Management of Non-Indigenous Animal Incursions

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Purpose

New South Wales Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI), an office within the Department of Regional NSW, is the lead agency responsible for enacting and implementing legislation, policies and procedures for the management of terrestrial and freshwater non-indigenous animal (NIA) incursions where significant pest animal, disease and/or other biosecurity risks are apparent. This procedure:

- Deals with the management of incursions of animals listed as prohibited dealings in Schedule 3 of the *Biosecurity Act 2015,* (NSW) (the Act) (Part 2, Division 1 and, Part 3). In addition to the species listed as prohibited dealings in the legislation, any NIA not listed in Schedule 3 or Schedule 4 of the Act is considered a prohibited dealing,
- Describes how NSW DPI will manage the biosecurity risks posed by incursions of certain NIAs that have not established widespread populations in NSW, but have been assessed as representing a significant establishment risk or a danger to people and/or the state's economic, environmental and/or community assets,
- Provides guidance to administrative, technical, operations and compliance staff working for NSW DPI in roles concerned with the management of NIA incursions,
- Outlines how the work of NSW DPI and allied agencies supports the National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement (NEBRA).

Contents

1. Work health and safety

The *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* places an obligation on the agency (NSW DPI) as a person conducting a business or undertaking, and workers to provide a safe and healthy workplace. Safe Work Method statements that support activities included in this procedure must be used in identifying, assessing and controlling risks.

NIAs can be dangerous. They may have the ability to crush, bite, envenomate, scratch, constrict, etc. NIAs may also carry zoonotic diseases. Positive identification (including the common name, scientific name and knowledge of the danger to humans from the species), of a NIA is essential in employing appropriate work health and safety (WH&S) controls. The following controls should be considered for use in operations involving the collection of live NIAs from a captive or open environment:

- an appropriate number of officers present to manage the risks identified in an operation,
- persons handling NIAs to be suitably qualified (with certification from a registered training organisation or with equivalent certified industry experience) or with practical experience in handling similar species to those in the incursion response,
- availability and use of appropriate animal handling equipment,
- appropriate personal protective clothing and equipment,
- appropriate animal storage to prevent contact with unauthorised personnel or escape by the NIA. This may include a lockable room or enclosure for short-term animal storage,
- personnel to have a current first aid certificate and appropriate first aid kit,
- a telephone and list of emergency contact numbers (hospitals, doctors, anti-venom agencies etc.),
- persons handling NIAs to use appropriate sterilisation and hygiene procedures to prevent the spread of zoonoses and other animal diseases.

Staff of NSW DPI will work to create a safe and supportive work environment when undertaking any of the activities outlined in this procedure.

2. Preparing for and responding to NIA incursions

The responsibilities of NSW DPI in preparing for and responding to NIA incursions include:

- managing a NIA incursion reporting and response system for NSW,
- coordinating the validation of NIA incursion reports,
- once validated, reporting nationally significant NIA incursions to the Commonwealth Government according to the National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement,
- identifying biosecurity risks and risk mitigation controls for validated NIA incursion reports,
- coordinating timely responses to NIA incursion reports to ensure NIAs are eradicated where possible and that the biosecurity impacts of NIAs are minimised,
- coordinating screening of NIAs for biosecurity risks,
- where appropriate, vouchering of biological samples of NIAs in relevant Australian repositories (such as DPI Biosecurity Collections Unit or the Australian Museum), to assist with NIA incursion management, research and education programs,
- managing records of NIA incursion reports, investigation work and management programs,
- disseminating information on NIA incursion reports, investigation and management programs to relevant groups including internal and external stakeholders to encourage awareness and engagement with NIA incursion management issues,
- maintaining preparedness arrangements, including the capacity for timely response and follow-up of NIA incursion reports, and where appropriate, providing support and guidance for managing the incursion, and delivering training to current and prospective authorised

officers (and to appropriate personnel from allied agencies and industry) to facilitate effective NIA incursion management actions,

- providing advice to permitted and registered NIA keepers, and other stakeholders, on NIA biosecurity risks and the obligations of keepers under the Act, and
- negotiating resource sharing arrangements relating to the management of NIA incursions with land managers, other government agencies and industry.

3. Private veterinarian involvement in the management of NIA incursions

Although NSW DPI coordinates the management of NIA incursions, from time-to-time, assistance is sought from registered private veterinary practitioners. For some issues, including animal welfare and disease management, private veterinary practitioners with relevant expertise may be contacted to request assistance in managing a NIA incursion. Such assistance is voluntary and NSW DPI consults with veterinary practitioners to verify if they have the time, capacity, skill and willingness to be involved with assisting in the management of specific NIA incursions. The cost of any service provided by veterinary practitioner in relation to the management of a NIA is reimbursed by NSW DPI.

4. Surveillance for NIA incursions

Surveillance for NIA incursions is generally a passive activity, reliant on opportunistic encounters being reported by public and private land managers, the general public, agencies with field staff such as Local Government Authorities (LGA), NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), Local Land Services (LLS), NSW Police and the Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) and non-government agencies (such as Wildlife Information Rescue and Education Service (WIRES), Landcare and Neighbourhood Watch). In the course of their work, such people may become aware of a NIA incursion, receive reports of a NIA incursion or have reasonable suspicion of an incident involving a NIA incursion. Passively detected NIA incursions or information relating to a suspect NIA incursion should be reported to NSW DPI as soon as practicable and within 24 hours of becoming aware of the information. Details on how and where to report a NIA incursion are provided in **Section 5**.

A program of active surveillance for NIA incursions may be conducted if there is suspicion of, or knowledge of, the deliberate release or escape of a NIA, a NIA outbreak, or where a NIA incursion report has been received by NSW DPI and a decision is made to conduct a survey of the area to confirm the presence or absence of additional NIAs. Where active surveillance is used, NSW DPI will assist with coordinating the resources, surveillance tools and techniques necessary and collate the data collected during the active surveillance program.

NSW DPI may coordinate and/or support community awareness campaigns and notification to residents in the vicinity of a confirmed detection, to encourage passive surveillance and community reporting. Where relevant, a letterbox drop may be conducted, the scope of which will be determined by factors including: reliability and scale of initial detection; likelihood of NIA movement through the landscape; and risk posed by the animal.

5. Receipt of NIA incursion reports

Any person who knows of, has information relating to, or suspects a NIA incursion should report the information to NSW DPI as soon as practicable and within 24 hours of becoming aware of the information. Information relating to NIA incursions can be reported to NSW DPI through the following means:

- 'Report a biosecurity concern' online reporting form
- Email: invasive.species@dpi.nsw.gov.au
- Telephone: Biosecurity Helpline (1800 680 244).

Note: In emergency situations and outside of normal business hours (8:30am – 4:30 pm weekdays) where there is a perceived danger to the public presented by a NIA, reports should be directed to

emergency services (000) and the police assistance number (131 444) in addition to reporting the information to NSW DPI.

Although a number of options are available for NIA incursion reports to be made to NSW DPI, use of the 'Report a biosecurity concern' online reporting form should be encouraged where possible, as it prompts users to quickly report all necessary information for NSW DPI to make a preliminary assessment of the associated biosecurity risks. All NIA incursion reports are analysed by the NSW DPI Invasive Species Biosecurity Unit and a preliminary risk assessment is conducted to determine the most appropriate management actions to take.

5.1. Response to the receipt of an NIA incursion report

- NSW DPI will normally respond to the person who provided the initial NIA incursion report by email or telephone to acknowledge that the report has been received. When possible, acknowledgement will occur within one business day of receiving the report.
- Further details about the NIA incursion may be requested as part of NSW DPI's response. If not provided with the original NIA incursion report, photographs, sound or video recordings of the reported NIA should be requested by NSW DPI. This information should only be collected by the person reporting the information if it is considered safe to do so.
- Where considered necessary, NSW DPI will coordinate the validation of the NIA incursion report by working with the person who provided the initial NIA incursion report, liaising with allied agencies within the detection area, and/or seeking expert advice from organisations such as the Australian Museum.
- Where appropriate (e.g. in relation to public land or a cooperative private land manager), NSW DPI will liaise with the manager of the land or water body where the incursion has been reported to validate the NIA incursion report.

