



Quarterly report No.2 October–December, 2023–24

Report to: NFAEP National Management Group
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Summary

This report was developed in accordance with Schedule 4 to report on the National Fire Ant Eradication Program (NFAEP) performance against the work plan 2023–2024 (the work plan), focusing on quarter 2 (Q2) of 2023–24, 1 October–31 December 2023. During this period, the NFAEP commenced work on 7 of the 18 key performance indicators (KPIs) outlined in the fire ant response plan 2023–27 (the response plan) and the work plan. During Q2, the NFAEP did not commence any formal work on the response plan KPIs. Overall, the NFAEP is currently at risk of not completing the 12 required KPIs listed within the work plan.

The NFAEP had no issues carried forward from quarter one (Q1) 2023–24. The NFAEP reported 22 new issues in the NFAEP issue register that would hinder our ability to mobilise and ramp up as originally intended from the work plan to the full response plan. The NFAEP is currently forecasted to complete the work planned within 2023–24 financial year \$7.7 million under budget.

Scope

In July 2017, the NFAEP began implementation of the 10–year eradication plan 2017–27 (10–year plan). The plan focused on finding, containing, and eradicating fire ants in South East Queensland. However, the NFAEP is transitioning away from the 10–year plan to mobilise and implement the response plan. This report to the National Steering Committee (NSC), for the NFAEP provides information on the NFAEP’s progress from 1 October–31 December 2023 against the objectives of the response plan and KPIs of the NFAEP’s annual work plan. It is noted that this report will transition to the NFAEP National Management Group (NMG) with the changes to the governance model to be enacted at the start of 2024.

The NFAEP is funded through a national cost sharing arrangement between the Australian and all state and territory governments. Biosecurity Queensland (BQ) delivers the response on behalf of these cost-share partners. The NFAEP is governed by a NSC led by an independent chair and administered by the Queensland Government through the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) on behalf of cost-share partners. The scope of the NFAEP’s work includes activities to:

- reduce infestation until fire ants are no longer present in Australia
- ensure areas remain free from fire ants
- prevent spread to non-infested areas
- provide evidence to demonstrate freedom from fire ant infestation
- help prevent establishment of new incursions of invasive ant species Australia-wide.



Key insights

Strategic eradication objectives

Progress against NFAEP objectives is summarised in Table 1. At a strategic level, there are shared objectives across the NFAEP and Fire Ant Suppression Taskforce (FAST) that align with Option A of the Strategic Review that will enable the ultimate outcome of eradication outlined in the vision.

Table 1: Strategic eradication objectives

Objective	Progress made this quarter (Q2 2023–24)	Planned for next quarter (Q3 2023–24)
<p>Innovation</p> <p>The NFAEP will expand its innovation capacity and capability, seeking to rapidly improve efficiency and effectiveness across operational activities and transformation of the NFAEP over the longer term. This will include ongoing engagement with technology providers and the broader innovation ecosystem. This includes technology developers and cross-sectoral industries (AgTech, Defence and Mining), equipment, technology, and services (METS), through industry-led innovation hubs and clusters, and universities with a focus on capabilities such as AI, remote sensing, and Robotic Autonomous Systems (RAS).</p> <p>This will be supported by dedicated resources to implement improved technology, applied science, procurement processes, treatment, scheduling, and dispatch, incorporating findings from the operational review, and the Strategic Review. A key operating principle for the NFAEP is the deployment of innovations as a strategic eradication objective. The need to constantly explore new approaches and technologies to help deliver on the NFAEP will mitigate the risk of the pressures on resources, labour, and necessity for confidence in proof of freedom (PoF).</p>	<p>In Q2, the proof of concept for a new aerial treatment method, fixed wing, is scheduled to commence to determine if the bait is distributed at a rate that efficacy will occur and modelling to determine its cost effectiveness is also proven. If the technology is proven to be effective procurement will need to occur by the end of February to allow for the technology to be used during round 3 of the treatment season.</p> <p>Seasonal bait trials to assess the efficacy of treatment over the cooler months has continued to provide comparable data at the same experimental sites as the temperatures increased, prior to the completion of the trial.</p>	<p>Development of an innovation strategy that will establish an innovation culture across all areas of the program to identify areas for improvement and optimisation of current processes and methods, along with developing new or emerging ways to improve overall program effectiveness.</p> <p>Seasonal treatment trials will be completed, and the results analysed to assess the efficacy of treatment over the cooler months.</p> <p>Research into the feasibility of using environmental DNA to detect fire ants will be continued, in collaboration with James Cook University, through field testing.</p>



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Objective	Progress made this quarter (Q2 2023–24)	Planned for next quarter (Q3 2023–24)
<p>Collaboration</p> <p>Achieving sustainable collaboration across various partners of the NFAEP and FAST is essential. A key focus for FAST is to cultivate relationships in dense urban and complex environments (multi-tenure and multi-responsibility operational situations), establishing a legacy for the NFAEP to continue to activate going forward. Communication, engagement, and behavioural science to build constructive relationships, support the design of collaborative models (including for self-treatment), and manage risk of human-assisted movements (HAM) is critical.</p> <p>The focus of achieving this strategic objective is to concentrate on effective self-treatment and voluntary compliance in high-risk industries and areas using targeted enforcement strategically and only where necessary, such as infringement notices, biosecurity orders and prosecution.</p> <p>There is also increasing importance for community participation in the eradication effort, where community members will continue to have a key role in reporting fire ant presence and absence, and treating infestations where it is more effective, rapid, and safe to do so. This is a core aspect to both the NFAEP and FAST and will increase in importance as the eradication effort progresses over time.</p>	<p>A self-treatment campaign is scheduled to run in Q2 within the suppression zone.</p> <p>The second quarterly industry forum delivered with 35 stakeholders attending from industry, government, and community organisations.</p> <p>Community partnership groups established for City of Gold Coast, Lockyer Valley, and Scenic Rim council areas.</p>	<p>Delivery of the third industry forum.</p> <p>Establishment of the fourth community partnership group in the Moreton Bay council area.</p> <p>Partnership agreement established with Department of the Premier and Cabinet to undertake a behavioural insights project and commencement of phase one, which aims to reduce NFAEP treatment refusals.</p>
<p>Expansion</p> <p>The NFAEP and FAST will expand activities across all operational areas, following Option A of the Strategic Review, to ensure the 2032 vision is achieved. The degree to which treatment and surveillance can be scaled-up will be reliant on resilient supply chains for bait, labour and equipment, efficient and effective procurement processes, and the efficient and effective use of technology.</p> <p>To ensure the NFAEP delivers on planned scale-up, an organisational strategy 2023–25 is being developed. The organisational strategy aims to increase the capacity and capability of the NFAEP for the delivery of</p>	<p>Development of a new target operating model (TOM) will be commenced as part to the organisational strategy 2023–25.</p> <p>The NFAEP plans to submit a Cabinet Budget Review Committee (CBRC) submission for consideration in Q2.</p> <p>The NFAEP has initiated the following procurement processes:</p>	<p>Treatment variation is to be approved by Director General (DG).</p> <p>Strategic procurement plan (SPP) for treatment 2024–27 approved by DG.</p> <p>SPP for fixed-wing treatment executed.</p> <p>RFQ for the provision of drone treatment finalised.</p>



