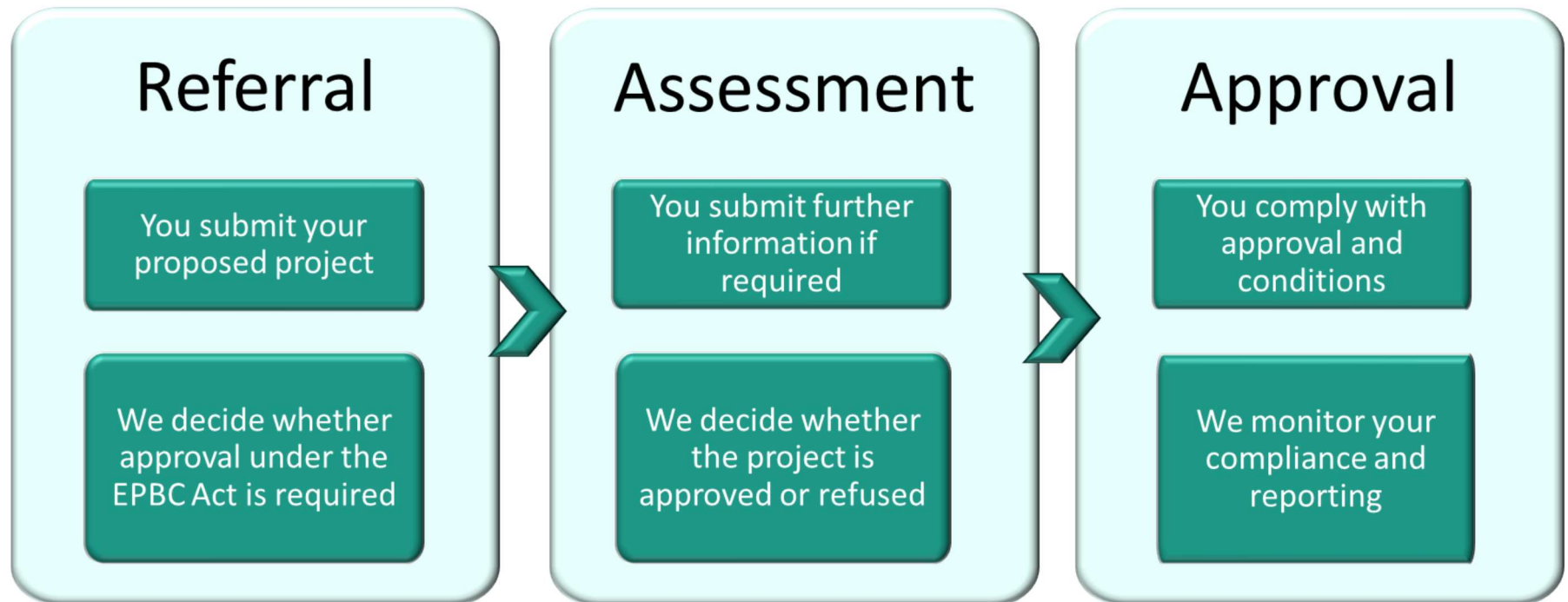
Seek professional assistance by:

- hiring a professional environmental consultant
- arranging a pre-referral meeting with us – you can book a time to discuss your project with a departmental officer to ensure you understand the process and what you will need to provide.

Consider how you can avoid/mitigate potential impacts.

Refer your project to us.

## EPBC Act referral and assessment process



## State Legislation and its interaction with the EPBC Act

### Planning Act 2016 (Qld)

- The Planning Act does not assess nationally protected matters; it assesses state interests.

### Vegetation Management Act 1999 (Qld)

- Clearing that is lawful under the VMA may still require EPBC referral if nationally protected matters are affected.

### Nature Conservation Act 1992 (Qld)

- State-listed species may differ from EPBC-listed species.

### Environmental Protection Act 1994 (Qld)

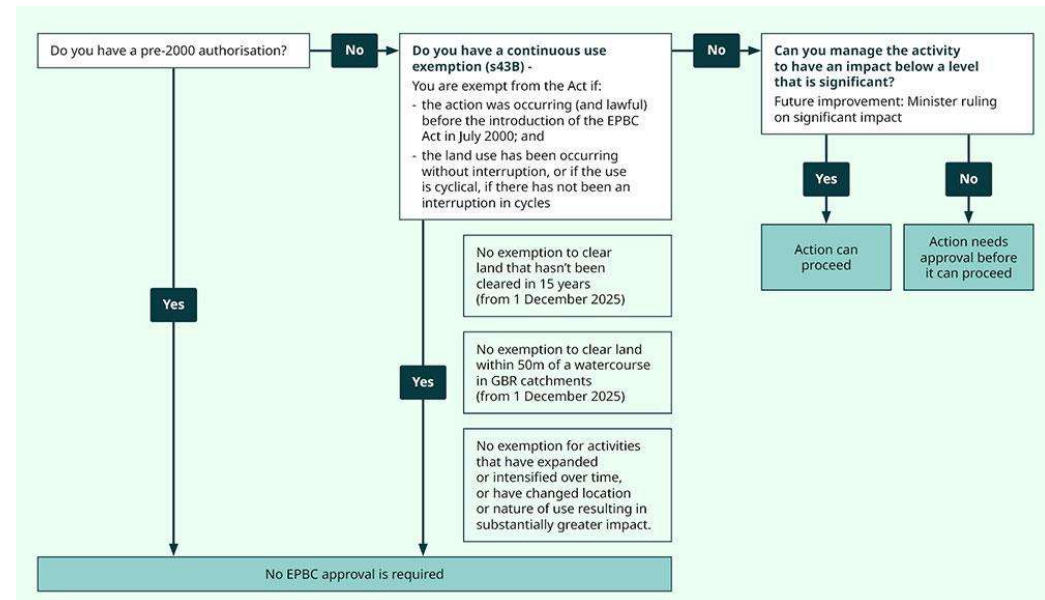
- ERAs may require state environmental authorities but can still trigger EPBC referral for nationally protected matter impacts (e.g., runoff affecting the Great Barrier Reef).

### Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003 and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2003

- EPBC Act separately protects National and World Heritage places.

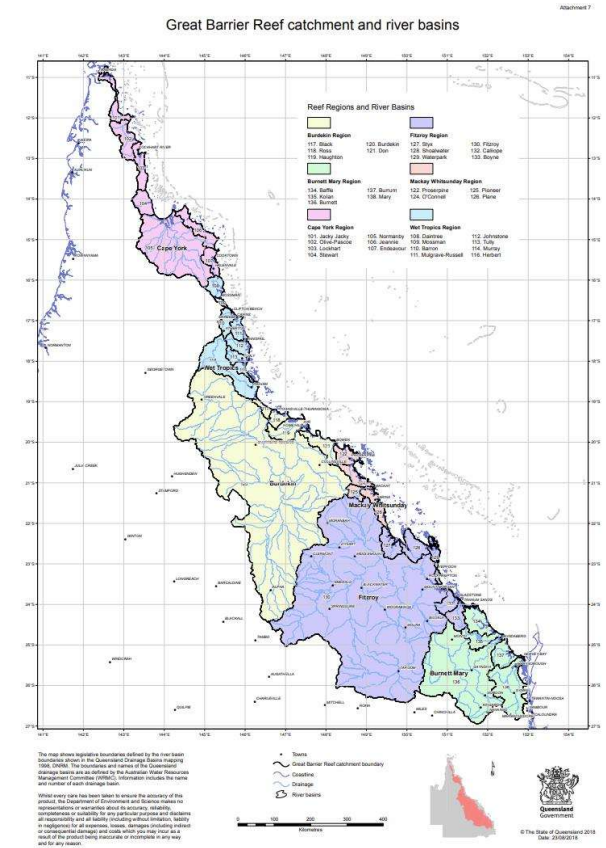
# Exemptions website & contact centre

- Website has included input and questions from AgForce and others
- Contact centre has received over 260 calls and emails from landowners, which are receiving a follow-up support from experienced assessment managers
- Most landowners have already conducted a Protected Matters search before calling, confirming their understanding with us.
- Will continue to work with you on draft FAQ's, and use this to update our website



# QLD Globe Definition – drainage lines

- Confirm that the property is within the catchment of the Great Barrier Reef (map linked on the agricultural exemptions webpage).
- PMAV Mapping of Category R does not appear to cover all drainage lines
- Within Queensland Globe to go Topics > Natural Resources > Vegetation Management to add PMAV layers to your view
  - Visit the [Watercourse Identification map](#) (creates a new layer on QLD Globe) on the Business QLD page to show watercourses.
- Drainage lines under the Queensland *Water Act 2000* will be displayed as blue and orange lines, clearance within 50 metres of these is no longer exempt.
- DCCEEW has adopted the definition of a ‘drainage feature’ used by Queensland regulators to align with the framework that has been in place for some time.



