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Funding for Cane Toad Projects

Dr Chris Burns MLA
Minister for Parks and Wildlife

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Parks and Wildlife Minister Dr Chris Burns has announced funding totalling $26,400 for three projects to combat cane toads and assess their impact on native species in the Territory.

The grants are:

- $16,600 for Riyala Inc for cane toad trap development and a public awareness display;
- $13,200 for the Key Centre for Tropical Wildlife Management to determine the impact of cane toads on the survival of two goanna species; and
- $6,600 for Envirotek’s investigation of the role of cane toads on the mortality of northern quolls at East Alligator.

“The NT Government is serious about responding to the cane toad threat,” Dr Burns said.

“We have fought successfully to get the issue on the national agenda, and last month hosted the inaugural meeting of the National Cane Toad Taskforce.

“We have committed $720,000 towards tackling the cane toad menace, and have made the protection of our unique environment and ecosystems a priority.”

The Riyala Inc project involves testing methods of trapping and attracting toads, and providing prototypes of the traps and text for accompanying interpretative material for a display at the Territory Wildlife Park. The intended outcome is the design of a trap and lure combination which would maximize the capture of cane toads while minimising impact on native species.

The study by the Key Centre for Tropical Wildlife Management will examine the impact that the colonisation of the cane toad will have on the survival of two common and widespread goanna species. The Merten's water monitor (Varanus mertensi) is a large predatory monitor species that inhabits riparian woodlands within tropical northern Australia. The mangrove monitor (Varanus indicus) inhabits mangrove habitat in northern Australia. The project will use radio transmitters to record the mortality/survivorship of the two species before, during and after cane toad colonisation.

The Envirotek project will involve radio-tracking the fate of the northern
quoll population at East Alligator. This particular population has already declined in number and is predicted to become extinct by January 2005. Individual female quolls will be radio-collared and radio-tracked every morning to determine the cause of mortality when they die. Northern quolls are probably the species most impacted by the cane toad.