5.2. Response to NIA incursions reported as being advertised for sale

When a NIA incursion report relates to the advertisement of NIAs for sale, NSW DPI will manage the report in the following way:

- The advertisement will be examined for signs of legitimacy using the following steps:
  o Conduct a reverse image internet search of any associated images to determine if the images are generic, and
  o Conduct an examination of the advertiser's profile and other advertisements if available,
- If there is a reasonable belief that the advertisement is a fake or a scam, the advert is to be reported to the host website and Scam Watch,
- If there is reasonable belief that the advertisement is genuine, the information should be relayed to the BFS Compliance Unit by emailing a BFS Investigations Information Form to quarantine@dpi.nsw.gov.au or by registering the information through the NSW DPI Biosecurity Helpline: 1800 680 244,
- A police check of the alleged NIA keeper may be obtained and NSW Police consulted prior to the compliance investigation to ensure NSW DPI staff safety is managed appropriately,
- Consideration should be given to reporting the NIA advertisement to the publisher or website hosting the material,
- Consideration should be given to reporting advertisements for the sale of NIAs in jurisdictions outside NSW (e.g. non-native reptiles are prohibited from being kept in private collections throughout Australia) by NSW DPI to the relevant agency in that jurisdiction.

5.3. Response to established widespread pest, companion animal or livestock species

A list of non-indigenous animals classified as established widespread pests, companion animals and/or commercially significant livestock species is provided in Schedule 3, Part 2, Division 2 of the Act. When a NIA incursion report relates to a species listed in Schedule 3, Part 2, Division 2 of the Act, NSW DPI will manage the matter as outlined below:

- NSW DPI will generally encourage the person who reported the presence of a widespread pest to report the sighting to their nearest LLS office and relevant module of FeralScan.
- Reports relating to widespread non-indigenous pest animals such as wild dogs, foxes and wild rabbits should generally be managed by the affected land manager. The LLS can generally provide landholders with information including:
    - priority pest animals within LLS regions and local pest animal management programs,
    - the biosecurity risks of widespread priority pest animals,
    - the biosecurity duty to manage the animals under the Act, and
    - best practice management options to minimise, prevent or eradicate the biosecurity risks of the animals.

5.4. Response to a report related to cane toads

Cane toads have established pest populations in Queensland, Northern Territory, Western Australia and the far north coast region of NSW. However, individual cane toads are occasionally reported in other parts of NSW, usually due to accidental transportation of individual toads. To manage their biosecurity risks and prevent further spread of cane toads in NSW, a Cane Toad Biosecurity Zone has been established for all land within the State other than the far north coast region of NSW.

There is an obligation to report new cane toad incursions detected in the Cane Toad Biosecurity Zone and NSW DPI will encourage anyone who suspects they have identified a cane toad in the Cane Toad Biosecurity Zone (i.e. outside of the endemic area), to safely collect the animal for positive identification. If the animal is confirmed as a cane toad it must be humanely euthanased.

Cane toads detected in the Cane Toad Biosecurity Zone will be managed by NSW DPI according to the relevant steps outlined in **Sections 10-12** of this procedure, with the exception of biosecurity screening and tissue sampling, which will generally not be conducted. Where there is evidence to suggest a new breeding population of cane toads has established in the Cane Toad Biosecurity Zone a risk assessment will be conducted as outlined in **Section 7** and an active survey will be considered as outlined in **Section 4**. Cane toads reported within the endemic area will generally be managed to protect priority assets such as threatened species, as identified in the NSW Government Saving our Species program.
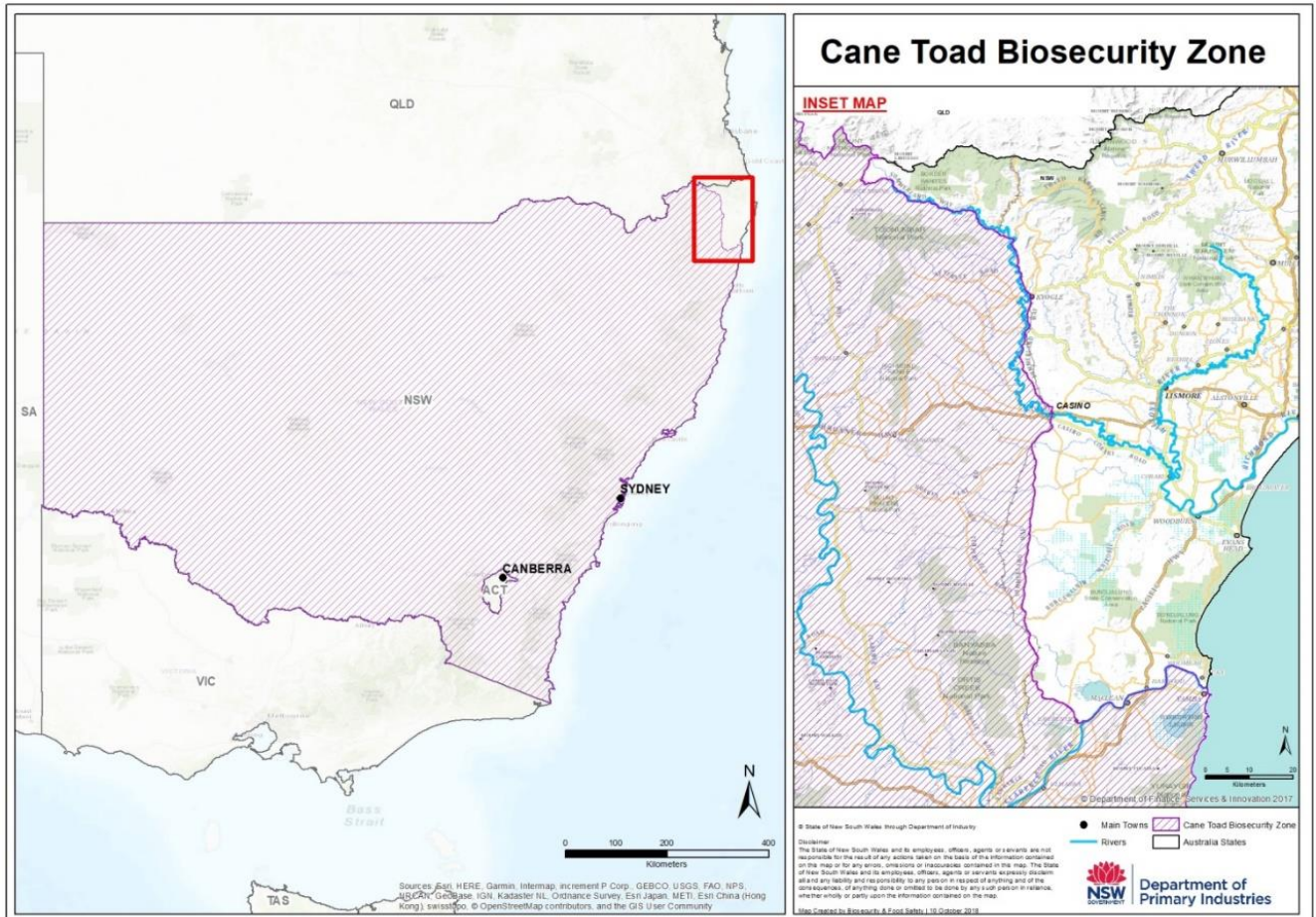
Figure1. NSW Cane Toad Biosecurity Zone map.

The Cane Toad Biosecurity Zone incorporates all areas of NSW except:

- land within the Tweed, Byron, Lismore and Ballina local government areas,
- land within the part of the local government areas of Kyogle and Richmond Valley bounded by Summerland Way in the west,
- land within the part of the local government area of Clarence Valley bounded by:
    - In the south by the part of the Clarence River east of the town of Lawrence, and
    - In the west by the part of Pringles Way between the town of Lawrence and its intersection with Summerland Way,
    - The part of Summerland Way north of its intersection with Pringles Way.

5.4.1 Guide to reporting cane toads

The map in figure 2 indicates three areas of NSW along with guidance on the management and reporting of cane toads in each area. The Cane Toad Biosecurity Zone consists of the Buffer areas (amber) and Cane toad free area (red). The endemic cane toad infestation area is shaded green.