Objective	Progress made this quarter (Q2 2023–24)	Planned for next quarter (Q3 2023–24)
<p>consecutive annual workplans that will more than double the current capability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • treatment (bait) variation to increase volume for supply for 2023–24 • Drafting of SPP for treatment to cover 2024–27 • drafting of procurement plan for contingent labour • drafting of SPP for pilot of fixed-wing treatment methods • request for quote (RFQ) being drafted by subject matter experts for the provision on drone treatment. <p>The NFAEP has committed to expanding into the Gold Coast and Moreton Bay regions with negotiations currently occurring on prospective depot sites.</p> <p>The NFAEP has reviewed its fleet and is expanding as required to meet the operational requirements.</p> <p>The NFAEP extended its arrangements with the Gold Coast City Council to occupy temporary sites at Coombabah and Merrimac until 31 July to allow for the negotiations on the main site for the Gold Coast to be finalised.</p>	<p>It is anticipated that the following will occur:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lease executed for a site on the Gold Coast to serve as the main depot for southern operations • licence to occupy hard stand sites at Molendinar executed to until main depot at Gold Coast is available • lease executed in the Moreton Bay Region to serve as the main depot for northern operations.



Progress against key performance indicators

Work plan 2023–24

Progress against the NFAEP KPIs is summarised in Table 2 in relation to the work plan. Where individual activities are scheduled and finalised across the year, progress reporting may not be applicable to each quarter – for example, complete treatment in Q2.

Table 2: Work plan 2023–24 KPIs

KPI 2023–24	Target	Traffic light	Progress made in Q2	Planned for Q3
Strategic goal: treatment				
Three treatment rounds in outer 5 km Southern Downs local government area (rural) (LGA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Southern Downs 7,436 ha in round 1 Southern Downs 7,436 ha in round 2 Southern Downs 7,436 ha in round 3 	On track	No treatment was undertaken as part of completing round 1 and commencing Round 2 in the outer 5 km Southern Downs areas, due to the pending outcome of the habitat suitability analysis.	No treatment will be undertaken as part of completing round 3 in the outer 5 km Southern Downs areas, due to the pending outcome of the habitat suitability analysis.
Three treatment rounds in outer 5 km Scenic Rim LGA (rural)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scenic Rim 48,098 ha in round 1 Scenic Rim 48,098 ha in round 2 Scenic Rim 48,098 ha in round 3 	Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 45,554 ha of treatment and an additional 1,574 ha of approved treatment gaps was undertaken as part of round 1 in the outer 5 km Scenic Rim areas. Aerial treatment has completed round 1 in the Scenic Rim, however ground treatment will continue into January 2024 due to inclement weather delays. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Round 2 is planned to run from December 2023 to March 2024. Round 3 is planned to run from March to June 2024.



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KPI 2023–24	Target	Traffic light	Progress made in Q2	Planned for Q3
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Round 2 Aerial treatment started on 8 December and Round 2 schools for ground treatment were treated during December. 5,207 ha of treatment has been undertaken as part of Round 2. Due to the pending outcome of the habitat suitability analysis as referenced in the Southern Downs treatment area, 2740 ha has been reduced from the original target of 50,838 ha. 	
Two treatment rounds in outer 5 km Gold Coast City LGA (urban)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gold Coast 17,703 ha in round 2 Gold Coast 17,703 ha in round 3 	Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ground treatment of round 2 started earlier than planned in November 2023. 1,249 ha of treatment and 203 ha of approved treatment gaps has been undertaken as part of completing round 2. This is less than the expected 3,540 ha due to inclement weather causing the delay to the start of aerial treatment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Round 2 is planned to run from December 2023 to March 2024. Round 3 is planned to run from March to June 2024.
Two treatment rounds in outer 5 km Lockyer Valley LGA (urban/rural)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lockyer Valley 24,462 ha in round 1 Lockyer Valley 30,450 ha in round 2 	Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10,638 ha of treatment and 140 ha of approved treatment gaps has been undertaken as part of completing round 1. Ground treatment began on 3 October and aerial treatment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Round 1 is expected to run into Q3 through January and February 2024. To maintain the recommended treatment interval between treatment rounds, ground



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KPI 2023–24	Target	Traffic light	Progress made in Q2	Planned for Q3
			<p>began on 13 November. This was later than the planned Round one in Scenic Rim due to variations approved to the work plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22 ha of round 2 ground treatment (schools) has been undertaken. • During Q2, variations to the work plan to include the addition of 2 to 3 rounds of eradication treatment in the Lockyer Valley LGA was submitted for approval. This will result in an increase to the overall hectares required to be achieved for rounds 1 and 2. 	<p>treatment for round 2 commenced during Q2. Round 2 aerial treatment will commence in March and will run into Q4.</p>
One treatment round in outer 5 km Somerset Regional LGA (urban/rural)	Somerset 17,022 ha in round 3	Not started	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No treatment planned during Q2. • During Q2, variations to the work plan to include the addition of 2 and 3 rounds of eradication treatment in the Somerset LGA was submitted for approval. This will result in an increase to the overall hectares required to be achieved for round 3. 	Round 3 is planned to run from April to June 2024.
One treatment round in outer 5 km Moreton Bay Regional LGA (urban/rural)	Moreton Bay 33,700 ha in round 3 (area is an approximate)	Not started	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No treatment planned during Q2. • During Q2 variations to the work plan to include the 	Round 3 is planned to run from April to June 2024.