## Tools and Resources

### EPBC Act overview

Watch the [EPBC Act](#) video.

### Determine if you may have an impact on nationally protected matters

Read the step-by-step guide and watch our videos about the [referrals and environmental assessments under the EPBC Act](#).

### Continuing use exemption changes

Read about [updates to agricultural use exemptions under the EPBC Act](#).

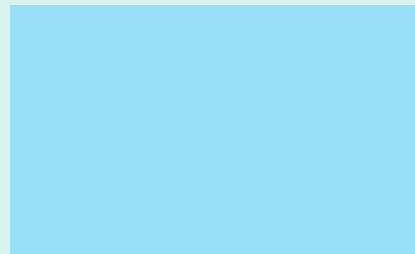
Watch the video to learn [how to navigate the EPBC Act](#).



Watch the video to learn about [what's protected under the EPBC Act](#).



Watch the video to learn about [Self-assessment](#) before making a referral under the EPBC Act.



Watch the video to learn about avoidance and mitigation for your [referral](#).



## Tools and Resources (cont.)

### Find out more about the recent changes:

[EPBC example scenarios for farmers](#) – worked examples showing how national environment law applies for agriculture, based on assistance provided to date.

[Agricultural exemptions under the EPBC Act](#) – a guide to the recent changes to continuing use provisions under the EPBC Act, including examples of common farm activities that remain exempt.

[Protected Matters Search Tool \(PMST\)](#) – a free, interactive online website application to help you identify potential protected matters on or near your project’s site and aid research and decision making.

[Significant Impact Guidelines \(SIGs\)](#) – a guide to help you determine if an action could have a significant impact on a nationally protected matter, including the Great Barrier Reef.

[Species Profiles and Threats \(SPRAT\)](#) – information on species and ecological communities listed under the EPBC Act, including statutory and non-statutory documents such as:

- Conservation Advices
- Recovery Plans
- Threat Abatement Plans

## Tools and Resources (cont.)

### Find out more about recent reforms:

- [Environment protection reforms](#) – find out more about the recent environment law reforms including opportunities for consultation and new information as it becomes available.
- [Referral Guidelines for the Great Barrier Reef](#) – information about what might count as a significant impact on the Great Barrier Reef and when you should refer to DCCEEW.

### Make a submission:

[EPBC Act Business Portal](#) – submit a referral, access guidance and track your project's progress.

[EPBC Act Public Portal](#) – a public view of all projects referred to us and open for comments.

## Contact us

Book a pre-referral meeting:

To book a pre-referral meeting: Email: [epbc.referrals@dcceew.gov.au](mailto:epbc.referrals@dcceew.gov.au)

Phone 1800 423 135 to leave a voicemail message about a pre-referral meeting. We will return your call as soon as possible.

[Pre-referral meeting for EPBC Act assessment process - DCCEEW](#)

For further information or enquiries about the EPBC Act contact us via:

- **Online enquiry form:** [dcceew.gov.au/about/contact](https://dcceew.gov.au/about/contact)
- **Phone :** 1800 920 528 (between 9am and 5pm Canberra time, excluding Public Holidays)

dcceew.gov.au |     

# National Electric Ant Eradication Program

Department of Primary Industries

**Biosecurity  
Queensland**



- Program was started in 2006 in response to Australia's first detection, in Smithfield
- Nationally cost share funded
- Funding extended from July 2024 for 5 years
- Increased funding received to greatly expand our operational capacity
- Currently around 60 field team members plus office staff
- 3 teams based in Mossman - recruiting with 1 new teams in South Johnstone from January 2026



Electric ants are one of the world's worst invasive species

**Category 1  
restricted matter**  
under the  
*Biosecurity Act 2014*

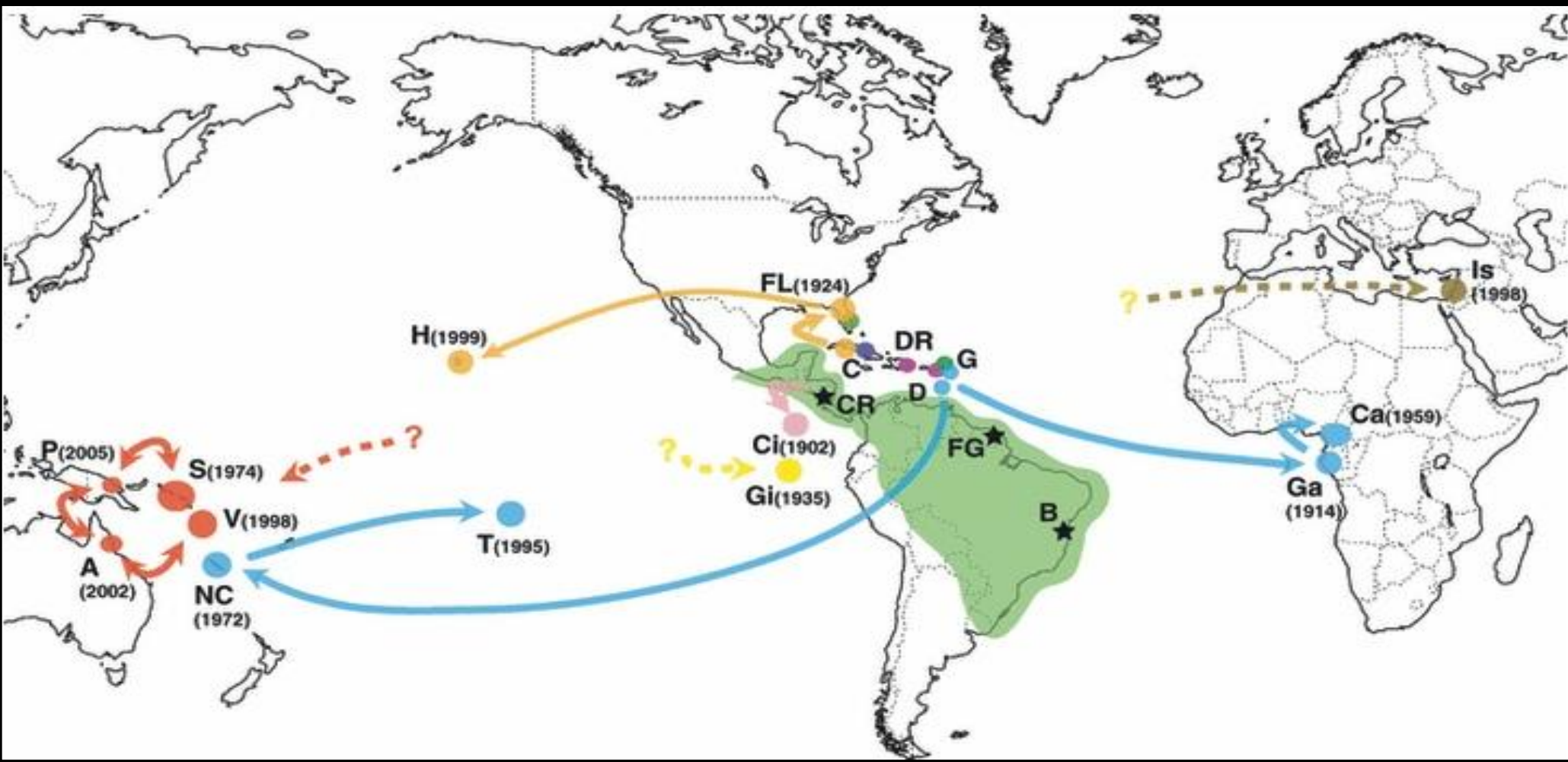


S.W



Originating from Central and South America, electric ants have invaded many other countries, including Hawaii, Africa, Taiwan, the Galapagos Islands, New Caledonia, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and others. Electric ants have now been detected on every continent except Antarctica.

FNQ's incursion is believed to be linked to an imported container from Vanuatu due to matching DNA.





What do they look like?



- *Wasmannia auropunctata*  
Auro = Gold, Punctata = Tiny

- They're tiny!  
1-1.5mm long,  
and all workers the same size.  
Queens up to 5mm.

- Golden brown/ orange/ ginger in colour.
- Slow moving, often in 'foraging lines'.
- Cannot grip very well.

