



Frogwatch Nth inc

Phone: 0411881378

Fax: (08) 8941 1167

C/- GPO Box 40245

Casuarina NT 0811

ABN 17466924105

Web: <http://www.frogwatch.org>

Toadally incompetent NTG caves in on toads.

The NT Government has stopped all funding to FrogWatch which means that Darwin is now exposed to a renewed threat of cane toads. After managing to keep toad numbers in Darwin very low and to stop the toads from wiping out much of our urban wildlife the funding cuts may open the way for toads to overwhelm Darwin.

To hear the Minister Bess Price say in parliament. " Let me be clear; this government did not cut the funding for Frogwatch. The contract was terminated by mutual agreement, effective 31 March 2013." is insulting and shows the minister is being spun by her Department as she was not the minister at the time. We did not and do not agree with the cut but were given no choice.

The NTG has the right to cut programs like this and the broader education programme it involved but it should be up front with the community about why and accept the responsibility for the results. We have written to the government and tried to get some clarity around which department is going to be responsible for biodiversity issues within NTG and have had no success. Our last request to Minister Willem Westra van Holthe is still unanswered from 11 February.

Frogwatch coordinator Graeme Sawyer said he was stunned to have the funding cut, especially at a point when it was now clear that the toad management activities were making a real difference and research is showing just how severe the cane toad threat to reptiles is.

He said the Reversing Reptile Decline project, which looked in some detail at reptile populations in the Darwin coastal fringe has shown that we have at least 34 Yellow Spotted Monitors in two key locations in Darwin. This is in stark contrast to areas in the bush and our national parks where the populations of this species have crashed with local extinction in many areas.

He also said that toad numbers in Darwin were very low due to the activities of people in Darwin and the ToadBusters project frogWatch has conducted since toads first arrived in the area.

The challenge now is to see if we can raise enough funds to continue to do the work needed and how well volunteers can increase their efforts to cover the gaps.

As an example, last wet season frogWatch removed over 200000 cane toad tadpoles from Darwin and several thousand adult cane toads. If these animals were left to breed then we would see an exponential increase in toad numbers and people would start to see their yards and public spaces over run by toads and local wildlife vanishing.

Yours truly,

Graeme Sawyer

Co-ordinator FrogWatch e-mail :graemes@entity1.com

Mobile 0411881378