Northern Queensland Biosecurity

Enhancing biosecurity capability in Queensland's north to reduce the potential entry and spread of plant and animal pests and disease.

> **"As biosecurity threats evolve, we need to continually review and adapt our strategies to protect Queensland."**
>
> – Queensland's Chief Biosecurity Officer

How Biosecurity Queensland is protecting the north

Increased surveillance for early detection of pests and disease.

Broadening partnerships across government, industry and community.

Boosting education and communication with a focus on high-risk groups such as tourists.

Strengthening prevention initiatives.

Building industry and community preparedness capabilities.

Why northern Queensland is a biosecurity priority

Proximity to neighbouring countries

Indonesia and Papua New Guinea have a significant number of high-priority plant and animal pests and diseases.

Adverse weather conditions

Weather events such as cyclones increase the risk of pests and diseases which may be airborne or spread by insects or by ocean currents.

Tropical climate and biodiversity

suits a range of pests and disease.

Vast, remote areas and coastlines

makes surveillance for early detection more difficult.

High demand for domestic and international travel

increases risk of spread by human-assisted movement.

Significant northern biosecurity initiatives

Far Northern Biosecurity Initiative including $3.7 million over five years (until June 2024) to enhance biosecurity capability in the region, with a strong emphasis on stakeholder empowerment, education and partnership.

Northern Australia Coordination Network – Queensland, Northern Territory, Western Australia and Australian governments working in partnership with key agricultural industries, James Cook University and local communities to enhance surveillance, prevention and preparedness for emergency animal diseases in northern Australia.

Biosecurity preparedness capability investment – in 2022 the Queensland Government committed an additional $22 million to build preparedness to enhance capabilities and capacity to respond to the potential for multiple, concurrent biosecurity threats. This funding includes a number of biosecurity preparedness officers in rural and regional locations, including north Queensland, to enhance biosecurity preparedness systems and contribute to local networks.

Northern Australia Plant Capacity and Response Network (NAPCaRN) – will build capacity and capability across the north including increasing surge capacity, assisting with early detection, and building preparedness and response capabilities. The network will enhance biosecurity outcomes for industry as well as on-country outcomes for First Nations peoples.

Behaviour change priorities: community and industry

- On-farm biosecurity plans help producers to protect their livelihoods against pests and diseases. Biosecurity Queensland's **Farm Check-in app** can be used to help minimise biosecurity risks.
- Come clean, go clean by washing garden, farm or outdoor recreational equipment and vehicles before moving locations to stop the spread of pests and disease.
- Dispose of food waste safely – do not feed any food waste to wild animals including pigs, dingoes or wild dogs.
- Check movement restrictions for plants and soil to make sure pests and diseases aren't being spread.
- Surveillance: Spotted anything unusual? Report it at **daf.qld.gov.au**

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Biosecurity projects in northern Queensland: A snapshot

The following is a snapshot of some of the Biosecurity Queensland programs currently underway in northern Queensland.

Indigenous Ranger Training

More than 150 Indigenous rangers and environmental health workers have been trained in biosecurity surveillance, emergency response and compliance. They are working in the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area, increasing the local capability to detect and respond to biosecurity incursions.

Strategic Invasive Grass Control

Reducing Gamba grass infestations around Cooktown. This environmental weed is a serious threat to undisturbed vegetation, including significant conservation areas, parks and reserves. Invaded areas contain much higher fuel loads and may also dramatically alter the structure of the native vegetation over time.

