Exotic Ants Targeted During Biodiversity Month

The war between native and exotic ants will be a key focus of September’s National Biodiversity Month, Parks and Wildlife Minister Alison Anderson said today.

Ms Anderson today launched a new website and brochure on exotic ants as part of National Biodiversity Month at Wagaman Primary School where students are learning about the roles native ants play in our environment and what they can do to protect native ants from exotic ants.

“Native and exotic ants are currently locked in a battle over food and habitat and Territorians can help native ants survive the onslaught,” Ms Anderson said.

“Australian Government funding of $102,000 has enabled the Northern Territory Government to undertake research to assess the distribution, potential spread, areas of incursion and impacts of exotic ants such as ginger ants and Yellow crazy ants in the Territory.

“As part of this research project to be completed by the end of the year, ant collection kits have been and can be provided to schools, community groups, landholders and anyone interested in participating to identify what, if any, exotic ants are in their school, backyard or land.

“Collection kits are sent back to the Wildlife Management Unit within the Department of Natural Resources, Environment, the Arts and Sport for identification.

“Native ants such as green ants and Northern meat ants play an important role in the natural ecosystem in many ways, such as assisting the germination of seeds, so we need to help protect native ants.

“People can also help prevent the spread of exotic ants by having their luggage checked by customs when returning from overseas or cleaning machinery before moving it long distances.

“I urge people to report suspected sightings of exotic ants or their nests to 8999 4582 or go to the new www.nt.gov.au/exoticants website to learn more about exotic ants.