Figure 2. NSW Cane Toad Biosecurity Zone and management areas
The above map shows three areas of NSW. The Cane Toad Biosecurity Zone consists of a Buffer area (shaded amber) and Cane toad free area (shaded red). The endemic cane toad area is shaded green.
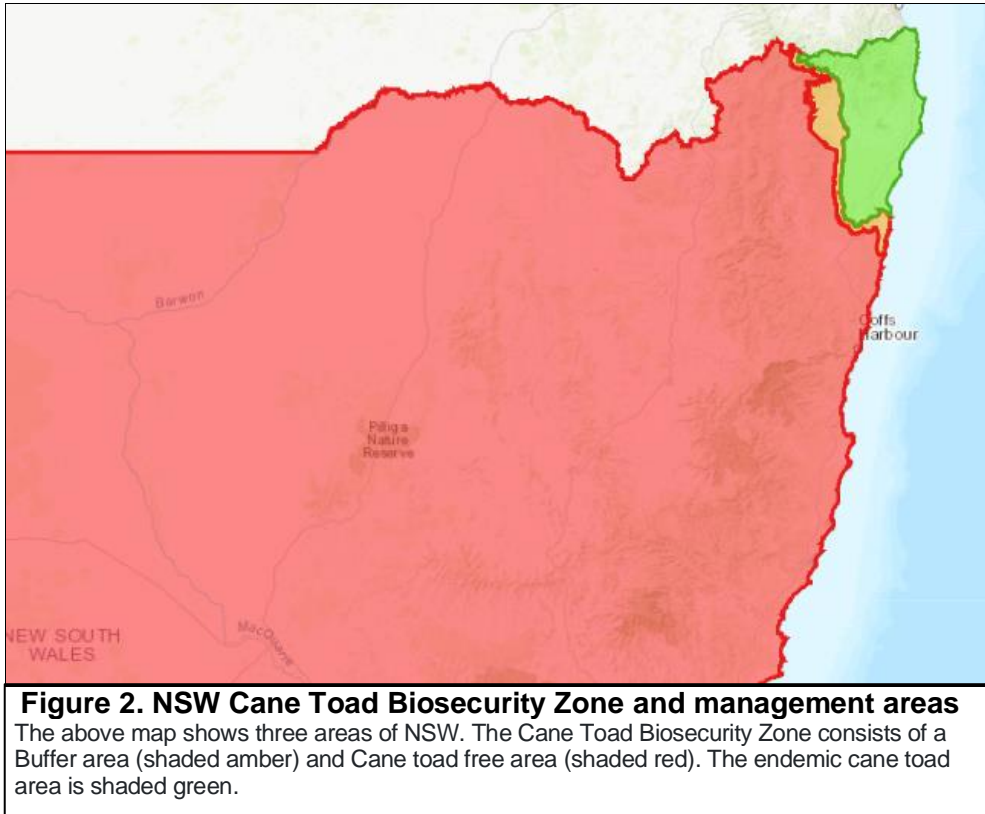
Table 1. Cane toad reporting requirements

Area	Area colour	Reporting requirements
Established cane toad population area	**Green**	Be alert to cane toads and prevent their spread into the Cane Toad Biosecurity Zone
Buffer area (Cane toad Biosecurity Zone)	**Amber**	Suspected cane toads should be photographed, carefully contained and reported. If the suspected cane toad is part of a new infestation detected **outside** a National Park it should be reported to Border Ranges-Richmond Valley Landcare Network or Clarence Landcare. If the suspected cane toad is part of a new infestation detected **inside** a National Park it should be reported to National Parks and Wildlife Service - North Coast Branch via Environment Line on 131 555 or info@environment.nsw.gov.au. No person can keep, move or release a cane toad in the Cane Toad Biosecurity Zone unless permitted for pest control, research or exhibition.
Cane toad free area (Cane toad Biosecurity Zone)	**Red**	Suspected cane toads should be photographed, carefully contained and reported using the NSW DPI Report an unusual animal form. No person can keep, move or release a cane toad from captivity in the Cane Toad Biosecurity Zone unless permitted for pest control, research or exhibition.

5.4.2   Positively identifying a suspected cane toad

If a report is received of an animal suspected to be a cane toad in the Biosecurity Zone, the person making the report should be encouraged to carefully collect the animal, photograph it and take note of the collection location. To assist with identifying and appropriately managing the animal the reporter should:

- Firstly, put on protective clothing such as disposable gloves, a long-sleeved shirt and eye protection,
- Take care when collecting the animal, as poison can ooze or squirt from glands on the side of a cane toad's head,
- Handle the animal with care and keep it in a well-ventilated container with a little water in a cool location,
- Take photos of the animal (including photos of the animal's head, body and feet), record the location where the animal was detected and provide the information to NSW DPI using the 'Report a biosecurity concern' online reporting form, or by email to invasive.species@dpi.nsw.gov.au.
- Wait until NSW DPI has positively identified the animal and provided further management instructions.

5.5. Response to a report of pest fish species

If a NIA incursion report relates to a non-indigenous fish species, the information will be relayed to the NSW DPI Aquatic Biosecurity Unit (aquatic.pests@industry.nsw.gov.au, (ph. (02) 4916 3877).

5.6.   Response to a report of a large felid

If a NIA incursion report relates to a large (>20Kg) cat sighting, NSW DPI will make a record of the report and refer the person making the report to contact the appropriate agency for assistance:

- If deemed appropriate, incursion reports of large felids that indicate concern about public safety risks the reporter will be referred to the NSW Police and/or the land manager for investigation.
- Incursion reports that indicate attacks on livestock will be referred to LLS (ph. 1300 795 299) for investigation to exclude the possibility of attack by other predators (e.g. wild dogs).

5.7. Response to a report of suspect invasive ant/tramp ant species

5.7.1   Initial response by NSW DPI to a report of suspect invasive ants/tramp ants

If a report is received of a suspect invasive ant or tramp ant species (e.g. red imported fire ant, electric ant, yellow crazy ant, or tropical fire ant), the person making the report should be provided the following instructions:

- Do not disturb the ants or ant nest(s) or try to treat the infestation as some ants are known to inflict painful bites and stings,
- If safe to do so, take clear photos of the suspect ants, including a scale (use a coin or a door key), and attach the photos to the online reporting form. Also collect and keep a sample of the suspect ants in a jar or ziploc® plastic bag in case it needs to be submitted for further investigation,
- Record the location where the suspect ant was detected and provide the information to NSW DPI using the 'Report a biosecurity concern' online reporting form, or by email to invasive.species@dpi.nsw.gov.au,
- If possible, do not disturb the suspect ants and/or ant nest(s) until NSW DPI has positively identified the ant species and provided the reporter with management guidance.

5.7.2   Collecting and recording relevant information from the reporter

NSW DPI (Invasive Species Biosecurity Unit) will confirm with the person who reported the suspect invasive ants/tramp ants that the ant(s) are still present. Photos will be requested if they have not previously been provided to NSW DPI or if photos of specific details (e.g. relative ant size, ant nests and specific parts of ants) are required. Any additional information can be requested from the reporter by NSW DPI at this stage. A list of the information that should be sought from the person reporting the suspect invasive ant/ tramp ant species can be found in **Section 8.2** of this procedure. The Invasive Species Biosecurity Unit will analyse and triage the information provided. When good quality photos are available, physical features such as the ant's size, colour, presence/absence of stinger can be used to help discount invasive ants/tramp ants.

5.7.3   Assistance with identifying suspect invasive ants/tramp ants

Where assistance is required by the Invasive Species Biosecurity Unit to analyse the information in a suspect tramp ant/invasive ant report, the Biosecurity Collections Unit will be emailed the following information via biosecurity.collections@dpi.nsw.gov.au:

- the original biosecurity report and/or email information provided by the reporter,
- good quality photographs of the suspect ant(s), nest(s) etc.,
- the CM9 reference number for the file where the biosecurity report, photos and other information on the case are recorded.

The Biosecurity Collections Unit analyses the available information and produces a formal identification report. The formal identification report is emailed to invasive.species@dpi.nsw.gov.au quoting the relevant CM9 reference number. The Invasive Species Biosecurity Unit will update CM9 records with the formal identification report provided by the Biosecurity Collections Unit.

5.7.4 Collection of physical samples

In some cases, where suspect invasive ants/tramp-ants can't be identified from photographs or where NSW DPI otherwise considers it necessary, the Invasive Species Biosecurity Unit may arrange for samples of ants to be collected by authorised officers of NSW DPI, LLS, LGA or the original reporter. Note: to provide a higher level of public safety and to ensure samples are managed promptly, where possible, suspect invasive ant/tramp ant samples should be collected by authorised officers.

One or more of the suspect invasive ants/tramp ants should be collected in a paper tissue and sealed in a plastic ziploc bag or specimen jar. The ant sample in the plastic ziploc bag or specimen jar should be placed in a freezer overnight then mailed with an Insect Identification Request Form to the Biosecurity Collections Unit for formal identification.