Identification can only be confirmed under microscope

# Where are they in Australia?

Infestations in Cairns, Douglas, Tablelands, Mareeba and Cassowary Coast LGA's  
From Mission Beach to the Daintree

They don't build nests

Habitats include:

- \* Pot plants
- \* Underneath rocks and pavers
- \* Under or between timber
- \* In leaf litter or dead wood
- \* Epiphytes/palm crowns
- \* In wall spaces
- \* Furniture and bedding
- \* Favour damp areas

They may even be in your swimming pool

Marker eggs

Queen eggs



# Electric ants:

- Are omnivorous – eat plants and meat
- Are arboreal – can live in trees
- Queens have wings but do not fly
- Ability to thrive in a variety of habitat types including human modified environments
- Form super colonies with multiple queens
- Queens can lay 70 eggs per day
- Queens can clone themselves, and choose when to produce more Queens, males and workers
- All workers are non-productive females
- Can only be accurately identified under a microscope

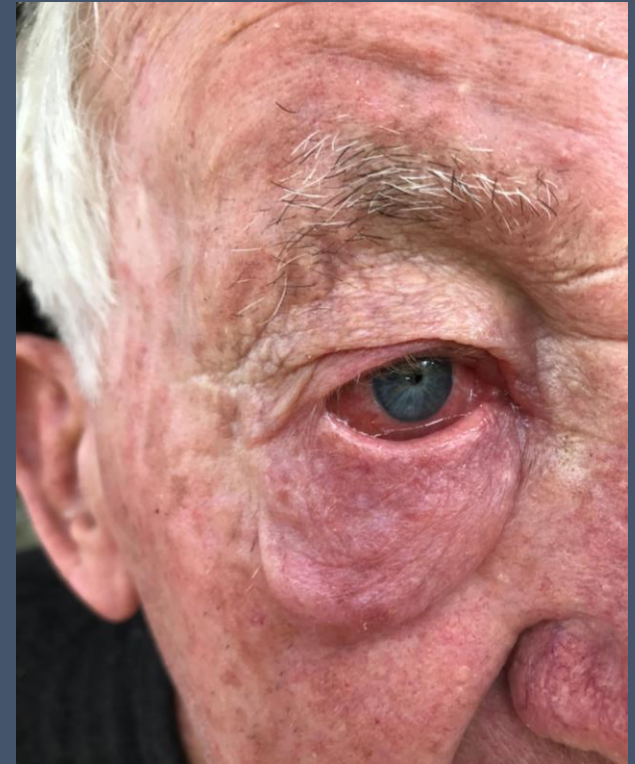


One reproductive queen with a few workers is all that is needed to establish a new infestation.



# Little ant... Big problem

Electric ants inflict a painful, long-lasting, venomous sting that can cause an anaphylactic reaction and secondary infections. Each ant can sting multiple times





## Little ant – big problem

Electric ants find it difficult to penetrate our pets fur but are attracted by the moisture in animals eyes. Multiple stings can cause permanent blindness

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS**

**Electric ants displace, outcompete and kill our native species and compromise the ecological function they serve (pollination, seed dispersal).**

**As their numbers increase, they will attack larger species.**

**They predate heavily upon other insects and small animals.**

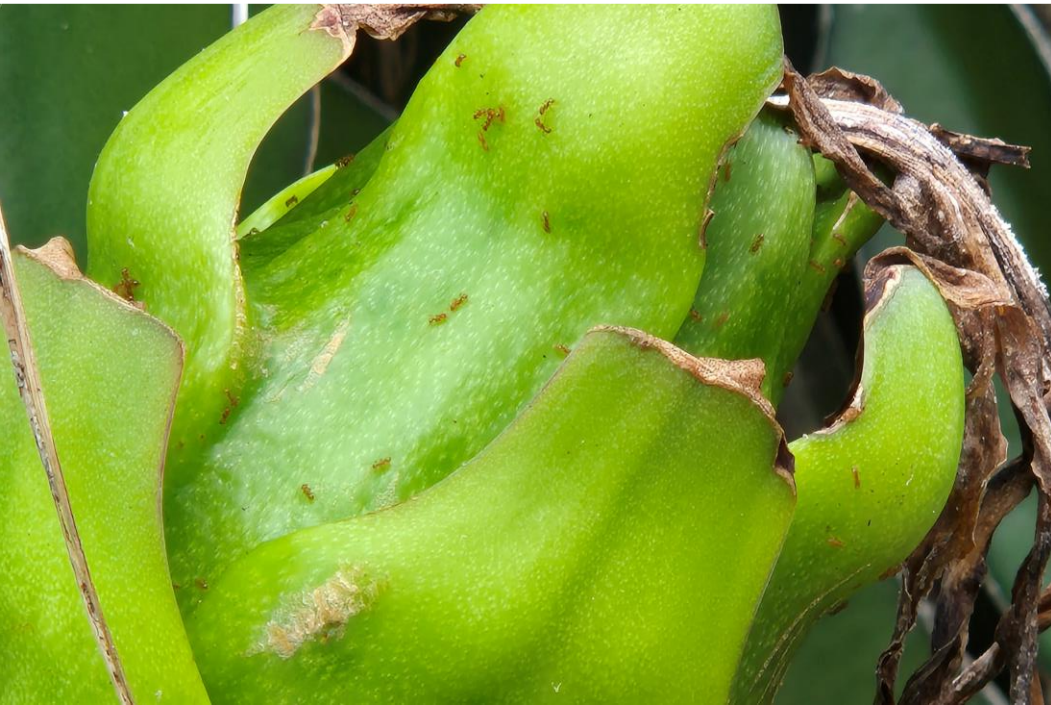
**Can cause blindness in vulnerable birds and mammals**





# **Agricultural Impacts**

**Electric ants ‘farm’ the small honey and sap-sucking insects that live on sugarcane and other crops, protecting them from their own natural predators, in exchange for the sugars. This causes a build up of ‘sooty mould’ compromising the development and health of the crop**



Electric ants cannot fly, and will only travel up to 50m per year on their own

# Electric ants are mainly moved by people



**Outdoor materials**



**Potted plants**



**Electric ants can 'raft' in waterways, and be spread by flood waters.**



**Illegal dumping**



**Electric ants can also be moved in landscaping machinery, mowers, bobcats and trailers – anything that may have soil attached**

# How Can You Help?

- **FREE YARD CHECKS!**
- Self checking is not thorough or effective.
- Field officers are trained to lure, detect and collect samples. All samples are taken to the Cairns Diagnostics Laboratory to ensure accurate identification.
- Help keep your community electric ant free.
- Book your free yard check today!



# Treatment Fast Facts

The Program uses a small granular bait specifically designed for electric ants, under strict permit conditions issued by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority.

It is harmless to humans and animals at these concentrations.

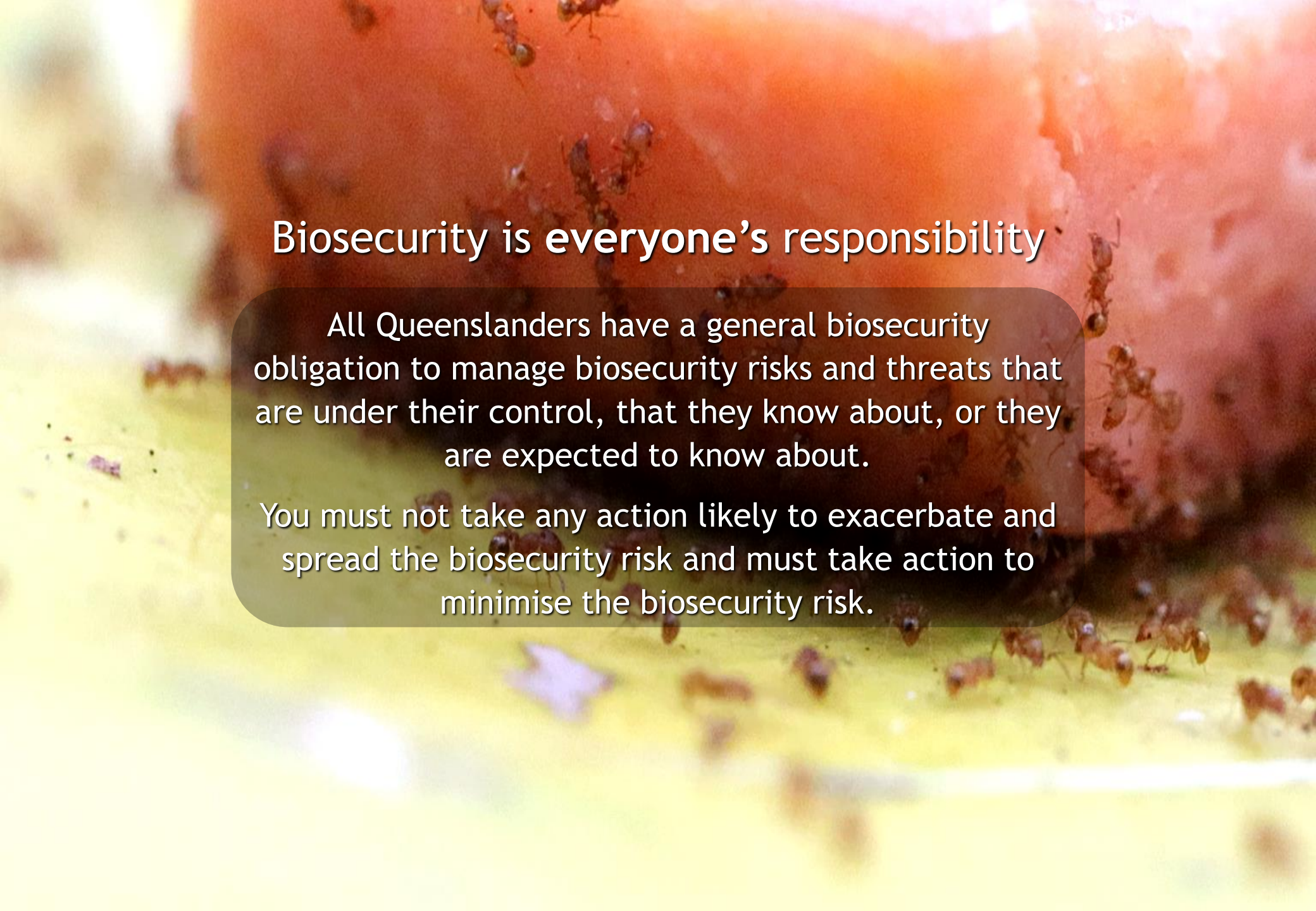
Only infested areas receive treatment. In those areas it is unlikely there will be any other species present, as they will have been driven out by the electric ants.