KPI 2023–24	Target	Traffic light	Progress made in Q2	Planned for Q3
			addition of 2 and 3 rounds of eradication treatment in the Somerset LGA was submitted for approval. This will result in an increase to the overall ha required to be achieved for round 3.	
Outlier treatment (additional to what is outlined in the work plan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kleinton, Minjerribah, and Tabooba; 23,030 ha in round 1 • Kleinton, Minjerribah, Tabooba, and Tallebudgera; 25,760 ha in round 2 • Kleinton, Minjerribah, Tabooba, and Tallebudgera; 25,440 ha in round 3 	Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16,634 ha of treatment and 1,134 ha of approved treatment gaps has been undertaken as part of completing Round 1. • 415 ha of treatment and 43 ha of approved treatment gaps has been undertaken as part of completing round 2. • During Q2, variations to the work plan to include the addition of 2 and 3 rounds of outbreak treatment of the Tallebudgera and Tabooba detections of importance respectively was submitted for approval. This will result in an increase to the overall outlier ha required to be achieved for rounds 1, 2 and 3. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round 2 is planned to run from December 2023 to March 2024. • Round 3 is planned to run from March to June 2024.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Murwillumbah, New South Wales (NSW) was 8,984 ha in round 2 • Murwillumbah, NSW was 8,984 ha in round 3 	Not started	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No treatment planned during Q2. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round 2 is planned to run from January to March 2024 • Round 3 is planned to run from April to June 2024.



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KPI 2023–24	Target	Traffic light	Progress made in Q2	Planned for Q3
Polygyne treatment (additional to what is outlined in the work plan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1,830 ha of polygyne treatment in round 1 1,830 ha of polygyne treatment in round 2 1,830 ha of polygyne treatment in round 3 	On track	1,569 ha of treatment and an additional 139 ha of approved treatment gaps has been undertaken as part of completing round 1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Round 2 is planned to run from December 2023 to March 2024. Round 3 is planned to run from March to June 2024.
Strategic goal: surveillance				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The approved work plan set the target of 8% (12,320 ha) of the surveillance area to be surveyed. The approved surveillance plan sets a target of 18,600 ha. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eight per cent (12,320 ha) of the surveillance area for 2023–24 to be completed over a 12-month period with an average of 8.3%, (1,026 ha) of total surveillance completed per month in the surveillance period. 	On track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No surveillance activities were planned to be conducted during Q2 as the focus during this period was on treatment. Any planned surveillance undertaken was due to inclement weather not permitting treatment to occur. 13,047 ha of surveillance and additional 8,090 ha of approved surveillance gaps has been completed to 31 December 2023. 	No surveillance activities are planned to be conducted during Q3 as the focus during this period will be treatment.
Strategic goal: improving the legislation and providing guidance				
Changes to General Biosecurity Obligation (GBO) guideline for residents and industries that deal with a fire ant carrier	GBO guideline changes made and published in 2023–24.	On track	GBO guidelines have been developed and consultation is underway, feedback was due back 22 December 2023, but was extended to mid January 2024 at the request of stakeholders.	Once feedback is incorporated into the guideline, it will be presented to Deputy Director General (DDG) for approval in February 2024 to be authorised under the <i>Biosecurity Act 2014</i> .



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KPI 2023–24	Target	Traffic light	Progress made in Q2	Planned for Q3
Review soil movement guideline, as required	Soil movement guideline reviewed annually to ensure it is fit-for-purpose.	On track	Review completed and industry consultation underway.	Soil movement requirements will be included in the Biosecurity Regulation amendment. Industry consultation will continue.
Penalty infringement notice review	Review of penalty infringement notice completed by 30 June 2024.	Not started	Not commenced as planned.	Scheduled to commence in February 2024.
Queensland and NSW cross-border planning	Planning completed by 30 June 2024.	On track	Planning was to understand responsibilities if a detection happened in NSW. The cross-border planning was on schedule but has been superseded with the detection in Murwillumbah, NSW.	
Strategic goal: expand the compliance team				
Uplift of new compliance officers.	Aiming for 41, an increase of 31, from a baseline of 10 positions.	Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the beginning of Q2, there were 17 compliance positions with 1 vacant position. During Q2, 6 new compliance positions were added to the establishment and filled; AO8 manager, compliance, AO7 principal compliance officer, 2 x AO6 senior compliance coordinators, and AO4 compliance coordinator x 2. Therefore, at the end of Q2, the compliance team was established for 23 positions with 19 staff members. There were 4 vacant positions due to supporting 3 employees on developmental higher duties to 	The remaining 18 new positions are scheduled to be filled in Q3.



KPI 2023–24	Target	Traffic light	Progress made in Q2	Planned for Q3
			fill the new positions and 1 position pending the commencement of the staff member in Q3.	
Training and capability development for new staff members to enhance knowledge of the <i>Biosecurity Act 2014</i> and powers of entry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Biosecurity Act 2014</i> and powers of entry training for new staff members in every induction. • Refresher training is forecasted to occur: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Refresher: <i>Biosecurity Act 2014</i> – for field staff in May 2024 – Refresher: entry process for field staff in June 2024. 	On track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A total of 122 new staff members received <i>Biosecurity Act 2014</i> and Powers of Entry training. • 42 current staff members completed Powers of Entry refresher. • 22 current staff members completed <i>Biosecurity Act 2014</i> refresher. • Training calendars and resources have been provided for all field roles to follow training pathways. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard operating procedure (SOP) has been updated for entry and access to place, training will be revised by 30 April 2024 to reflect SOP update, for June 2024 rollout. • <i>Biosecurity Act 2014</i> training will be reviewed and updated for May 2024 training.
Strategic goal: mobilising the community				
Per cent of stakeholders check their property and local area for fire ants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents (60%) (Baseline 58% 2022–23) • Industry (45%) 	Waiting on data	This data is collected via a survey annually during in Q4.	This data is collected via a survey annually during in Q4.
Per cent of stakeholders that are aware of fire ant biosecurity zones.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents (55%) • Industry stakeholders (75%) 	Waiting on data	This data is collected via a survey annually during in Q4.	This data is collected via a survey annually during in Q4.



Response plan 2023–27

During Q1 of 2023–24, the response plan was approved on 13 July 2023 and funding for the work had not been committed to by all jurisdictions. It is expected that the response plan approval and funding will be released in Q2 of 2023–24. This resulted in no work formally commencing on the response plan activities unless they were also in the scope of the work plan.