Guideline to fees

Formal identification of suspect invasive ants/tramp ants may be required to ensure best practice management is implemented when required. Generally, where DPI considers it necessary for ant samples to be collected and formally identified, no fee will be charged to third parties. However, a fee may be charged to a third party who submits an ant sample to DPI with a request for formal species identification and where DPI does not consider the case to involve a biosecurity risk. The following fees are based on recovery of costs for identifying suspect invasive ants/tramp ants:

- Species identification using a dissecting microscope – $50,
- Species identification using molecular techniques - $70 - $220.

5.7.5 Mailing ant samples to Biosecurity Collections Unit for formal identification

Ant samples mailed to the Biosecurity Collections Unit must be accompanied by a completed Insect Identification Request Form - available for download from: https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/about-us/services/laboratory-services/sample-submission.

Ant samples must be 'double-bagged' by placing the frozen ziploc® bag containing the sampled ant(s) inside a second plastic bag. The double-bagged sample should then be packed into a registered mail mailbag. The person mailing the sample should ensure the Biosecurity Collections Unit is notified of the suspect invasive ant/tramp ant sample being mailed in by calling in advance on 02 6391 3988, or emailing: biosecurity.collections@dpi.nsw.gov.au.

Refer to "Prohibited Matter (Diagnostics) Exemption Order 2019" for dealing with ant samples suspected to be classed as prohibited matter under the NSW *Biosecurity Act 2015*.

Samples should be mailed in an Australia Post mailbag via registered mail. The tracking number sticker for each mailbag labelled as 'Sender to keep' (see Figure 3) for each mail bag should be peeled off and retained in case the mail bag needs to be traced.

Figure 3. Registered mail tracking number

Suspect invasive ant/tramp ant samples should be addressed to:

Biosecurity Collections
Orange Agricultural Institute
1447 Forest Road
Orange NSW 2800

5.7.6 Record keeping requirements for suspect invasive ant/tramp ant species

Reports of suspect invasive ant/tramp ant species should be recorded in the NSW DPI record management system by the Invasive Species Biosecurity Unit using an individual subfolder for each report received.

- The CM9 reference number, report details, photos and response actions taken will be summarised in the pest animal incursions spreadsheet,
- When the Biosecurity Collections Unit provides an identification report, the details of the analysis should be emailed to invasive.species@dpi.nsw.gov.au quoting the relevant CM9 reference number,
- The Invasive Species Biosecurity Unit will update CM9 records with analysis details provided by the Biosecurity Collections Unit.

5.7.7 Reporting of suspect invasive ant/tramp ant formal identification work

Where appropriate, the Invasive Species Biosecurity Unit will respond to the original reporter, coordinate active management activities and report to relevant authorities (such as the LGA, LLS, Chief Plant Protection Officer and National Biosecurity Ministerial Consultative Committee).

6. Conducting a risk assessment on the data received in a NIA incursion report

Most NIA incursion reports relate to animal species that are well known in terms of their biosecurity risks and methods of management. However, in cases where an incursion report relates to a less well-known species or where a NSW DPI Compliance Operation is planned, a risk assessment may need to be conducted based on the information provided in the initial NIA incursion report and any other supplementary information available. The completed risk assessment should be used to guide appropriate management decisions. The risk assessment should consider risk factors including biosecurity impacts, staff and public health and safety, animal welfare and any other issues identified. The following general steps will be taken by NSW DPI when conducting a risk assessment:

- Consult the relevant NIA pre-incursion plan for general guidance on managing the incursion and identify the specific hazards involved with the species. Pre-incursion plans prepared by the Victorian government and PestSmart exist for:
  - Terrestrial snakes (INT17/181933)
  - Small Mammalian Carnivores (INT17/185528)
  - Vipers (INT17/185526)
  - Opossum (INT17/185523)
  - Squirrels (INT17/185522)
  - Geckos (INT17/185521)
  - Salamanders and Newts (INT17/185520)
  - Pythons and Boas (INT17/185518)
  - Large Herbivores (INT17/185516)
  - Toads and Frogs (INT17/185514)
  - Turtles and Tortoises (INT17/185513)
  - Birds (INT17/185512)
  - Asian Black-spined Toad (INT20/14754)

Identify any hazards associated with the site the NIA incursion is located at. Document the site risk assessment using the site assessment form,

- Assess the degree of risk created by the hazards,
- Determine how to eliminate risks and if not possible, determine appropriate measures to control the risks, including improving existing controls such as ensuring:
- appropriate levels of supervision are provided,
- appropriate instruction, education and training is provided to people managing the incursion, and
- appropriate personal protective equipment is available and used,
- Record any action or work procedure established to manage an identified risk. A hazard and incident risk assessment template is available to record the risk assessment process,
- Conduct an audit to determine if the control measures were implemented and the degree of success of the control measures.

7. Conducting a risk assessment on a suspected established NIA population

Depending on the outcome of the investigation into the initial NIA incursion report, a further risk assessment may need to be conducted if there is reasonable suspicion of, or confirmation of, additional NIAs indicating an established population of the species. Such a risk assessment should consider:

- biosecurity risks of an NIA population,

- likelihood of an NIA establishing and spreading,
- potential economic impacts, including those arising from negative consequences to human, animal and/or plant life, health and relevant aspects of primary production and/or business,
- potential environmental impacts, including negative changes to the environment, biodiversity or an ecosystem, both natural or man-made, terrestrial, or aquatic, and
- potential social amenity impacts, including negative changes to human infrastructure and health.

Potential hazards from additional activities undertaken to manage an outbreak, should also be included in the risk assessment. A hazard and incident risk assessment template is available to record the risk assessment process. Additional work procedures and subsequent actions relating to the management of the incursion should also be documented.

8. Management of NIA incursion data

The details of a NIA incursion report are to be entered into NSW DPI's record management system (INT17/79736) and should contain the following information for vertebrates:

- Incident:
    - unique Incident ID
    - date of detection
- Animal:
    - scientific name
    - common name
    - CITES category
    - EIC risk category
    - Taxonomic class (bird, reptile, amphibian, mammal)
    - number of animals
    - sex of animals
    - stage/form of animals
    - status/condition of animals when found
    - fate of animals
- Location:
    - town or area name
    - street address
    - postcode
    - Property Identification Code (if applicable)
    - GIS coordinates (latitude and longitude)
- Detection:
    - At large – reported/seen/observed, caught in the wild, intercepted at the border or at a private premises, other
    - Captive – seized/surrendered, reported private keeping, reported trade/advert, reported smuggled/import, reported escaped/stolen, other.
    - Stowaway – reported/seen/observed, intercepted at the border or at private premises, other
    - Smuggled – reported/seen/observed, intercepted at the border or at private premises, seized/surrendered, other
    - Pathway – escaped/released from captivity, captive trade, import, existing population – feral or established, transported stowaway – air, sea, train, truck, private vehicle, mail centre, other, unknown
- Other details:
    - reporter name and contact details
    - action taken to manage incursion
    - compliance action taken (if any)
    - police report number (if applicable)
    - Sample Manager Job Number (if applicable)
    - Australian Centre for Wildlife Genomics identification number (if applicable)

- o other information relating to the incident
- o CITES Appendix
- o Byte reference number
- o details of any follow up actions and results

For reports of suspect invasive ants/tramp ants the details of the NIA incursion report are to be entered into NSW DPI's record management system (INT17/79736) and should contain the following information:

- Incident:
  - o unique Incident ID (CM9 file name) and Sample Manager Number
  - o date of detection
  - o reporter name and contact details (phone number, email address)
  - o reporter description (e.g. member of public, commercial, LGA, LLS)
- Location:
  - o town or area name
  - o street address
  - o postcode
  - o GIS coordinates (latitude and longitude)
- Animal:
  - o scientific name (confirmed by Biosecurity Collections)
  - o common name (confirmed by Biosecurity Collections)
  - o number of ants (e.g. single, less than 10, more than 10, nest, more than one nest)
  - o status/condition of ants when detected
  - o fate of ants (not managed, management in process, management complete)
- Detection:
  - o At large – reported/seen/observed,
  - o Stowaway – reported/seen/observed, intercepted at the border or at private premises, other
  - o Smuggled – reported/seen/observed, intercepted at the border or at private premises, seized/surrendered, other
  - o Pathway – escaped/released from captivity, captive trade, import, existing population – feral or established, transported stowaway – air, sea, train, truck, private vehicle, mail centre, other, unknown
- Other details:
  - o action taken to manage report (e.g. contacted reporter, requested photos/samples, forwarded info to Biosecurity Collections for analysis), Sample voucher number.
  - o results of analysis
  - o other information relating to the incident
  - o Byte reference number

- If photos, lab reports and/or other documents are generated during an NIA incursion management program, an additional subfolder is to be created in NSW DPI's record management system for each incident to contain the generated documents.
- To facilitate the sharing of information between agencies, data for any NIA incursion that results in a tissue sample being taken will be added to a google sheet database. This database will be shared (by invitation only) between relevant persons from NSW DPI and the Australian Centre for Wildlife Genomics (ACWG). Information stored in the google sheet database must not contain any private personal information and should only contain the basic details required for tracing the sample to its origin such as reference numbers, species, detection date and location.