On a 1000m<sup>2</sup> property, 250grams (  $\frac{1}{2}$  a teaspoon/m<sup>2</sup>) is used in each treatment. The corn grit granules contain less than 1% of the active chemical – about 2 grams of chemical is distributed. Treatment breaks down after 48 hours or sooner if wet.

Left untreated, electric ants will kill and displace native wildlife and animals, disrupt the ecosystems and harm the environment. Native flora and fauna, along with agricultural crops and fruit trees, will fail to thrive.

In areas where electric ants have been treated and successfully eradicated, recovery has been rapid, with native frogs, ground-nesting birds, lizards and pollinators returning to their natural habitats.



A close-up photograph of a large number of small, reddish-brown ants crawling over a bright red, textured surface. The background is a blurred yellowish-green. The text is overlaid on the image in a semi-transparent dark grey box.

## Biosecurity is **everyone's** responsibility

All Queenslanders have a general biosecurity obligation to manage biosecurity risks and threats that are under their control, that they know about, or they are expected to know about.

You must not take any action likely to exacerbate and spread the biosecurity risk and must take action to minimise the biosecurity risk.

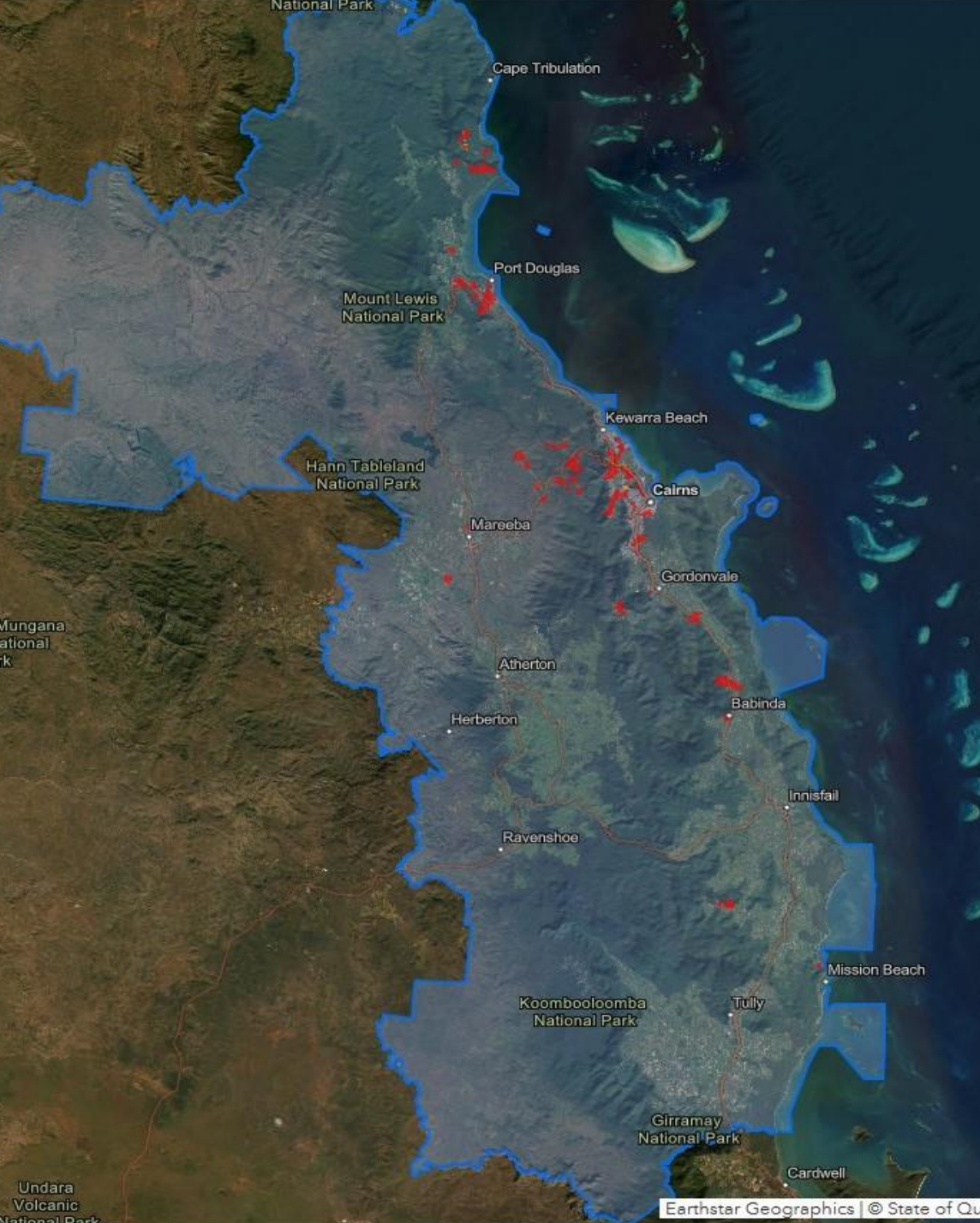
There is a legal requirement to report suspect electric ants within 24 hours.

We have a fully staffed diagnostics laboratory

We will take any and all samples for analysis.

The more the better.