Table 3: Response plan 2023–27 KPIs

KPI	Definition and purpose	Method and frequency	Targets	Status	Baseline	Progress in Q2
Measure: Effectiveness (compliance)						
Compliance rate of targeted high risk industries (activities) across local government areas	This measure will ensure effective, targeted delivery of compliance activities that address noncompliance that contributed to human-assisted movement.	Monitoring compliance interactions and resulting outcomes from audits and investigations (monthly).	Ten per cent annual increase year on year increase in compliance rate across high-risk industry categories (baseline to be established, target re-visited)	Not started	The compliance strategy is planned for completion in Q3 2023–24. A baseline will be captured within this document.	Work progressed on the compliance strategy, which will outline how compliance data will be generated, stored, and reported on.
Measure: Efficiency (compliance)						
Cost per unit of compliance audits undertaken	This measure will monitor the costs of undertaking compliance audits to indicate broader compliance efficiency and ensure efficient	Quantifying cost to undertake compliance audits (cost per audit) (annual).	Target to be determined once year 1 baseline data has been captured.	Not started	Baseline data will be captured between January to December 2024 on the number of audits and the monthly operating cost of	During Q2, a record was maintained in relation to what audits were completed. The type (desktop, physical inspection, industry that it related to).



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KPI	Definition and purpose	Method and frequency	Targets	Status	Baseline	Progress in Q2
	delivery of compliance outcomes.				the compliance cost centre.	
Measure: Effectiveness (eradication)						
Confidence in surveillance methodologies deployed to rural, peri-urban, urban areas that provide evidence of PoF.	This measure will track performance of surveillance as it is deployed to increase confidence.	Monitor outcomes of surveillance for accuracy against the PoF methodology, (annual).	PoF through surveillance tools at pilot sites achieved by 2025–26.	Not started	To be confirmed as per the PoF.	During Q2, a record was maintained in relation to what surveillance was completed.
Measure: Effectiveness (eradication)						
In accordance with the PoF plan the proportion of planned eradication band that delivers >90% confidence in absence of fire ants over a 2–year period (equivalent to 6 rounds of insect growth regulator (IGR) over 2 years per band).	This measure will track effective delivery of eradication effort by measuring resulting probability after a combination of treatment and surveillance methods may be deployed.	Monitor annual treatment and surveillance operations coverage and ‘gaps’ (annual).	>90% coverage of planned eradication band over a 2–year period (2% gaps).	Not started	Gaps from 2022–23 season.	During Q2, a record was maintained in relation to what was treated and any gaps.



KPI	Definition and purpose	Method and frequency	Targets	Status	Baseline	Progress in Q2
Measure: Efficiency (eradication)						
Cost per ha to initiate clearance surveillance.	This measure will monitor the costs associated with eradication efforts to clear land of fire ants and ultimately PoF.	Treatment and surveillance costs per ha calculated over a 2-year period within the eradication model.	Efficiency target to be determined after first year of the eradication plan. Separate target for urban and rural need to be developed.	Not started	Baseline data will be captured between 2023–24 and 2024–25.	The data is being captured on the number of ha being treated.
Measure: Effectiveness (workplace health and safety)						
Empowering staff to contribute to a proactive and preventative safety culture, including the maintenance of a robust and responsive Work Health and Safety Management System.	This measure will monitor the effectiveness of workplace health and safety (WH&S) measures to ensure staff are safe and satisfied with the work environment.	Health and Safety Committee meetings are being conducted in line with the <i>Workplace Health and Safety Act 2011</i> . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site inspections at all NFAEP locations are undertaken in accordance with BQ’s framework. • Reporting of high-risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of meetings are held as per requirements of the act. Every 3 months. • 100% compliance with approved site inspection schedule. • 100% of high risk incidents are reported. • 100% of incidents reported within required timeframes. 	Not started	Baseline to be captured in 2023–24.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Health and Safety Committee met on 12/10/2023. December 2023 and January 2024 meetings didn’t take place due to wet weather stand down and Christmas closure. • Site inspections were held at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Mutdapilly on 27/10/2023 – Wacol on 20/12/2023 – Laidley on 23/11/2023 – Berrinba on 25/09/2023. • There were no reportable incidents to WHSQ or the Electrical Safety Office.



KPI	Definition and purpose	Method and frequency	Targets	Status	Baseline	Progress in Q2
		<p>items to senior leaders is occurring.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3a. TABs reports – weekly - 3b. Driving reports – minimum of once per month <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reportable incidents to Workplace Health Safety Queensland (WHSQ) are reported within required timeframes. • Risk register framework in place HSRs appointed first aid officers mental health First aid officers injury management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk registers are up to date and reviewed at minimum annually. • Health and safety representatives (HSRs) are appointed with each site location being represented • HSR training is completed and up to date. • First aid officers are appointed in accordance with site requirements. • First aid training is up to date for all first aid Officers. • Mental health first aid officers are trained. • Pro-active injury management is being conducted. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly reports are emailed to senior managers, listing all TABs reports for the previous week. The WHS team continue to encourage a reporting culture in addition to completing regular field visits to assist in risk identification and education on safe work practices. • Work in currently underway to begin collaboration and consultation regarding the hazard and risk register. • The NFAEP has the following HSRs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Laidley x 2 - Mutdapilly x 2 - Berrinba x 3 - Wacol x 1 • Records indicate that all HSR are current in their training. • The NFAEP has the following first aid officers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Laidley x 3 - Mutdapilly x 3 - Berrinba x 8



KPI	Definition and purpose	Method and frequency	Targets	Status	Baseline	Progress in Q2
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to rehabilitation and return to work arrangements in accordance with DAFs policies. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wacol x 3 All team leaders are also fire aid trained (26 currently). First aid risk assessments have been completed (May 2023) which identifies the number of first aid staff for each depot (compliant), including field staff. All first aid have current certificates. Working in taking place to schedule additional mental health first aid training to ensure supervisors have been adequately trained. The NFAEP WHS team liaised with Corporate WHS team on multiple occasions regarding staff that are currently ill or injured. Collaboration took place with supervisors and Queensland Shared Service Medical Case Management to identify injuries and illnesses promptly and to work collaboratively with the worker, their manager, and the treating medical practitioner for the injured worker to stay at work



KPI	Definition and purpose	Method and frequency	Targets	Status	Baseline	Progress in Q2
						<p>wherever safely possible and to promote the earliest possible return to work, in whatever capacity the worker is able to.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NFAEP is supporting several staff on suitable duties arrangements.

Execution outcome deliverables

Table 4 outlines the status of the execution outcome deliverables.