9. Managing a live NIA incursion in the open environment

After a risk assessment has been conducted and appropriate controls have been implemented to manage the risks, NSW DPI will encourage the person reporting the NIA incursion to safely and humanely contain the NIA. If containment of the animal is not considered safe or possible, the

location of the animal should be monitored by the person reporting the incursion, so that suitably qualified and equipped personnel can be organised to contain the NIA. NSW DPI will consider whether it is necessary to seek assistance from the following agencies to contain the NIA:

- NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service - Manager, Pests and Weeds (Ph. 9585 6658)
- NSW WIRES – Rescue Office Manager or Wildlife Rescue Line (Ph. 1300 094 737)
- NSW RSPCA
- Greater Sydney LLS – Manager Biosecurity & Emergency Services
- State LLS - Business Partner Biosecurity and Emergency Management (Ph. 69236321)
- LGA Pest Animal Ranger or Senior Ecologist
- Other wildlife care organisations – (see INT17/75174).
- If the NIA incursion cannot be captured and is on public land, NSW DPI will record the details and contact the organisation responsible for managing the land to inform them of the sighting if this has not already occurred.

10. Managing a report of a NIA incursion where the animal has already been euthanased

In the case of an NIA incursion report where the animal has been euthanased prior to reporting, NSW DPI will contact the person reporting the information.

- NSW DPI will confirm that the reporter still has the animal and should request photos of the animal (if they have not previously been provided), or may request photos of specific animal details if it is safe for such photos to be taken. Any additional information on the NIA incursion should also be requested by NSW DPI at this stage. A list of the information that should be sought from the person reporting the NIA incursion information can be found in **Section 8** of this procedure.
- If possible, NSW DPI will confirm the identification of the animal by analysing the photographs and information provided in the report. If identification assistance is required, the Australian Museum may be contacted.
- NSW DPI will contact the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment if the NIA is identified as a species listed under CITES to provide details on the case.
- NSW DPI will consider the merits of further analysis and where desirable and practical arrange for the NIA carcass to be transported to the State Veterinary Diagnostics Laboratory (SVDL).
- When a decision is made to transport a carcass to the SVDL, as the preferred option, the euthanased animal carcass is to be chilled or put on ice if it can be delivered to the SVDL within 15 hours (same day or overnight) of euthanasia. Otherwise, the carcass should be frozen before transportation to the SVDL. If frozen, NSW DPI should discuss with staff of SVDL the size of the animal(s) and whether sufficient freezer space is available at the SVDL.
- The euthanased animal should be packaged for transport to the SVDL by wrapping in two plastic bags, and placing in an esky with ice or ice bricks. NSW DPI will assist with transportation by:
  - sending the following information to the person with the euthanased animal:
    - a pre-filled Veterinary Specimen Advice form with current SVDL quote code (see INT17/251832),
    - a courier consignment note and (when available) courier booking information,
    - confirmation of how to pack the specimen in an esky,
    - a request for the third party to supply an invoice for any work performed so that payment can be made as efficiently as possible, such as by a Pcard payment,

- instructions to label the package as follows:

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To:          NSW DPI Laboratory Services
             EMAI
             Woodbridge Rd
             Menangle NSW 2568


             Emergency 24hr contact name and number
             UN3373 Biological Substance Category B label
             Orientation label
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- o arrange courier transport of the package to the SVDL,
- o send a prepaid consignment note to the third party facility via email. If a consignment note is not available, request that SVDL Customer Service (ph.1800 675623, option '1') send a prepaid consignment note to the third party facility via email. *NOTE: SVDL Customer service is not available after 4 pm on weekdays or on weekends. Do not arrange transport if a consignment note cannot be obtained,*
- o provide email notification to the SVDL Team Leader Biosecurity and Senior Technical Officer of incoming NIA(s),
- o If possible, alert the SVDL sample reception desk (emai.srd@dpi.nsw.gov.au) and the EMAI Veterinary Pathology Team (emai.vetpathology@dpi.nsw.gov.au) 24 - 48 hours prior to the arrival of the package containing the NIA(s) so that the animal(s) can be pre-booked into the system and a Sample Manager number can be assigned as soon as possible (prior notice of information at SVDL will help to prevent samples becoming mixed up). The advisory email should include the veterinary specimen advice form, and;
- o liaise with Australian Museum ACWG Manager and other research groups, if appropriate, to determine if any additional sampling and/or the whole carcass is required by these groups. Instruct SVDL as required.

11. Managing a report of a dead NIA incursion - animal found in the open environment

In the case of a report of a dead NIA detected in the open environment, NSW DPI will request details about how long the animal has been dead for, the specific circumstances of the incident, and if the person reporting the information still has the animal or access to it.

- NSW DPI will arrange for a qualified person to positively identify the NIA as soon as practicable. Generally, positive identification of a dead NIA will be conducted using photographs of the animal carcass. Where third party and NSW DPI staff are unable to positively identify the NIA, the Australian Museum's Centre for Wildlife Genomics should be contacted
- If the NIA has been dead for less than 24 hours, NSW DPI will request that the animal carcass is taken from the open environment, packaged for transport by wrapping it in two plastic bags, frozen and placed in an esky with ice or ice bricks.
- NSW DPI will consider the merits of further analysis and where desirable and practical arrange for the NIA carcass to be transported to the SVDL as per the instructions in **Section 10**.
- If the NIA has been dead for more than 24 hours without refrigeration (or the person reporting the NIA incursion indicates the carcass is starting to degrade), NSW DPI will liaise with the ACWG Manager and other research groups, if appropriate, to determine if the carcass is still of use. If of use, the carcass should be frozen (if required) and transported to the Australian Museum with all necessary paperwork. NSW DPI will ensure that the person(s) handling the NIA carcass is instructed on appropriate WH&S measures.

12. Managing live NIA incursions after containment

- NSW DPI will confirm with the person reporting the NIA incursion that they still have the animal(s) and request photos of the animal(s) if they have not previously been provided or if photos of specific animal details are required (and it is safe for such photos to be taken). Any additional information on the NIA incursion can be requested by NSW DPI at this stage. A list of the information that should be sought from the person reporting the NIA incursion can be found in **Section 8** of this procedure.
- If possible, NSW DPI will confirm the identification of the NIA incursion by analysing the photographs and information provided in the report. If assistance is required to identify the NIA incursion the Australian Museum's Centre for Wildlife Genomics should be contacted
- As part of the identification process the CITES status (if any) of the NIA incursion should be determined. NSW DPI will contact the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment if the NIA incursion is identified as a species listed under CITES to provide details on the case.
- NSW DPI will liaise with the ACWG Manager and other research groups, if appropriate, to determine if they are interested in obtaining additional samples and/or the whole carcass and obtain instructions on any requirements for this.

13. Management of live NIAs (other than CITES Appendix I) after containment

- Where it is desirable and practicable live NIAs will be contained and transported to the SVDL. If necessary (prior to transportation to the SVDL), NIAs may be temporarily moved to a local facility with capacity to manage the biosecurity risks. NSW DPI will arrange for the containment and transport of the NIA incursion by one of the following means:
    - LLS Officer / NSW DPI Compliance Officer,
    - Licenced wildlife handler,
    - Member of the public (if the animal is not considered to represent a danger to them or the community),
    - If none of the above is possible, NSW DPI will contact a private animal carrier/ transporter to collect and transport the animal,
- Where necessary, NSW DPI will contact a third party facility to determine if they are willing and able to admit the NIA (prior to transportation to the SVDL),
- NSW DPI will arrange for a qualified person to positively identify the NIA as soon as practicable. Where third party and NSW DPI staff are unable to positively identify the NIA, Australian Museum's Centre for Wildlife Genomics should be contacted,
- NSW DPI will contact the Commonwealth Department of Environment and Energy if the NIA is identified as a species listed under CITES to provide details on the case,
- Once the NIA incursion is confirmed to be a Prohibited Dealing and a non-CITES I listed the animal will be euthanased,
- As the preferred option, the euthanased animal carcass is to be chilled or put on ice if it can be delivered to the SVDL within 15 hours (same day or overnight) of euthanasia. Otherwise, the carcass should be frozen before transportation to the SVDL. If frozen, NSW DPI should discuss with staff of SVDL the size of the animal(s) and whether sufficient freezer storage space is available at the SVDL.