Exotic Invasive Pest Prevention

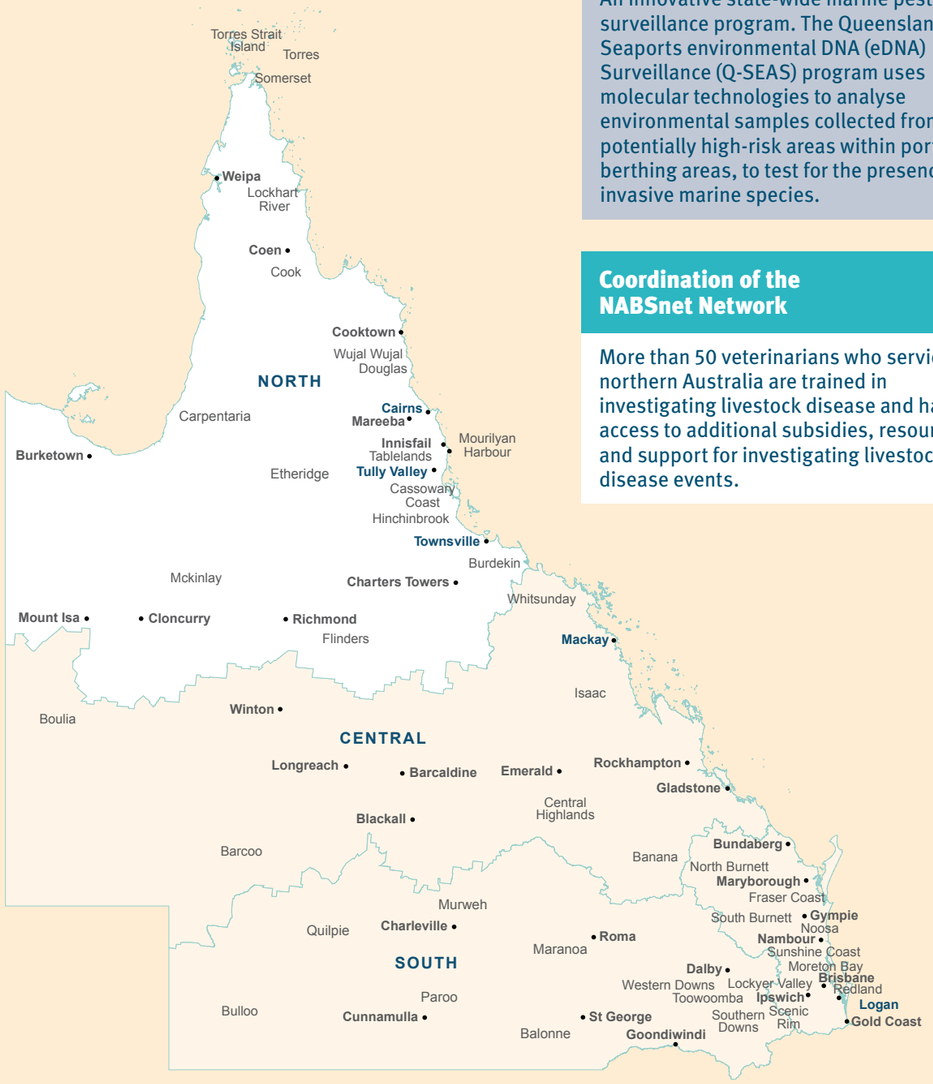
Pre-emptive surveillance for early detection of high-risk invasive species such as Asian Black Spine Toad, White Witchweed, and tramp ants both south and north between Papua New Guinea, Torres Strait and the mainland.

Stakeholder Pest Training

Training Indigenous communities and local governments on Cape York Peninsula and Torres Strait Islands for awareness and adoption of weed hygiene protocols and installation of clean down facilities.

Weed Projects

Eradication of invasive weeds including Cecropia spp, Madras Thorn, water mimosa eradication, Cha-om, White Ball acacia, Opuntia spp and targeted eradication of Gamba Grass and Pond Apple from Horn Island.



eDNA Marine Pest Surveillance Program (Q-SEAS Program)

An innovative state-wide marine pest surveillance program. The Queensland Seaports environmental DNA (eDNA) Surveillance (Q-SEAS) program uses molecular technologies to analyse environmental samples collected from potentially high-risk areas within port berthing areas, to test for the presence of invasive marine species.

Coordination of the NABSnet Network

More than 50 veterinarians who service northern Australia are trained in investigating livestock disease and have access to additional subsidies, resources and support for investigating livestock disease events.

Delimitation Surveys for Freshwater Pest Fish

James Cook University's TropWATER centre on the western islands of Moa, Badu and Mabulag in the Torres Strait to determine if pest fish species have expanded southwards.

The National Electric Ant Eradication Program

An extensive year-round surveillance program to meet eradication targets. This includes targeted surveillance in high-risk areas throughout Far North Queensland. Electric ants impact social amenities and our way of life.

Feral Pig Action Strategy

Queensland contributes to this national strategy to build local capacity and capability to undertake strategic destruction of feral pig populations during an exotic disease incursion. Four regionally-based feral pig management coordinators will service multiple local government areas to establish strategic and operational plans with a focused approach to feral pig suppression.

National Tropical Weeds Eradication Program

Targeting *Miconia*, *Limnocharis* and *Mikania* in the Douglas shire and Mossman area.

Baseline Exotic Ant Survey

James Cook University and Queensland Museum are contracted to undertake baseline surveys for exotic ants on all 17 inhabited Torres Strait Islands and five Northern Peninsula Area communities.

African Swine Fever Prevention

Enhancing surveillance and early detection systems through an online course for local and state government and peak industry bodies and an awareness campaign including electronic noticeboards and radio advertising across Torres Strait and northern Queensland.

Just-in-time Biosecurity Emergency Response Package for Torres Straits and the Northern Peninsula Area

Aimed at inducting indigenous participants into a biosecurity emergency response, and providing a specific TS & NPA cultural awareness induction for support staff from other parts of Queensland attending a response.

The National Exotic Fruit Fly in Torres Strait Eradication Program

Eradicating annual incursions of targeted exotic fruit fly in the Torres Strait and extending across the north region.

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