**Blue areas:**

**Biosecurity Zone**

**Shires of Cairns, Douglas, Tablelands, Mareeba, Cassowary Coast, Yarrabah, Friendly isles and Low isles**

**General Biosecurity Obligations**

**\*Know if you live or work in the electric ant restricted zone**

**\*Report suspect ants within 24 hours**

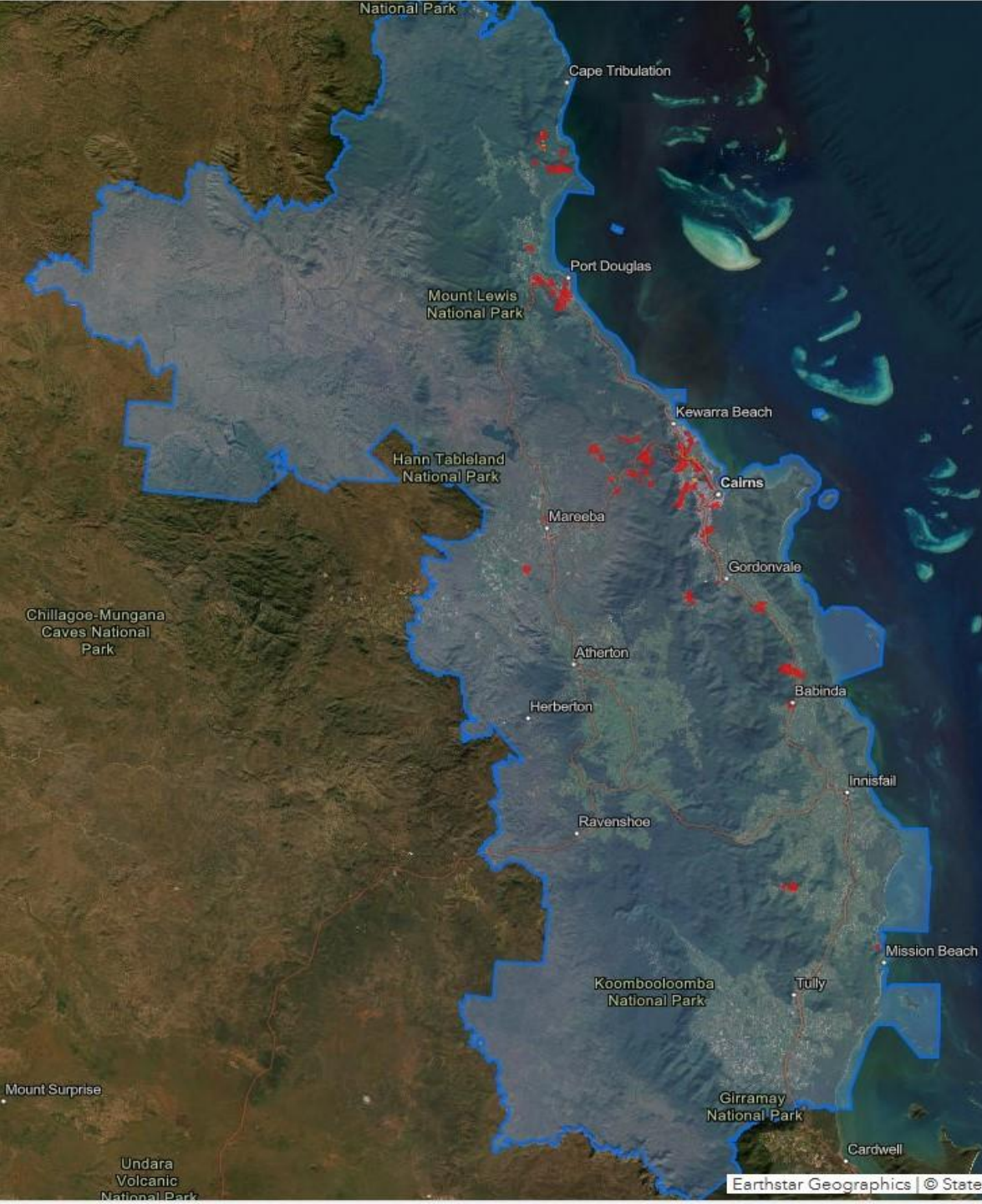
**\*Do not move or keep electric ants**

**\*Know what electric ant carriers are and how to reduce the risk of spread**

**Electric ant carriers include:**

**potted plants, cuttings, garden waste, mulch, fruit from plants, beehives, pots and outdoor furniture, turf, compost, animal feed and manure.**

**Anything that has been in prolonged contact with the ground**



## Red areas – Restricted zone

When living, visiting or working in the Restricted Zone, persons must comply with Movement Restrictions on CARRIERS

Carriers Leaving the Restricted Zone must be moved either

Directly to an Approved Facility (Council WTS and Some Private). It is your responsibility to advise the receiver that the waste is coming from a Restricted Zone

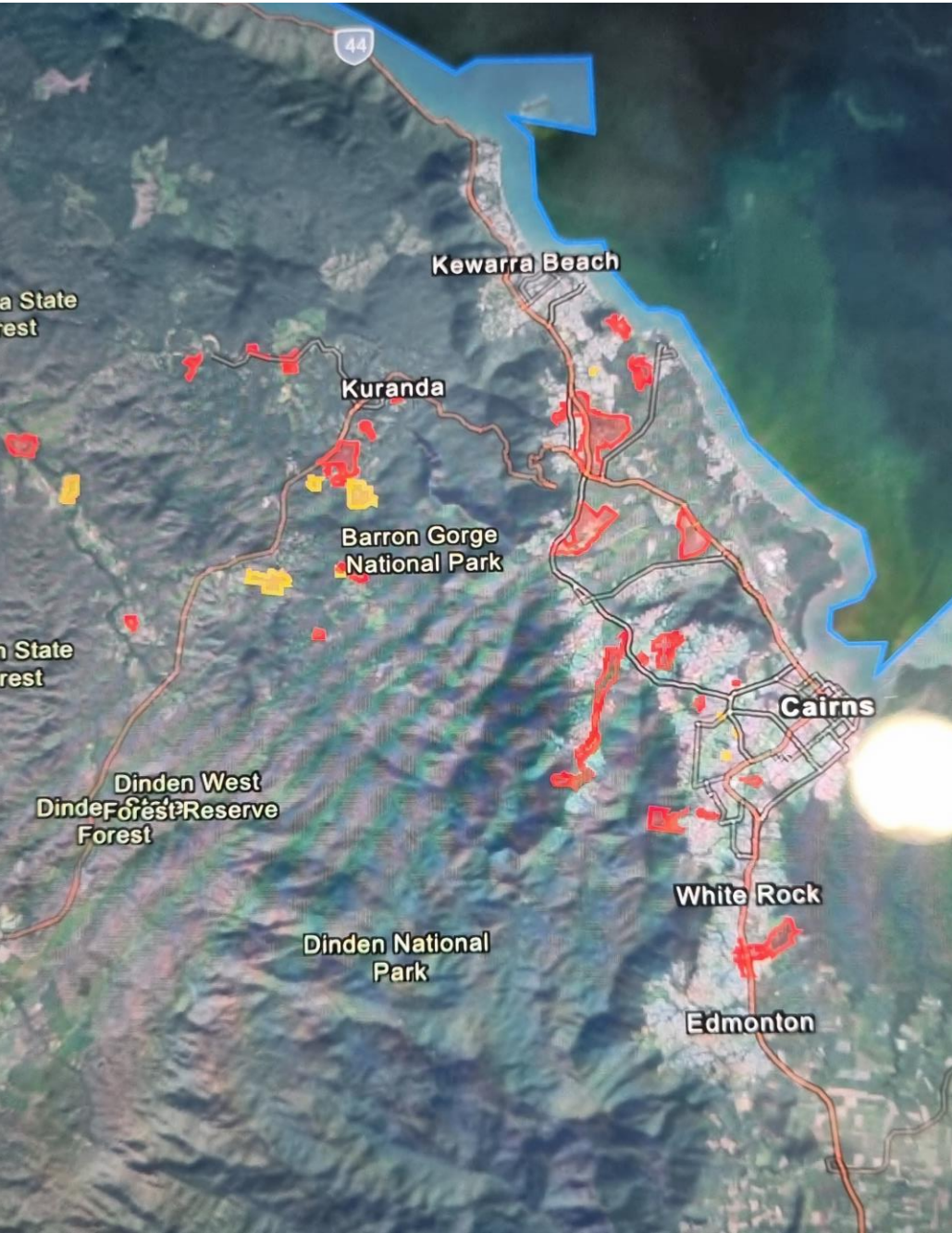
OR

If to another site - Apply for a Biosecurity Instrument Permit

Plant and Machinery must be cleaned down on site

Penalties apply for non-compliance

# Check the online map



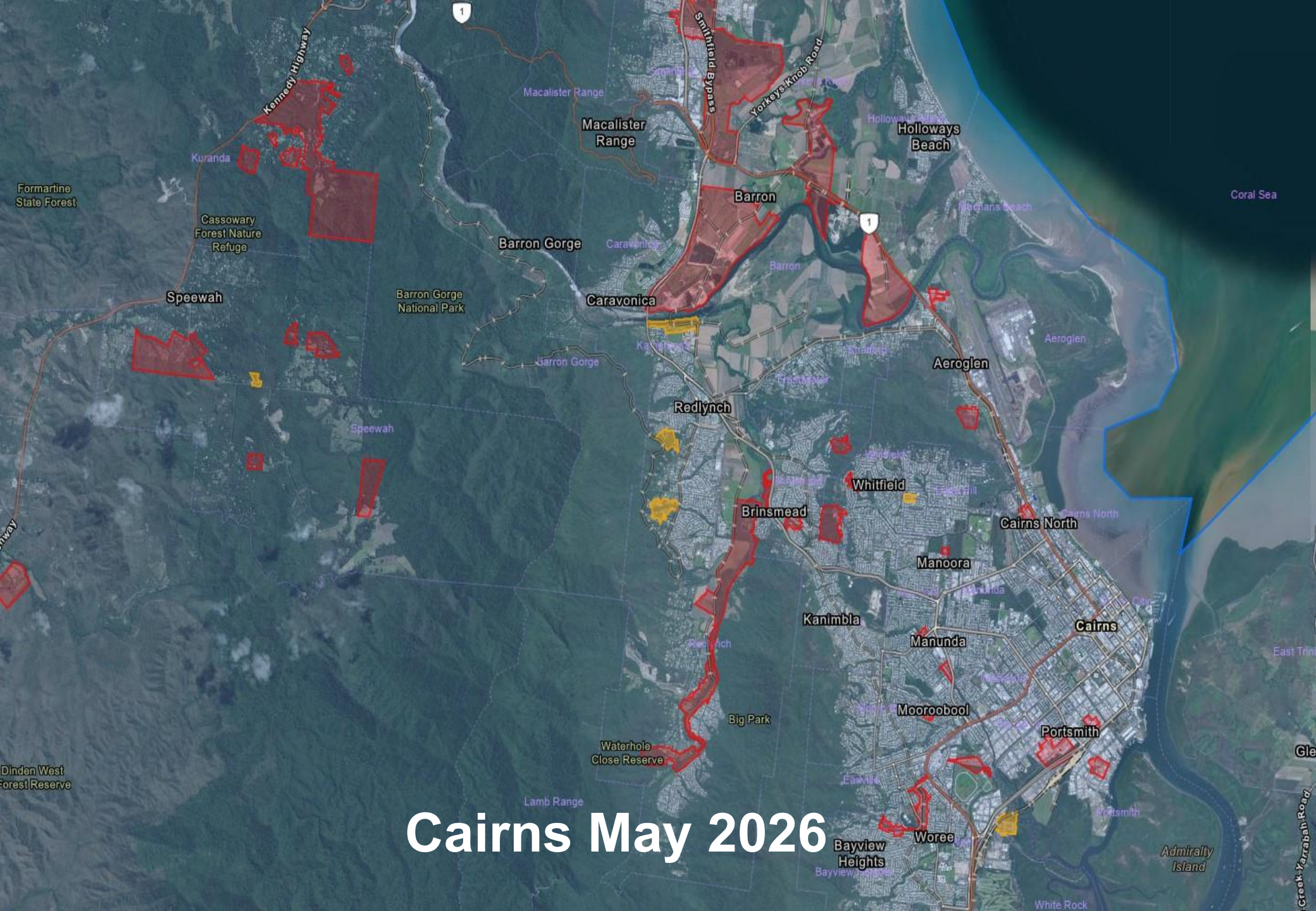
Current restricted zones  
are online:

[dpi.qld.gov.au/electricantmap](https://dpi.qld.gov.au/electricantmap)

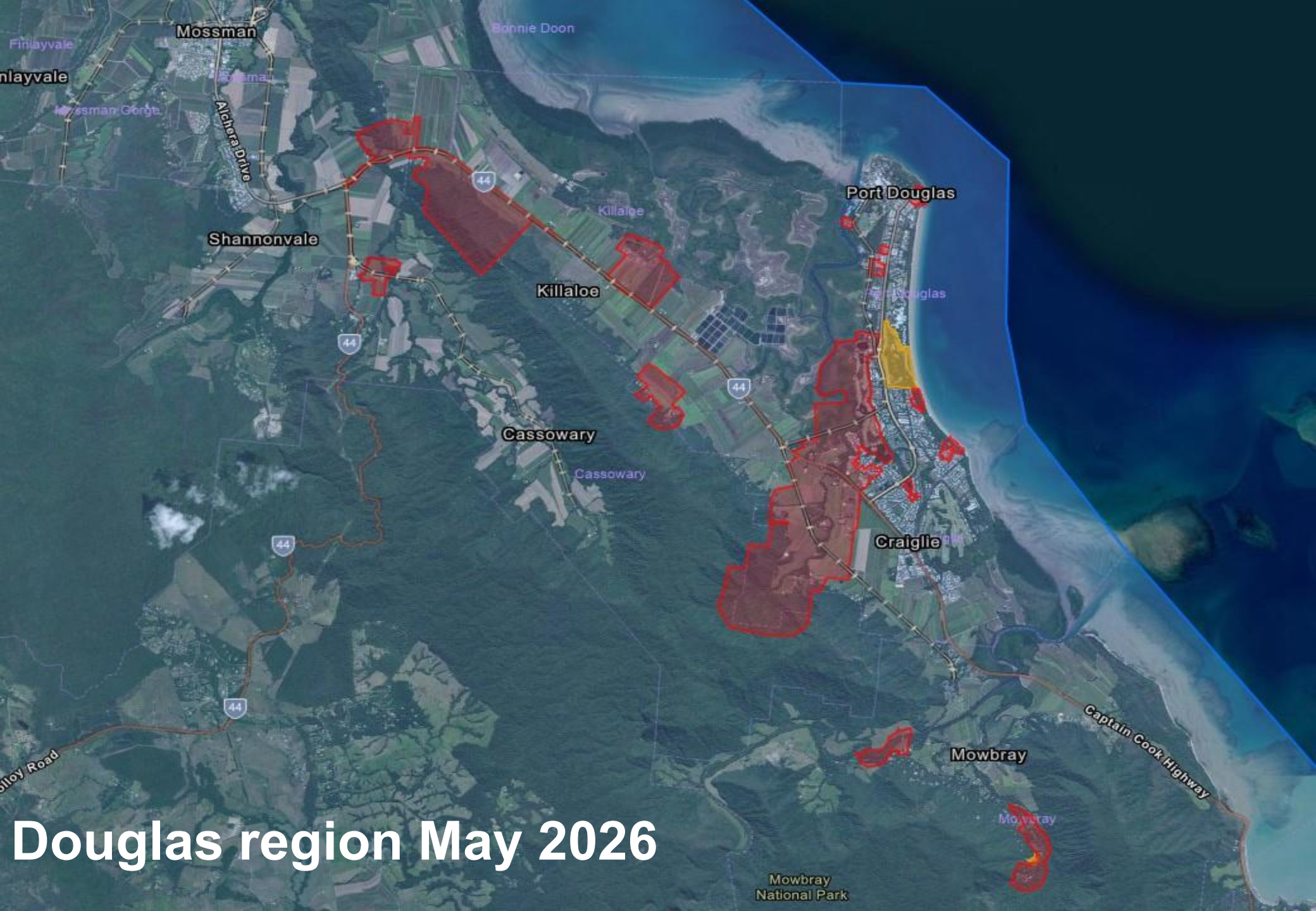
**Red** = Restricted Zone

**Yellow** = Interim zone – electric  
ants have been detected in this  
area but boundaries are still  
Being established





# Cairns May 2026



**Douglas region May 2026**

Mowbray National Park

# Electric ants have been contained to Far North Queensland



Staaten River National Park

Croydon

Georgetown

Port Douglas

Cairns

Mareeba

Atherton

Girram National

A person wearing an orange safety suit, a wide-brimmed orange hat, and safety glasses is kneeling in a garden. They are surrounded by various plants, including purple and green foliage, and several large, light-colored rocks. The ground is covered with mulch and gravel. The person appears to be inspecting or working with the plants.

- **Good to know:**

- More than 43% of infestations are found during property checks

- Early detection makes eradication faster and easier.

- Yard checks that find no electric ants are just as important for proof of absence.

- Don't wait to see suspect ants – be proactive and book it anyway – every 12 months is best

- ***Don't leave it to chance – call in the experts!***

# Treatment Strategy

- We only treat in areas of confirmed electric ant presence including the 50 metre buffer.
- The buffer is included to account for potential spread since last survey.
- Our treatment is designed to target electric ants. The bait is applied at low dose so workers have sufficient time to distribute it throughout the colony, including to the queens.
- Once the queens are eliminated the colony collapses as the population can no longer be replenished.
  
- Multiple treatment rounds are required to break the electric ant reproductive cycle.
- Electric ant eggs are not affected by treatment – larvae and pupae can be.
  
- Lifecycle:
  - Eggs – incubated for 8-10 days
  - Larvae develop for 14-16 days
  - Pupae stage – 11 days
  - Workers live approx. 37 days
  - Queens can live up to 12 months – laying up to 70 eggs per day



What our  
Scientists  
see



Tiny but mighty...the little ones  
Overpowering the big one!



Where it all began – Smithfield 2006





Thank  
You

Questions?



© Me



NATIONAL  
**Fire Ant Eradication**  
PROGRAM

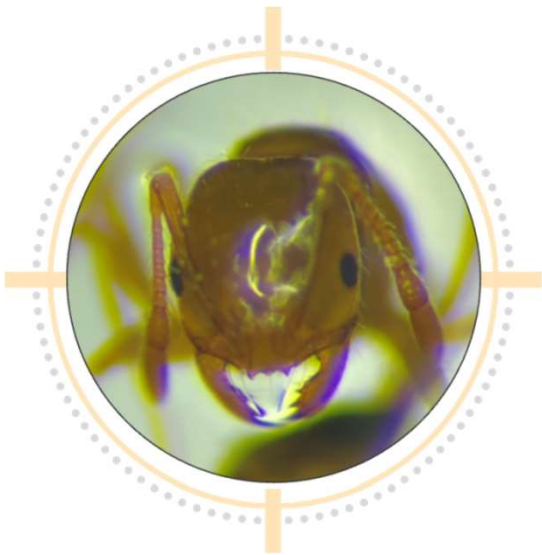
# Protecting Australia from fire ants

## Rural Industry Advisory Group

June 2026

# Key Features

- Coppery brown with a darker abdomen
- Variety of sizes in a single nest, from 2-6mm
- Highly aggressive!