14. Biosecurity screening and tissue sampling of non-CITES I listed NIAs

The NIAs sent to the SVDL will be photographed, undergo biosecurity screening, demographic information will be collected and tissue samples taken for storage/genetic testing. Further instructions about additional sampling, carcass storage, treatment and transportation may be provided by NSW DPI, the ACWG, or other research groups. When necessary, Chain of Custody procedures should be adhered to with all relevant samples generating a new 'Chain of Custody' form (INT17/81443) as per the instructions in **Section 19**.

14.1. Biosecurity screening of non-CITES Appendix I listed NIAs

Generally, NIAs will undergo necropsy, gross examination of tissues and histopathology where the condition of the carcass is suitable. Additional specific tests may be carried out depending on the type of animal submitted and according to the relevant disease risks of the particular NIA. Female animals will be checked for breeding status.

- Copies of all photos and lab reports are to be emailed to invasive.species@dpi.nsw.gov.au for filing in NSW DPI's record management system.
- Disease exclusion lists (for diseases considered to have economic, environmental and/or human health risks) have been compiled for NIA species that are regularly reported to NSW DPI. The disease exclusion lists should be consulted during the biosecurity screening process. The Animal Biosecurity Unit should be consulted for advice on disease risks where a NIA species is not included on in the disease exclusion list. (i.e. by notifying the duty vet via animal.biosecurity@dpi.nsw.gov.au and following up with face to face discussion in Orange HO where possible) and identifying when something needs to be escalated e.g. requires expedited transport.

14.2. Genetic Sampling of non-CITES I listed NIAs

The tissue samples taken from NIAs are to be preserved by the SVDL in Dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO) or 'RNA-Later' reagent. Once the tissue samples are preserved in reagent, the samples are to be couriered to ACWG for storage at - 80°C with all required paperwork.

15. Management of live CITES I listed animals reported as NIA incursions

When a NIA is positively identified as a species included in the CITES Appendix I list, the NSW DPI Animal Welfare Unit will be contacted for advice on the availability of licensed facilities that can house the animal. If re-homing the animal within an appropriately licensed Australian facility is not possible, the animal will generally be euthanased and managed as outlined in the procedures for managing non-CITES Appendix I listed animals.

- If a CITES Appendix I listed animal requires temporary accommodation before being re-housed in a licensed facility, NSW DPI will attempt to house the animal at:
  - A Taronga Conservation Society Wildlife Hospital (Sydney or Dubbo).
  - NSW RSPCA facility
  - Licensed wildlife care facilities should also be considered as options for temporary housing of the animal.
- Where possible, non-lethal DNA collection using a blood card, biosecurity screening samples taken via swabs and photographs of the CITES Appendix I listed animal should be taken. Any samples generated will be sent to the ACWG and the SVDL respectively. Samples should be addressed as outlined in **Section 10.**

16. Handling and transporting live NIA incursions

An unidentified animal, suspected of being a NIA incursion, must be treated and managed as a biosecurity risk which may be dangerous to the economy, environment and/or people. An animal should only be handled when it is safe to do so and only by a person who has training and experience with handling of the specific (or closely related) species. Inexperienced NSW DPI staff, staff of allied agencies and members of the public should seek expert assistance before managing a NIA. The IP&A Unit can assist with identifying and deploying appropriately skilled personnel.

- Anyone involved in handling a NIA incursion animal should take all necessary steps to protect themselves from the risk of infection with zoonotic diseases by wearing and safely disposing of used personal protective equipment and handling equipment. NSW DPI has produced a guide on the use of personal protective equipment.

- All NIAs must be transported in containers or cages that are escape-proof, crush-proof, safe, well ventilated and of an appropriate size.
  - Transport containers must be secured to prevent animal escape, using screws, locks, cable ties or other suitable fasteners
  - Transport containers must not be placed in direct sunlight, water or draughts and the animal must not be subject to extremes of temperature during transport
- Reptile requirements:
  - Most reptiles, except larger species or individuals, should also be contained inside of a cotton or calico bag within the transport box.
  - A venomous snake must be transported in a lockable container with the sign 'Danger – venomous snake' printed on the outside of the container. The species identity and number of animals contained must also be clearly visible on the container label.
  - Reptiles must not be fed immediately prior to or during transport due to the risk of regurgitation.
  - Reptiles must have access to water prior to transportation to prevent dehydration. This may involve placing the animal in shallow tepid water for an appropriate time prior to departure. This is particularly important for juveniles.
- Small mammal requirements:
  - To allow small mammals to hide, a wire mesh cage, such as a cat carrier, with newspaper and a towel or calico bag lining the base, should be used. A towel or sheet should cover the cage carrying small mammals to provide darkness.

17. Management of NIA incursions associated with illegal activity

Internationally, it is estimated that tens of thousands of businesses and individuals are involved in advertising, selling and transporting NIAs (considered as prohibited dealings in NSW) for use as collectables, trophies, artefacts, food and folk medicine. The array of mechanisms for making transactions is highly diverse, including local networks of enthusiasts, standard retail websites, auction sites, local business and personal for sale and wanted advertisements, portals that facilitate communication between buyers and sellers, and specialty chat forums. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Foursquare are further changing the landscape, particularly through informal retail arrangements.

Where a NIA incursion report indicates that a NIA is being dealt with in breach of the Act (e.g. where an animal listed as a prohibited dealing is alleged to be illegally kept, bred, transported, or sold etc.), the information in the report will be analysed by the NSW DPI.

- All information in relation to the NIA incursion will be saved in a dedicated container within the NSW DPI records management system.
- A risk assessment will be conducted by the NSW DPI using the information available.
- Prior to 1 July 2017, NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS) regulated the private keeping of non-indigenous reptiles in NSW and continues to have a role in regulating the private keeping of native fauna in NSW. For these reasons, NPWS and NSW DPI should be contacted to determine if there are any current or expired licences, permits or registrations issued by NPWS or NSW DPI for the species under investigation or similar species, in association with the person or property of interest.

When an NIA incursion report relates to illegal keeping of NIAs, a compliance investigation may need to be conducted by NSW DPI as outlined in the Regulatory Compliance Investigations Policy. All reports of alleged illegal activity requiring a Compliance Unit investigation should be:

- recorded in the records management system (see **Section 8**),
- reported to the NSW DPI Compliance Unit using the BFS Investigations Information Form, and emailed to quarantine@dpi.nsw.gov.au, and
- reporting the information to the NSW Police should also be considered. Under Section 363(1) of the Act, a police officer is taken to be an authorised officer and may exercise all of the functions of an authorised officer under the Act, including seizing NIA incursions.

18. Seizing a non-indigenous animal

The seizure and management of a seized NIA should be conducted as outlined in the following procedures:

- Functions of authorised officers in relation to the seizure and destruction of property Procedure,
- Destruction, Sale or Disposal of things under the *Biosecurity Act 2015* Procedure

In the event that a NIA is considered dangerous or unable to be managed alone by the authorised officer, the authorised officer should seek assistance. An authorised officer can use the assistance of any person they consider as necessary to safely conduct the seizure procedure, in conjunction with **Section 1** of this procedure (WH&S). Guidelines on containing, handling and transporting a NIA are provided in **Section 16** of this procedure. As soon as practicable, a seized NIA should be positively identified by a person with relevant professional training or experience in non-indigenous animal identification. For additional assistance with the identification of the NIA, the ISB Unit can be contacted and photos of the animal can be emailed to invasive.species@dpi.nsw.gov.au.

19. Managing the Chain of Custody process for a seized NIA incursion

- A seized NIA, associated items, and any resultant tissue or biological samples taken in relation to the investigation, must be managed using a 'Chain of Custody' form for each individual item.
- The NSW DPI 'Chain of Custody' Procedure (INT17/78964) and the 'Chain of Custody' template form (INT17/81443) should be accessed from the NSW DPI Records Management System.
- Each time a seized item is transferred from one person to another (i.e. changes hands) the 'Chain of Custody' form must be completed by both the person releasing the seized item and the person receiving the seized item. Once the form is signed by both parties, the 'Chain of Custody' form must be photographed and the image emailed to invasive.species@dpi.nsw.gov.au in order for the seized item to be traced.
- When emailing the SVDL about items that are subject to 'Chain of Custody', indicate clearly at the top of the email by typing '**Chain of Custody**' using a bold, red font. Additionally, the first bullet point on the veterinary specimen advice form should indicate in a bold, red font that the specimen is subject to Chain of Custody.
- Because of the sensitive nature of some specimens, a specialist courier such as Labcabs may be necessary to courier specimens that are subject to Chain of Custody.