Table 4: Execution outcome deliverables

Deliverable (30 June 2024)	Status	Commentary
Strategic outcome: Management of ongoing bait costs in a constrained market		
Tender to market, purchase, and trial alternative treatment products (e.g. more effective, faster acting, and more streamline supply chains to improve efficiencies)	In progress	Procurement processes commenced in Q2 for the supply of treatment product.
All weather treatment products (e.g. water resistant)	Not started	A project to investigate the uptake and comparative success of a commercially available 'wetable' treatment product option with the current treatment products under wet and dry conditions will commence in early 2024. Hydrogel crystals will also be investigated for their viability as alternative to the current corn grit treatment formulation.



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Deliverable (30 June 2024)	Status	Commentary
Provide university funding or grant funds to develop an all-weather treatment product	Not started	It is not planned that that NFAEP will provide university funding or grants to develop an all-weather treatment product pending the outcome of the planned NFAEP trials.
Strategic outcome: Market access risk for human resources		
Full time equivalent (FTE) scale up targets achieved in order to be able to deliver 10 km treatment band in 2024–25	In progress	The NFAEP submitted a CBRC submission for consideration in November 2023, a decision was made in December 2023 with the announcement of the decisions scheduled for February 2024.
Strategic outcome: Eradication band – treatment		
Based on 5 km eradication band: 158,000 (unique ha)	In progress	76,111 ha (48.2%) of 158,000 unique ha was treated in Q2 of 2023–24.
Strategic outcome: Compliance		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General biosecurity obligation (GBO) guideline released for industry feedback (2023) • Develop and implement GBO code of practice. • Incorporated in the regulation by end of 2023. 	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Q2, once internal feedback is incorporated the guidelines will be presented to the Steering Committee and then industry. Feedback is expected to be completed by the end of December 2023. • In Q3, the guidelines will be endorsed by DDG, BQ to be authorised under the Biosecurity Act 2014. • It was deemed that the need to develop and implement GBO code of practice was no longer required as amendments will be made to the Regulation.



Finance

Expenditure to budget

The NFAEP is currently \$7.705 million underspent against the current adjusted \$87.261 million full year \$84.31 million work plan budget. It is anticipated that the budget will be adjusted to match the response plan of \$133.094 million during Q3 (see Table 5).

Table 5: Funding 2023–24

	Year to date (YTD) Budget \$'000	YTD actual \$'000	Variance to YTD budget \$'000	Variance to YTD budget %	Year-end forecast \$'000
Revenues	39,314	31,608	(7,706)	20%	87,261
Expenses	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Employee expenses	9,482	7,558	1,924	20%	19,647
Supplies and services*	29,621	23,839	5,782	20%	67,799
Depreciation	142	142	0	0%	287
Loss on Sale	0	9	(9)	0%	0
Other expenses	69	59	10	14%	281
Total expenses*	39,314	39,609	7,705	20%	87,261
Surplus/(deficit)	0	(1)	(1)	0	0

* Adjustment to YTD Budget due to technical cash flowing oversight.



Overall operating result

The NFAEP is currently \$7.705 million underspent against the current adjusted \$87.261 million 2023–24 budget.

Employee expenses – \$1.9 million under YTD which is primarily due to the current level of FTE vacancies and challenges with recruitment activities and delays with the commissioning of the Gold Coast depot, including the scale up to its planned 12 field teams.

Supplies and services – \$5.8 million under YTD which is primarily due to the underspends on bait \$1.8 million, aircraft hire \$1.2 million due to available treatment days, and underspends contractors \$2.5 million and other supplies and services \$0.32 million.

Forecast to 30 June 2024

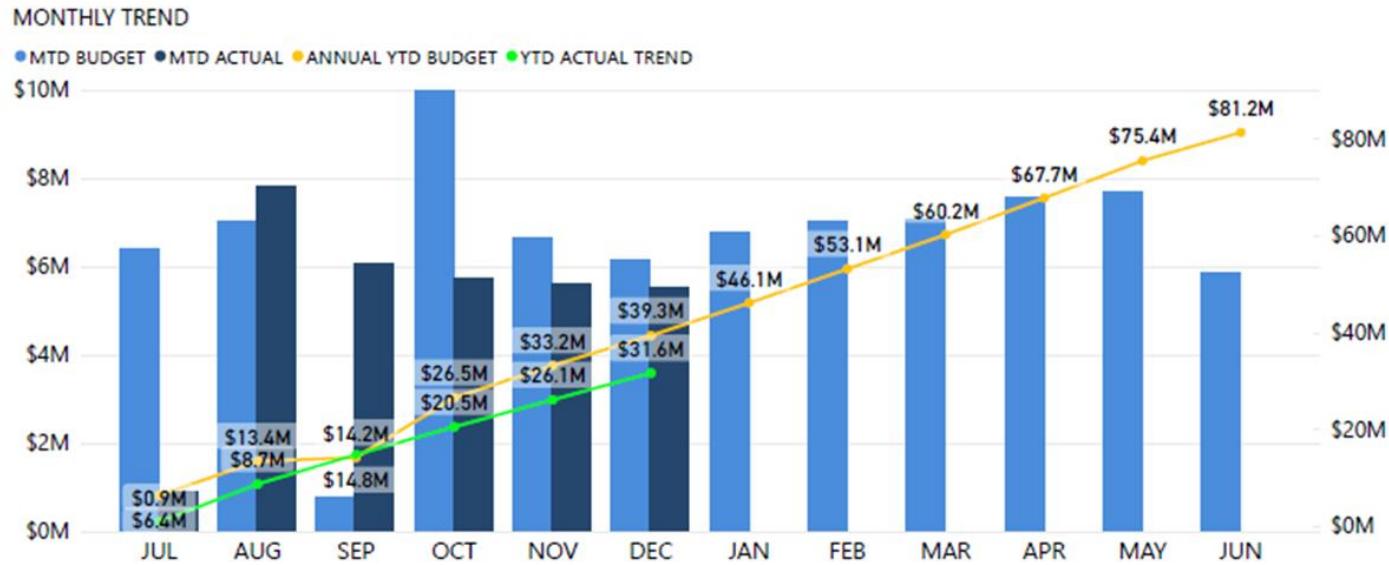
The NFAEP will be in a better position to provide a forecast to the 30 June 2024 when there is certainly of finalised contributions from the NFAEPs contribution partners. Any significant delays with this will impact the scale up of operations to the response plan resulting in a significant carryover.

The NFAEP currently has a forecast of operational budget of \$87,462,391 with commitments from the NFAEPs contribution partners however the timing of these contributions will be dependent from each jurisdictions Treasury departments. All jurisdictions have now advised their commitments to the response plan as scheduled. Work has commenced on the scaling up of internal budgets and the anticipated timing of outflows.