# Mound structure and appearance



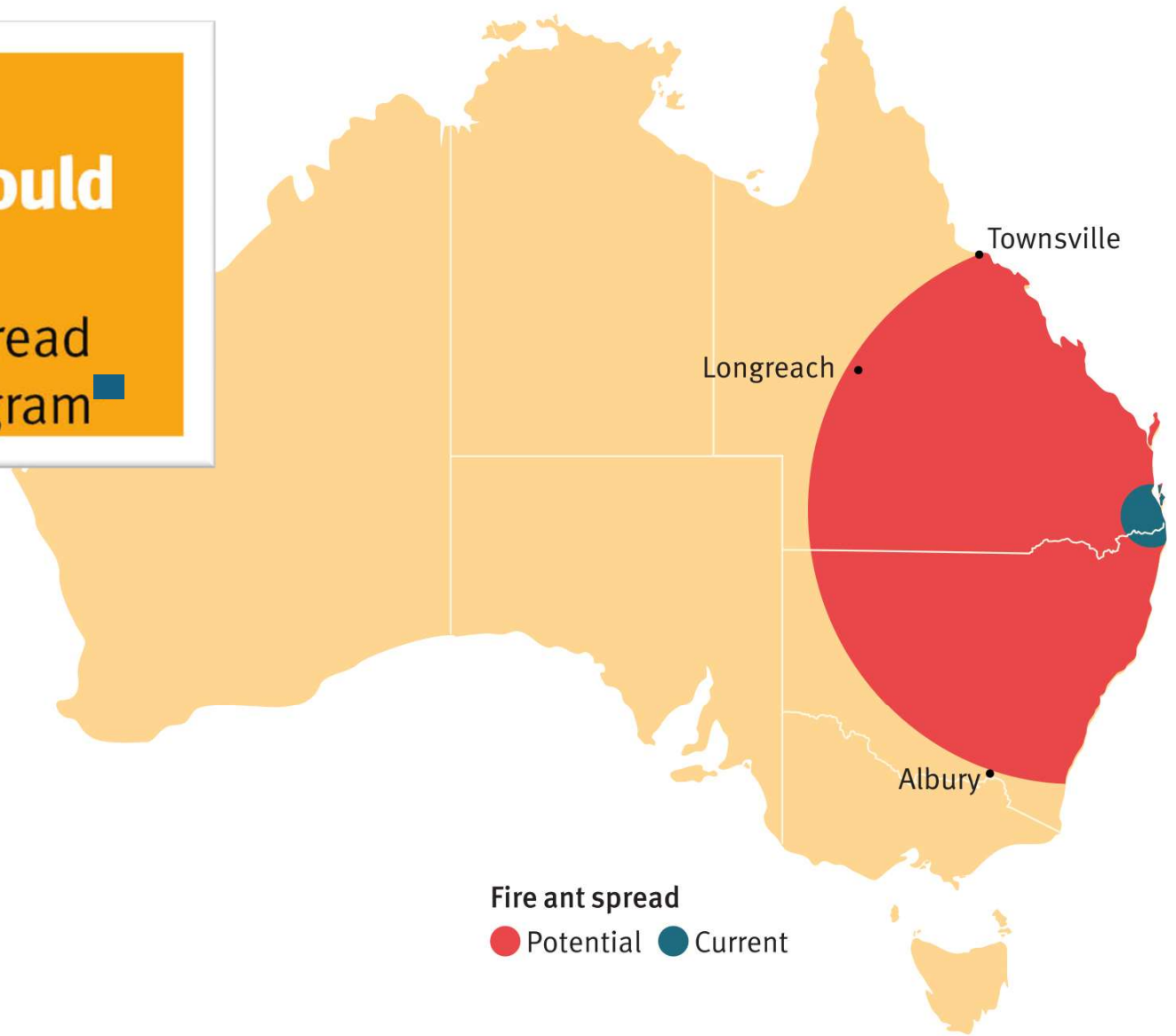
# Australian incursions



Successful eradication of 8 separate incursions. 6 in Queensland, and one each in New South Wales and Western Australia.

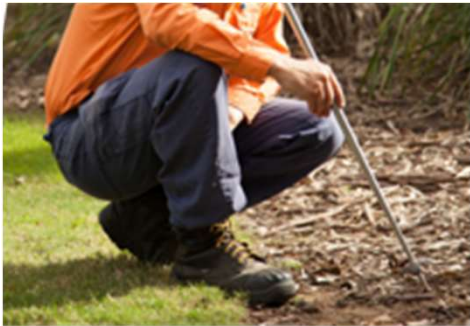
# In Australia, unchecked spread would have looked like this

Potential area of fire ant spread  
without an eradication program



Wylie, F.R. and Janssen-May, S. (2017), Red Imported Fire Ant in Australia: What if we lose the war?. <https://doi.org/10.1111/emr.12238>  
Or just, Wylie, F.R. and Janssen-May, S. (2017)

# Tools for eradication



Surveillance



Odour detection dogs



Scientific analysis



Direct nest injection



Drone treatment



Helicopter treatment



Ground treatment



UTV treatment

# Fire ants and their impact



# Human health and lifestyle impacts



Projected  
cost  
per annum  
**\$536**  
million



# Agriculture and livestock impacts



Projected  
cost  
per annum  
**\$381  
million**



# Infrastructure impacts



Projected  
cost  
per annum  
**\$250  
million**



# Human assisted movement



# Materials that can carry fire ants



Baled hay or straw



Manure



Mulch



Turf



Potted plants



Quarry and mining products



Soil



Machinery & equipment



# Risk mitigation measures



Processing



Storing



Treating



# Non-traditional carriers



## High-risk carriers

- Some non-traditional products and equipment can harbour and carry fire ants.
- Shipping containers, porta-loos, site offices, skip bins, palletised products.
- Items near soil, mud or turf are especially high-risk.

## How to reduce risk

- Clean items before moving on/off site.
- Be vigilant and monitor non-traditional carriers.
- Proactive checks to assess risk and ensure compliance by people handling these items.



# Distance is not a risk mitigation strategy




November 2019 - Interception.  
18 bales sent from Beenleigh, stopped in  
Roma



2025 July - Detection. Bricks sent from Logan  
identified several nests found in Central  
Queensland

**Preparation** reduces impact and  
**Awareness** reduces spread



# General biosecurity obligation (GBO)



Under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*, all Queenslanders have a GBO to manage biosecurity risks and threats:

- under their control
- that they know about
- that they are expected to know about

**This means you have a legal obligation to:**

- **report** suspected fire ants or nests within 24 hours via 13 22 68 or [fireants.org.au](http://fireants.org.au)
- **check** fire ant biosecurity zones and materials that may carry them
- **inspect** at-risk materials for fire ants before moving them.



# Biosecurity Regulation 2016

## Section 67: Moving a fire ant from or within a fire ant biosecurity zone

A person must not:

- move a live fire ant
- from a place in a fire ant biosecurity zone to another place, within or outside the biosecurity zone
- unless the person moves the fire ant under a biosecurity authorisation.

# Fire ant management core actions



## Awareness and training

Promoting fire ant awareness, training and responsibility across all levels of the council



## Surveillance, reporting and treatment

Monitoring and reporting fire ant sightings



## Decrease human-assisted movement

Ensuring adherence to Queensland biosecurity requirements including maintaining records



## Supporting eradication

Proactive engagement, communication, and sharing compliance intelligence at the local level

# Advice Notice

Under the Biosecurity Act 2014, all Queenslanders are required to manage fire ant risks. The Biosecurity Regulation 2016 specifies how materials that can carry fire ants originating from fire ant biosecurity zones must be managed throughout all stages of development.