20. Temporarily housing a seized NIA or other seized item

Where necessary, NSW DPI will arrange for a seized NIA or other seized item to be temporarily housed in one of the following facilities:

- an appropriately licensed facility such as a zoo,
- an authorised fauna rehabilitator (INT17/75174),
- the premises from which the NIA was seized (in-situ seizure), with appropriate safeguards to reduce the risk that the NIA will be inappropriately disposed of by the illegal keeper or otherwise managed inappropriately.

21. Seizing a NIA in-situ (animal seized but not removed from location)

Consideration should be given to seizing a NIA in-situ if one or more of the following apply:

- the status of a person's authority to keep the NIA (Biosecurity Permit, Biosecurity Registration, Exhibited Animals Protection Act licence or Animal Research Act licence) is uncertain and needs to be determined by NSW DPI,
- the welfare of the animal may be compromised if trained people and equipment are not employed to manage the handling and transport of the animal,
- it is unsafe for the authorised officer to handle and transport the animal without specialised equipment and/or the assistance of trained personnel, or;
- it is not otherwise practical to take possession of the animal (e.g. due to the presence of multiple animals or the lack of available temporary housing facilities).

22. Notification after NSW Police investigation involving the seizure of an NIA

Under Section 363(1) of the Act, a police officer is taken to be an authorised officer and may exercise all of the functions of an authorised officer under the Act including seizing NIAs. Where a NIA is seized by NSW Police without NSW DPI involvement, NSW DPI will:

- contact the relevant police officer and obtain the following information which will be recorded in the relevant spreadsheet in NSW DPI's record management system:
  - o the police report number for the event,
  - o the person(s) of interest in the incident details,
  - o details about the circumstances including the location of the seizure, and the current location of the seized animal, and
  - o information on the NIA incursion, as outlined in **Section 8** of this procedure.
- contact the person/organisation that has possession of the NIA incursion and follow procedures outlined in **Sections 9 - 13** as relevant,
- determine from the police officer involved and/or the BFS Compliance Unit if it is prudent to follow the 'Chain of Custody' process and if prosecution under the Act or other legislation is being considered,
- follow 'Chain of Custody' process if required (**see Section 19**).

23. Managing suspected or confirmed pest population level NIA incursions

Once a NIA pest population becomes established, eradication (i.e. complete and permanent removal of a pest species) is often difficult to achieve. It is therefore essential to minimise the risk of new NIAs entering a region and to quickly remove individuals before they have a chance to spread and establish breeding populations.

Where a report of a non-indigenous animal incursion is suspected or confirmed to involve a population level NIA incursion, (outbreak) or the incursion has potential to be of national significance, a coordinated response may be required. NEBRA may come into effect, or NSW biosecurity incident management procedures may be considered for implementation. In such cases NSW DPI will:

- Inform the NSW Chief Animal Health and/or NSW Chief Plant Protection Officer of the incursion
- coordinate the process of verifying a NIA outbreak, positively identify the species and undertake a risk assessment using the available information (see **Sections 6 and 7** of this procedure),
- convene a forum discussion with appropriately qualified staff of allied NSW Government agencies (NSW DPIE, NSW LGA and LLS), to discuss and agree on the following:
  - o an appropriate management response to a NIA outbreak,
  - o ongoing surveillance requirements for an NIA outbreak,
  - o allocation of resources and cost-sharing arrangements to manage the NIA outbreak, and
  - o within 24 hours of initially receiving a report of a NIA incursion, determine if the report has potential to be a matter of national significance, requiring the IP&A Director to notify the Commonwealth Government Chief Environmental Biosecurity Officer.

- coordinate allied NSW Government agencies participating in a NIA incursion surveillance and management program. Participation may include:
  - organisations contributing to agreed NIA incursion surveillance and management activities, including sharing the costs of these activities,
  - determining and agreeing on the agency, group of agencies or third parties with the most appropriate knowledge, skills and on-ground resources to conduct the NIA incursion management activities, regardless of the land tenure that the NIA incursion is located on,
  - sharing of data collected during NIA incursion monitoring, surveillance and management activities with other allied organisations,
  - where relevant, informing neighbouring jurisdictions and stakeholders of a NIA incursion and associated management program,
  - joint-management activities where NIA incursions occur across state and territory borders,
  - increased government agency, industry and community awareness and engagement in NIA management activities and related issues.

24. Reporting a pest population level NIA according to the NEBRA guidelines

The NEBRA may apply if there is uncertainty as to whether the NIA outbreak can be managed under existing cost-sharing arrangements or otherwise where the NIA incursion is of national significance. Within 24 hours of initially receiving a NIA incursion report, the IP&A Director is required to notify the Commonwealth Government Chief Environmental Biosecurity Officer of the NIA incursion or outbreak.

Upon notification of a significant NIA incursion or outbreak, the parties to the NEBRA will form the National Biosecurity Management Consultative Committee (NBMCC), which will confirm the existence of the incursion and notify all parties of the incursion. The NBMCC, along with the National Biosecurity Management Group (NBMG) (if it is requested to form), will decide if the outbreak can be managed under pre-existing cost-sharing arrangements, and if not, whether the outbreak is nationally significant and likely to be eradicable. If these conditions are met, and the Incident Action Plan (response plan - prepared by NSW DPI in accordance with NEBRA requirements with the assistance of other parties) is approved, then the National Environmental Biosecurity Response is activated under NEBRA. If these conditions are not met, then NSW DPI is responsible for determining and undertaking an appropriate response to the incursion (as outlined in **Sections 6 & 7** of this procedure).

The rapid (emergency) response actions undertaken must not be delayed or impeded during the formation of the Incident Response Plan or while seeking NEBRA approval (see below).

25. Rapid (emergency) assessment

NSW DPI will conduct and document a rapid (emergency) assessment of the population level NIA incursion. The relevant pre-incursion plan (see **Section 6**) will be consulted for guidance on managing WH&S issues, planning a site assessment, containment of NIAs, transport of live NIAs, euthanasia options and eradication techniques, biosecurity screening tests, sampling and autopsy requirements, and carcass disposal options. A site assessment plan will be developed for the population level NIA incursion by the NSW DPI IP&A Unit in consultation with suitably experienced/ qualified people to ensure effective management of the particular NIA species at the location of the incident. The site assessment plan will be developed using the NSW DPI site assessment template. Results from the site survey plan will be used to inform the Rapid (Emergency) Assessment to confirm the existence of an outbreak and to determine the distribution and abundance of a population level NIA incursion. The following features should be included in a rapid (emergency) assessment:

- A site assessment plan, including:
  - coordination of available resources in allied agencies
  - coordination and delivery of any specialised essential training if required

- o agreement on the appropriate protocol for the surveying and monitoring techniques for the NIA incursion species
- Suitable site survey techniques, including:
  - o active visual searches,
  - o temporary barriers and traps to intercept animals,
  - o remote cameras, and/or
  - o coordination of site surveys utilising personnel with appropriate scientific expertise and experience.

The rapid (emergency) assessment should also include a risk assessment for the population level NIA incursion outbreak which should include the potential environmental, health and economic impacts of the incident, (see **Section 6** for reference to pre-incursion plans).

The rapid (emergency) assessment must include a set of recommended coordinated actions aimed at containing and eradicating the NIA population. The agreed coordinated actions will inform the rapid (emergency) response, which will be enacted whilst an Incident Action Plan is developed (see **Section 28**) and consideration under NEBRA (if appropriate).

26. Rapid (Emergency) Response

The rapid (emergency) response is developed and implemented by NSW DPI, with the assistance of other relevant agencies. This response involves a set of coordinated actions to prevent further spread of the NIA outbreak and to begin eradicating the NIA population while an Incident Action Plan is developed and implemented.

27. Development of the Incident Action Plan

The Incident Action Plan is to be developed by the NSW DPI IP&A Unit in consultation with species and technical experts as required. The Incident Action Plan should be documented in the NSW DPI Incident Action Plan template. The plan should:

- refer to the relevant pre-incursion plan for the species (see **Section 6**)
- incorporate any management actions already undertaken in response to the incursion, and any management actions that are in progress as part of the Rapid (Emergency) Response.