There is a level of financial risk associated the scaling up of operations including the establishment of additional regional depots. Considering the sessional window for treatment and time taken to recruit additional field staff the NFAEP may underspend this financial year.



Figure 1: Budget to expenses trend



Program risk and issues

There were 22 issues raised, and 5 issues were closed during Q2 of 2023–24. During Q2 2023–24 there were 5 new risks opened, and no risks closed as of 31 December 2023. In Q2, the number of risks decreases significantly as the baseline data was reviewed and consolidated.

Table 6: Residual risk summary

Rating	Residual operational	Residual strategic	Residual totals
Low	6	3	9
Medium	14	22	36



Rating	Residual operational	Residual strategic	Residual totals
Low	6	3	9
High	11	10	21
Extreme	0	1	1
Total (open)	31	36	67
Total (closed)	88	23	111

Table 7: Active NFAEP extreme risk

Residual rating	ID	Risk type	Controls	Treatments/mitigations
Extreme	PRG.RISK.191	Strategic	No recorded controls registered in Q2	None were documented at this point in time.

Risk framework triggers

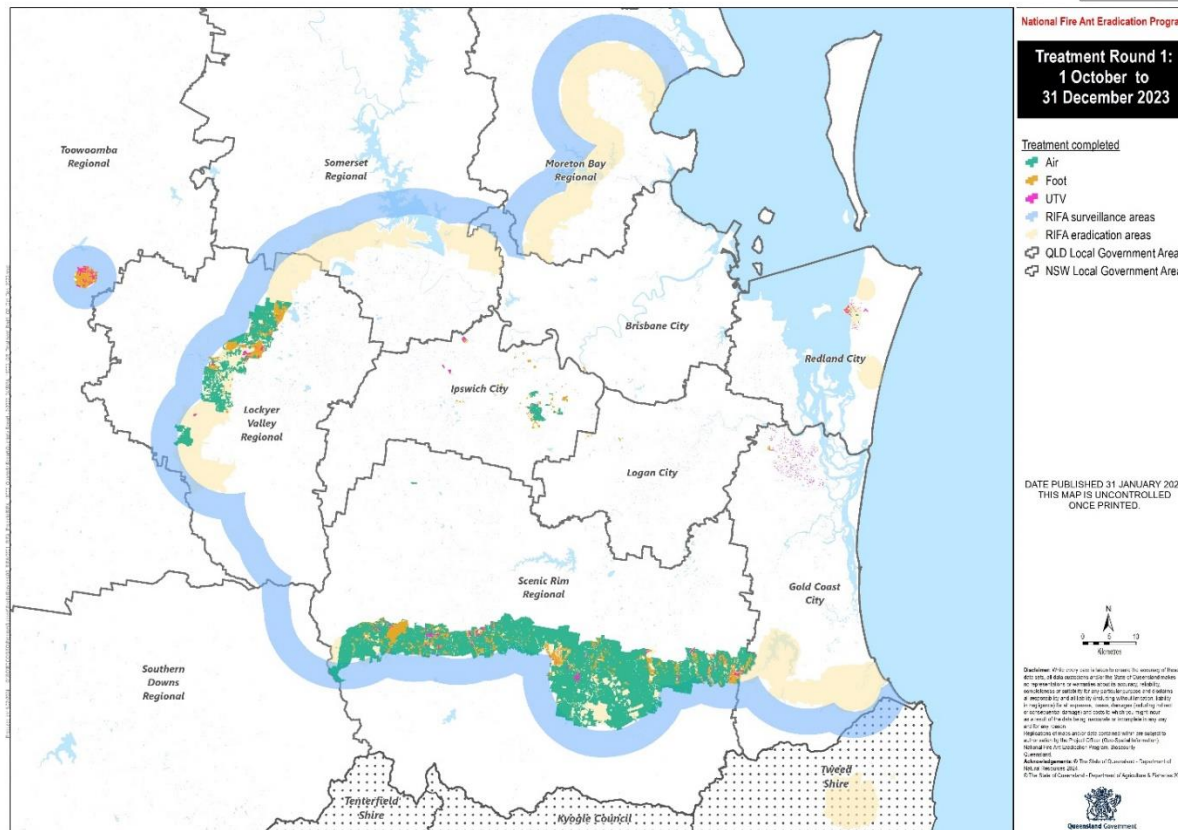
None on the 8 risk triggers occurred during this reporting period.



Appendix 1 – Planned treatment progress (31 December 2023)

The maps provided below outlines the round one and 2 treatment progress conducted during the reporting period. Details within the map indicate air (blue), foot (brown) and utility terrain vehicles (UTV – yellow) treatments were carried out within the eradication area (red).

Figure 2: Map of Round one planned treatment progress (31 December 2023)





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Figure 3: Map of Round 2 planned treatment progress (31 December 2023)





Appendix 2 – Planned surveillance progress (31 December 2023)

The map below outlines the planned and responsive surveillance activity carried out during the reporting. Indications of the map state that surveillance was completed through responsive (delineation – orange) and planned surveillance (clearance – cyan, and targeted – magenta).

