



NORTHERN TERRITORY  
GOVERNMENT  
NORTHERN LAND COUNCIL



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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**Dr CHRIS BURNS MLA**    **GALARRWUY YUNUPINGU AM**  
Minister for Environment and Heritage    Northern Land Council Chairman

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### **NORTHERN QUOLLS RESCUED FROM IMPACT OF CANE TOAD**

The Northern Territory Government, Northern Land Council and traditional owners have undertaken a ground-breaking relocation program to protect one of the Northern Territory's most vulnerable and much-loved native species from the impact of the cane toad.

In the past eight weeks, more than 50 Northern Quolls have been captured and translocated to two islands off north-east Arnhem Land, to protect against the loss of the species on the mainland.

The Minister for Environment and Heritage, Dr Chris Burns, and Chair of the Environment and Sustainable Development Sessional Committee, Delia Lawrie, recently travelled to Astell Island for the final release.

"This really is a remarkable project," Dr Burns said.

"While it seems almost impossible to stop the progressive march of the cane toad through the Northern Territory and the rest of Australia, the Territory Government wants to take some form of action before it is too late for some of our wildlife."

Northern Land Council Chairperson, Galarrwuy Yunupingu said the quoll relocation project highlighted the growing cooperation between Aboriginal ranger groups and government agencies across the Top End.

"Aboriginal peoples' depth of knowledge about their country makes it vital to ensure they are partners in all programs aimed at safeguarding native flora and fauna. I congratulate all involved in the quoll rescue effort," Mr Yunupingu said.

Evidence suggests numbers of the Northern Quoll could be severely diminished when the cane toad further invades the Territory mainland.

On Cape York Peninsula in Queensland, there appears to have been no recovery of quolls after more than a decade since the cane toad invaded.

Dr Burns said immature Northern Quolls have now been moved to Pobassoo and Astell islands in the English Company Island Group to begin a new life, away from the threat of

“So far, the translocations have been completely successful, with the quolls adapting well to their new surrounds,” he said.

The project was only made possible through the close collaborations between the Territory Government, Northern Land Council and traditional owners, who gave consent for the use of their land.

“The traditional owners of the islands accept these animals from the traditional owners of Kakadu and places around Darwin, such as Humpty Doo and Darwin River Dam,” said Terry Yumbulul, a senior Yolngu traditional owner.

Robert Brown, a Larrakia and Wulna elder who speaks for country near Darwin where the quolls were collected said it was vital the animals were protected “the best way we can”.

Up to ten quolls on each island were fitted with radio-collars, so their movements and fate can be monitored.

Scientists and traditional owners will continue to keep a close eye on the “refugee” quolls to see how they adapt to their new habitats, and assess the success of this innovative management plan.

“While there are no guarantees of success, we must try,” Dr Burns said.

“If this project does work, then we may look at options for the movement of other species susceptible to the cane toad.”

The Minister said the project had also been supported by the Tropical Savannas Cooperative Research Centre, Threatened Species Network, Parks Australia and Arafura Pearls Holdings.