Fire ant management practices include:

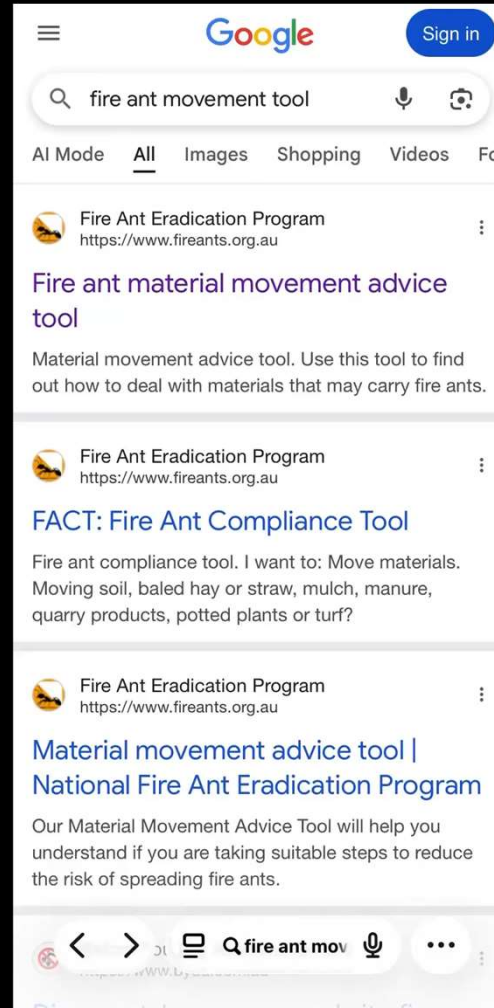
- reporting suspect fire ant activity within 24 hours either online at [fireants.org.au/report](http://fireants.org.au/report) or by calling 132 ANT (13 22 68).
- cleaning machinery, vehicles, and equipment before arriving at or leaving sites.
- complying with treatment recommendations where sites fall within suppression treatment area.
- Ensure you can demonstrate that contractors and staff understand their general biosecurity obligation and apply relevant fire ant-safe practices for each material.
- reviewing fire ant biosecurity zones monthly. If your site is outside but near a fire ant biosecurity zone, be prepared to implement risk mitigation measures, as zone boundaries may expand.

If you are unable to follow the fire ant safe practices, you must offer an alternative risk mitigation and apply for a biosecurity instrument permit before moving materials offsite.

- Visit [fireants.org.au](http://fireants.org.au) for more information.

# Material movement advice tool

## Scenarios



# Clean plant and equipment before moving

## Remove all soil using:

- scraping or blowing
- brushing down
- washing down
- steam cleaning
- air-blasting (with air compressor)



[fireants.org.au/stop/movement-controls/cleaning-machinery](https://fireants.org.au/stop/movement-controls/cleaning-machinery)

# Key Message to the Region

- Complete the **online NFAEP training**.
- Find out if materials are from a fire ant zone.
- **Preparation** reduces impact and **Awareness** reduces spread.
- Practice **machinery and equipment clean-down** procedures.
- NFAEP Government Partnership team is here to support you.

# Thank you!

## Q&A

# Resources



# Training and Tools

Access training and tools to stay informed and manage fire ants effectively.

- Visit [www.fireants.org.au](http://www.fireants.org.au) for fire ant training, factsheets, and resources.
- [The Fire Ant Compliance Tool](#) is an interactive tool supporting compliance with fire ant regulations in at-risk areas.
- [Fire ant training - National Fire Ant Eradication Program](#) interactive online training for workplaces, residents, primary producers, and pest managers



## Fire ant training

Explore fire ant training courses and guides to learn identification and control best practices.

[Find out more](#)



## Factsheets

Download fire ant factsheets with identification, treatment and management best practices.

[Find out more](#)



## Resources

Access fire ant tools, maps and resources to support effective identification and control efforts.

[Find out more](#)



NATIONAL  
Fire Ant  
Eradication  
PROGRAM

# Fire ant response plan

Our plan to eradicate fire ants from Australia by 2032 – protecting our health, environment, economy, and outdoor way of life.



## Fire ant spread

■ Potential ■ Current

Without intervention, fire ants would have spread north to Townsville, west past Longreach, and south to Albury by now.

## Without action

Fire ant damage could cost:

- \$536 million** per year to households for health and lifestyle impacts\*
- \$381 million** per year to agriculture\*
- \$250 million** per year to infrastructure\*
- \$84 million** per year to environment\*

\*Figures based on the Central Queensland University cost-benefit analysis in 2021.

[fireants.org.au](http://fireants.org.au)



### Surveillance area

We conduct extensive surveillance in this area to ensure fire ants don't escape. Property owners and tenants can help by providing easy access to their land and reporting fire ants promptly for quick treatment.



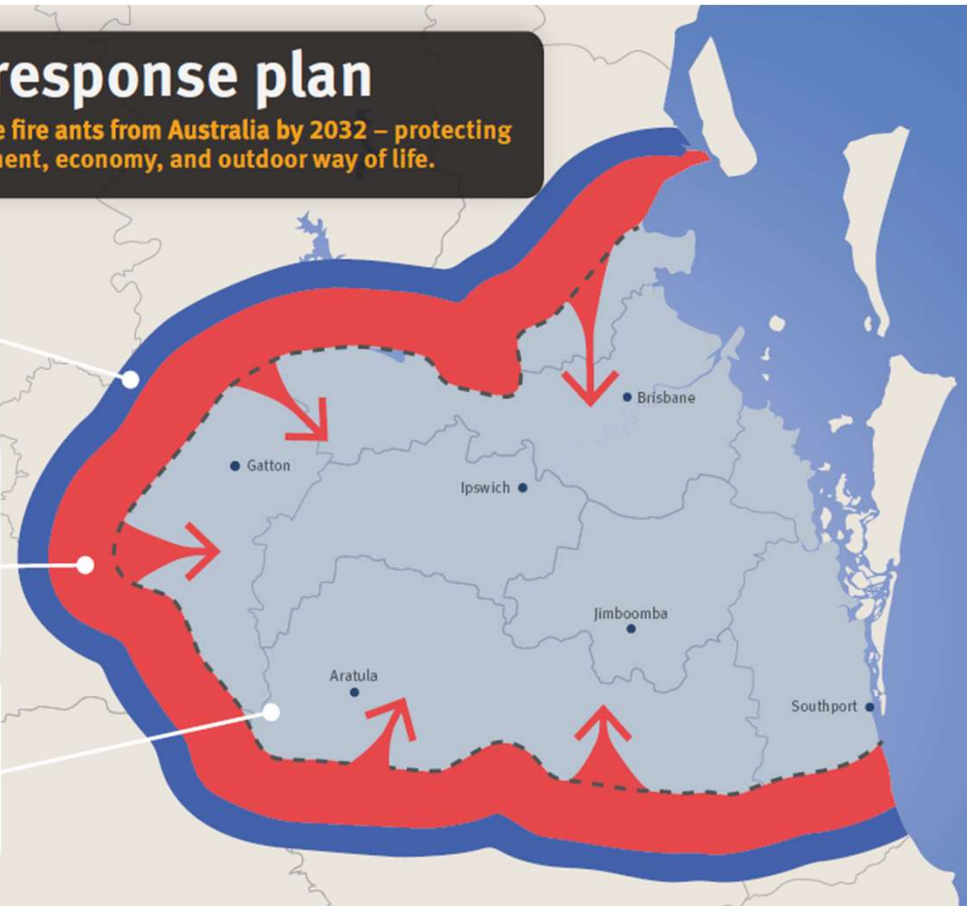
### Eradication treatment area

We must treat 100% of all properties in this area multiple times. Treatment is quick, easy, and safe. As we complete the required eradication treatment in an area, the band will move inward and the treated suburbs will transition to surveillance. Property owners and tenants can help by providing easy access to their land.



### Suppression treatment area

The Fire Ant Suppression Taskforce (FAST) assists government agencies, property owners, and tenants to self-manage fire ants in this area. People need to look for, report, and treat fire ants on their properties until eradication treatment reaches their area.

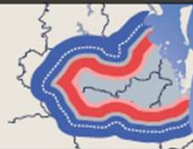


\*Conceptual map

2023 ●

Queensland eradication timeline

➤ 2032



AGRICULTURE VICTORIA



Department of  
Primary Industries and  
Regional Development



NATIONAL  
Fire Ant Eradication  
PROGRAM

# Fire ant safe practices for hay

Qld Compliance pathways	Key clarifications
<p><b>1)</b> Processing (rake + bale) and move &lt;24 hrs</p> <p><b>2)</b> Compliant storage only if hay has been processed correctly, or is from outside zones</p> <p><b>3)</b> Treatment: fumigation (APVMA methyl bromide permit, rarely used)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Places within fire ant biosecurity zones must use one compliant pathway before moving offsite.</li><li>• Processing + Storage is the primary QLD pathway.</li><li>• Treatment option exists but is not desirable for fodder (animal feed concerns).</li><li>• Hay from fire ant biosecurity zones into NSW require fumigation.</li><li>• Storage = off ground OR resistant surface + cover + 30 cm chemical treated perimeter</li></ul>



# Treating fire ants

- There are 2 types of product available.
- **Insect growth regulator (IGR)**  
e.g., Distance (pyriproxyfen) and Engage (S-methoprene)
- **Fast-acting insecticide (FAI)**  
e.g., Advion (Indoxacarb)



- The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) approves both products to treat fire ants.
- Not harmful to humans and most animals when used correctly. (Follow the product label & permit.)