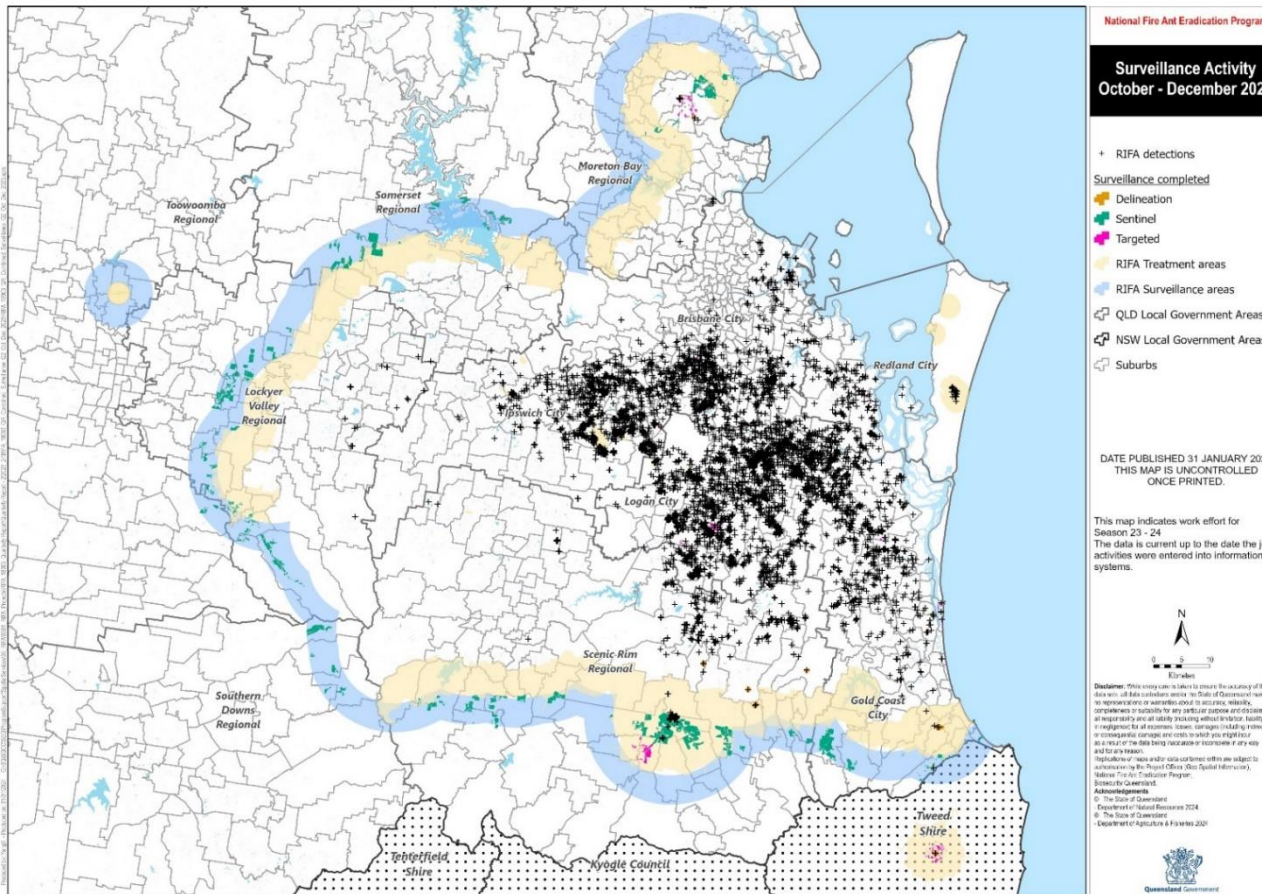


Table 8 outlines the numerical values of planned and actual treatment progress broken into treatment area for the reporting period.



Table 8: Surveillance progress planned and responsive YTD 31 December 2023

Surveillance task	Planned ha	Progress actual ha	Progress % completed
Planned*	9,210	13,047	142%
Responsive**	0	2,198	NA
Total	9,210	15,245	165%

*Planned surveillance – proactive surveillance on sites outside of current treatment area.

**Responsive surveillance – reactive surveillance on high-risk sites near new detections.



Appendix 3 – Planned compliance progress (31 December 2023)

The map below indicates the compliance check activities within the fire ant biosecurity zones. Compliance is indicated by a green triangle, non-compliance a red triangle. There are two fire ant biosecurity zones indicated in yellow and grey.