The IP&A Director must approve the Incident Action Plan before it is implemented. The Incident Action Plan may include the following components:

27.1.   National significance assessment

The national significance of the NIA incursion outbreak should be assessed according to criteria relating to the environment, people, including human infrastructure and social amenity, and business activity. The national significance assessment is an essential component for the enactment of NEBRA. A comprehensive guideline for completing a national significance assessment can be found in the NEBRA.

27.2.   Technical feasibility analysis

Assessing the feasibility of the proposed response actions requires consultation with technical and species experts and should be analysed with consideration and advice provided for the following criteria:

- the capability to accurately diagnose or identify the NIA,
- the effectiveness of the control technique options, including a recommendation on the control technique likely to be the most cost-effective in eradicating the NIA,
- the level of confidence that all individual NIAs present (including at all life stages) can be removed/destroyed by the recommended control techniques,

- the level of confidence that it is possible to remove the organisms at a faster rate than they can propagate until the population is reduced to a non-viable density,
- confirmation that the recommended control techniques are publicly acceptable (taking into consideration cultural and social values, humaneness, public health impacts, non-target impacts and environmental impacts),
- the Rapid Emergency Response actions that have been put in place,
- endemic pest or disease controls that may limit or prevent establishment,
- any legislative impediments to undertaking an emergency response,
- the known area of infestation,
- the likely distribution of the NIA,
- identification of the pathways for the entry into and spread within Australia of the NIA,
- the level of confidence that further introductions are sufficiently low,
- the dispersal ability of the NIA,
- the level of confidence that the NIA is detectable at very low densities and that all sites affected by the outbreak have been or can be found,
- surveillance activities that are in place or could be put in place to confirm proof-of-freedom for sites possibly infested by the NIA,
- the community consultation activities undertaken.

27.3. Cost-Benefit analysis

The direct and indirect costs arising from the impact of the NIA outbreak should be compared with the proposed actions, with qualitative assessments used for environmental or social costs and benefits. The cost - benefit analysis should also identify the industries, businesses or other sectors of society that would benefit from a biosecurity incident response, the costs and impacts of the response plan's actions, including the opportunity cost of any alternative uses of the funds required for implementation of the response plan and the relative cost effectiveness of alternative approaches to limiting the risks.

27.4. Proposed actions

Details of the actions to be taken, protocols for carrying them out and who will be undertaking them should be described in adequate detail. The relevant pre-incursion plan should be utilised to assist with selecting the most appropriate actions for the circumstances of the incident. This should also include details on any biosecurity screening procedures that are to be followed for all, or a sample of, animals caught and euthanased and the procedure for taking tissue samples for storage at the ACWG. Control zones or biosecurity zones may be implemented as part of the response.

27.5. Determining proof-of-freedom

The incident action plan should include recommendations on a method for determining whether eradication actions have been successful and can prove that the state or relevant area is free from the NIA.

27.6. Projected Budget and Indicative Costs

An outline of the indicative costs and projected budget must be included.

28. Implementation of the Incident Action Plan

Once the Incident Action Plan is approved it must be implemented. The implementation of the plan should generate:

- An event log, and
- situation report(s)

29. Media Strategy

The effective management of NIA incursions requires media activities to raise awareness and keep local communities informed of any developing situations. All communications must first go through the NSW DPI Communications Unit for approval before publication/production. Possible media activities include:

29.1. Proactive media activities

NSW DPI will use proactive multi-media activities to raise awareness about NIA incursion issues including through the following mediums:

- NSW Biosecurity Facebook
- print media
- radio and television

29.2. Reactive media activities

Reactive media activities may be coordinated to inform local communities about any incursions in their area when appropriate. Media releases issued to local newspapers/publications/radio and television outlets will be made in consultation/collaboration with LGAs and their media contacts

30. Definitions

ACWG	Australian Centre for Wildlife Genomics
Authorised officer	Secretary of the Department of Industry or person appointed as an authorised officer under the Biosecurity Act 2015
BFS	Biosecurity Food Safety
Biosecurity impact	An adverse effect on the economy, the environment, or the community that arises, or has the potential to arise, from biosecurity matter, a carrier or dealing with biosecurity matter or carrier
Biosecurity risk	Risk of a biosecurity impact occurring
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
NSW DPI	NSW Department of Primary Industries
EMAI	Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute
IP&A	Invasive Plants & Animals
EIC	Environment and Invasives Committee
Incursion	A reference to an 'incursion' in this procedure refers to prohibited dealing species listed in Schedule 3 of the NSW Biosecurity Act 2015 (other than species listed in Schedule 3, Part 2, Division 2, Clause 3), any non-indigenous animal species not listed in Schedule 3 or Schedule 4 of the Biosecurity Act 2015 and cane toads located outside of the endemic zone (all NSW local government areas (LGA) except: Tweed, Byron, Lismore and Ballina LGAs, the portion of Richmond Valley and Kyogle LGAs east of the Summerland Way, and the portion of Clarence Valley LGA north of the Clarence River and east of the Summerland Way and Pringles Way.)
Large feline	Members of the Felidae family which includes subfamilies: Pantherinae (lions, tigers, leopards), and Felinae (puma, cougars, lynxes, domestic cats). These are also referred to as big cats, black cats, alien big cats, phantom cats, black panthers, and as the Blue Mountains, Emmaville, Lithgow and Richmond panther
LGA	Local Government Area

LLS	Local Land Services
NBMCC	National Biosecurity Management Consultative Committee
NBMG	National Biosecurity Management Group
NEBRA	National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement
NIA	Non-indigenous animal (an amphibian, bird, mammal or reptile not native to Australia before European settlement)
Outbreak	Population level (two or more individual animals) NIA incursion
Prohibited dealing	List of species provided in Schedule 3 of the NSW Biosecurity Act 2015 (apart from Schedule 3, Part 2, Division 2, Clause 3). In addition to the species listed as prohibited dealings in the legislation, as a safety net, any non-indigenous animal species not listed in Schedule 3 or Schedule 4 of the Biosecurity Act 2015 is considered a prohibited dealing
RSPCA	NSW Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
SVDL	State Veterinary Diagnostics Laboratory
WH&S	Work Health and Safety
WIRES	Wildlife Information, Rescue and Education Service

31. Relevant legislation

- *Biosecurity Act 2015* (NSW)
- Biosecurity Regulation 2017 (NSW)

32. Related departmental policies and procedures

- Media policy TI-A-137
- Policy – Non-indigenous animals regulatory activity
- Procedure – Permit for Prohibited Dealings
- Procedure – Biosecurity Undertakings
- Procedure – Biosecurity Direction
- Procedure – Functions of authorised officers in relation to the seizure and destruction of property
- Procedure – Destruction, Sale or Disposal of things under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*
- Use of Personal Protective Equipment guide
- Personal protective equipment fact sheet
- NSW DPI and LLS Memorandum of Understanding (Sch 4)

33. Other related documents

- National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement
- Chain of Custody instructions
- Schedule 3 of the MoU between NSW DPI and LLS – Invasive Plants and Animals
- INT17/1364 - Vertebrate Pest Detections Data DPI 2017
- INT16/1302#3 - Risk Assessment Template
- INT17/75714 - NSW Rehabilitation Groups list
- INT17/181933 - Pre-Incursion Plan: Terrestrial snakes
- INT17/185528 - Pre-Incursion Plan: Small Mammalian Carnivores
- INT17/185526 - Pre-Incursion Plan: Vipers
- INT17/185523 - Pre-Incursion Plan: Opossum
- INT17/185522 - Pre-Incursion Plan: Squirrels
- INT17/185521 - Pre-Incursion Plan: Geckos

- INT17/185520 - Pre-Incursion Plan: Salamanders and Newts
- INT17/185518 - Pre-Incursion Plan: Pythons and Boas
- INT17/185516 - Pre-Incursion Plan: Large Herbivores
- INT17/185514 - Pre-Incursion Plan: Toads and Frogs
- INT17/185513 - Pre-Incursion Plan: Turtles and Tortoises
- INT17/185512 - Pre-Incursion Plan: Birds

34. Revision history

Version	Date issued	Notes	By
1.1	1/07/2021	Includes section on management of suspect invasive ant/tramp ant reports	Technical Specialist Vertebrate Pests

35. Contact

Invasive Species Biosecurity Unit: invasive.species@dpi.nsw.gov.au