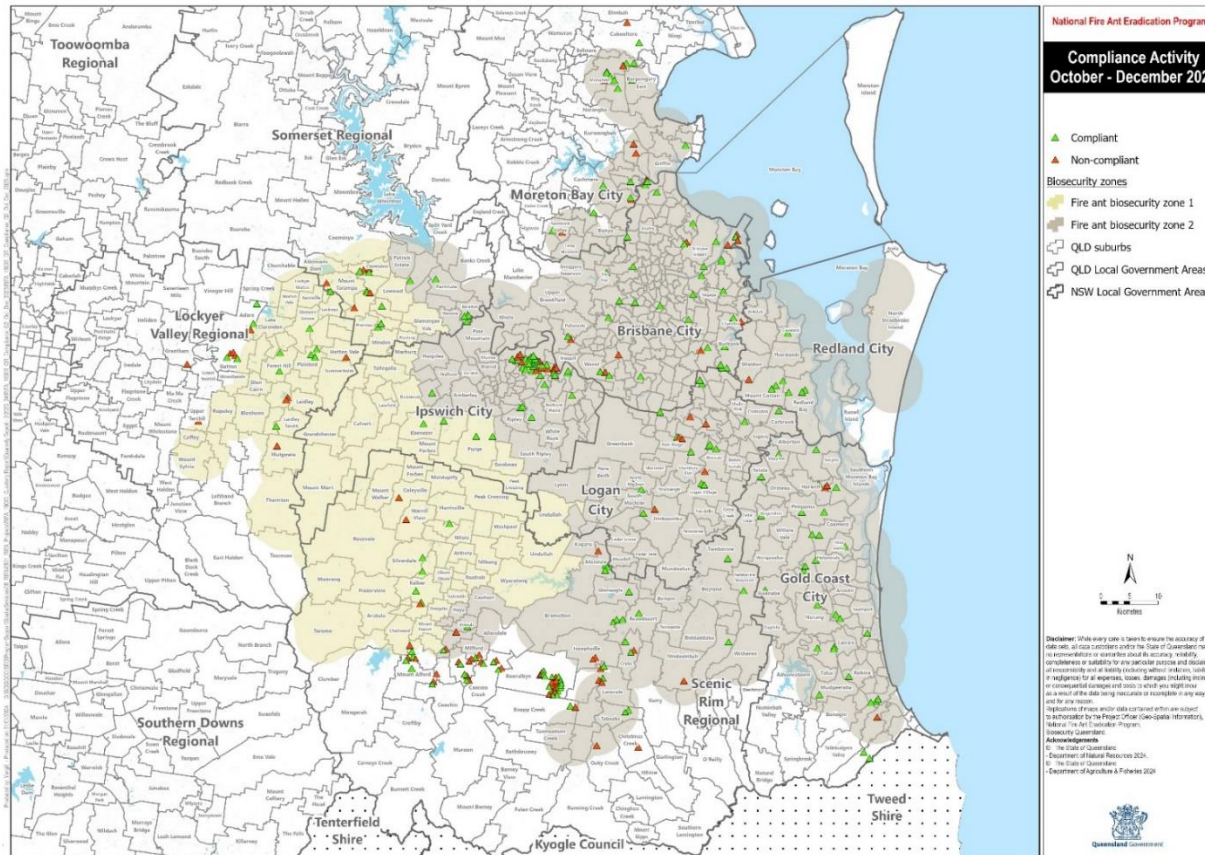




Table 9: High risk industry audits – numbers compliant vs. Non-compliant

High risk industry	No. audits	% non-compliant	Outcome
Hay	52	40	16 Advisory Notices and 4 Biosecurity Orders issued to hay producers for not storing or treating around storage sheds in accordance with section 71 of the Biosecurity Regulation 2016, and one penalty infringement notice (pin) for not storing in accordance with the regulation.
Earthmoving	24	13	1 Advisory Notice and one Biosecurity Order issued to several earthmoving companies.
Civil construction and builders	40	10	1 Advisory Notice and 3 Biosecurity Order for various GBO offences and failure to comply with section 71A of the Biosecurity Regulation 2016.
Landscaping supplier (potted plants)	42	29	10 Advisory Notices and 5 Biosecurity Orders mainly or failing to disturb carriers in accordance with section 71A of the Biosecurity Regulation 2016.
Quarry	17	18	3 Advisory Notices and one Biosecurity Orders, failing to comply with Biosecurity Instrument Permit, GBO and disturbance section 71A of the Biosecurity Regulation 2016.
Local council	3	0	1 Advisory Notice from non-compliance previous quarter.
Waste management	11	18	5 Advisory Notices 2 for failing to comply with Biosecurity Instrument Permit. For not meeting section 71A of the Biosecurity Regulation 2016.
Produce agent	8	0	Nil
Nursery/potted plants	36	33	9 Advisory Notices, in relation to section 71 Storage and treatment. One Biosecurity Order for not complying with section 71 of the Biosecurity Regulation 2016.
Turf	8	0	Nil
Total	241	23	Nil



Appendix 4 – Detections of importance in Q2

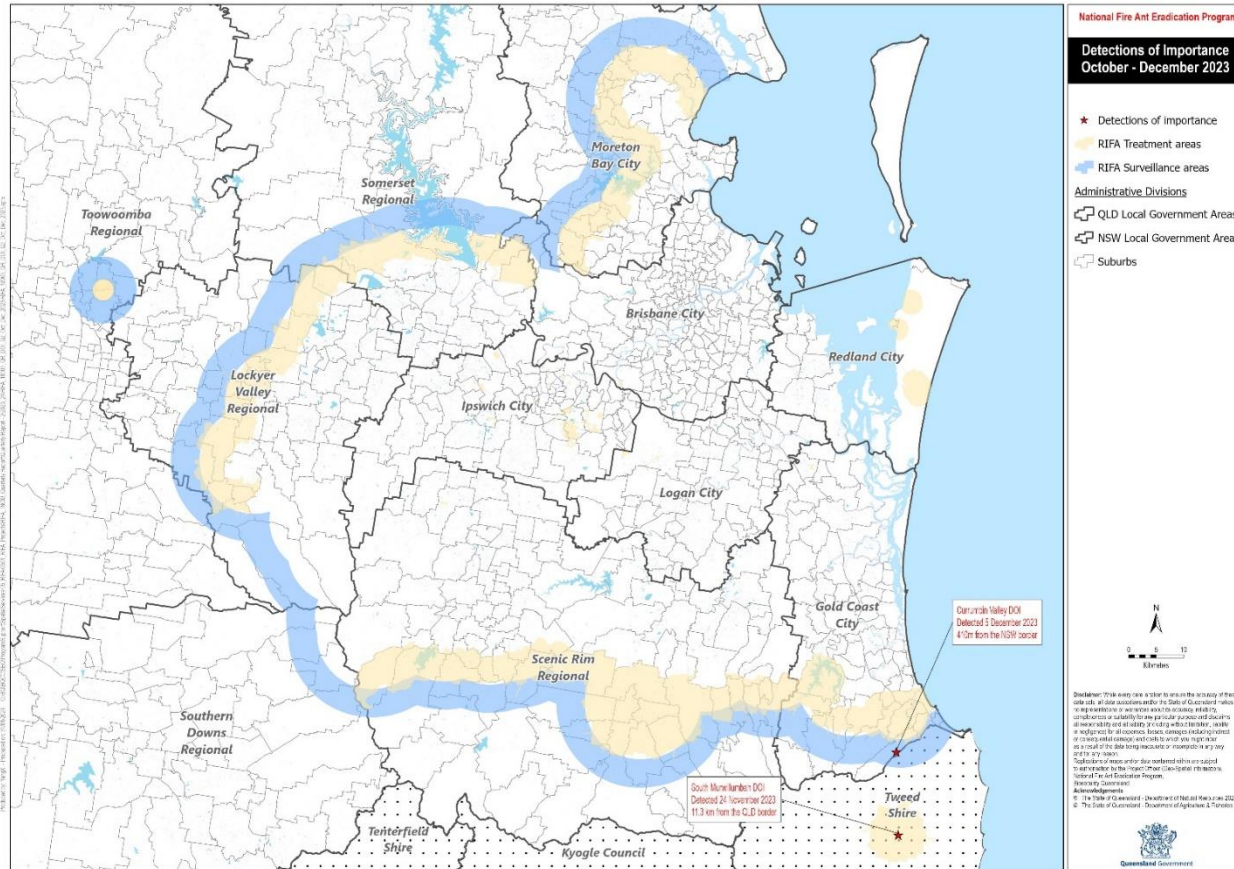
Detections of importance (DOI) are detections that present a risk to the NFAEP's ability to achieve objectives. These comprise detections in the outer eradication area that result in a change to the treatment boundary, and detections within and beyond the surveillance area. Detections within and beyond the surveillance area will trigger a spot eradication response: 6 rounds of broadscale treatment followed by surveillance to confirm the area is clear.

- During Q2, the NFAEP confirmed one DOI in South East Queensland in Currumbin Valley, Gold Coast City.
- The detection was destroyed using a combination of DNI and a broadscale treatment out to 5 km, and surveillance out to 5 km from the nest was undertaken to determine the extent of the infestation.
- The NFAEP is currently completing surveillance on sites with suitable fire ant habitat out to 2 km from the nest to gather intelligence that will inform whether additional treatment and surveillance is required to mitigate further risk of spread.
- A notional allocation of 40,000 ha was set aside in the work plan budget to respond to detections of importance. A variation to the work plan was approved in December 2023, so additional funding could be allocated as a priority to the DOI confirmed during Q1. Additional treatment for the Currumbin Valley detection will exceed this figure so another variation to the work plan may be required.
- During Q2, the NFAEP worked closely with the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Tweed Shire Council to contain and eradicate fire ants following a detection in Murwillumbah on Friday 24 November 2023.
- This was the first fire ant detection in NSW to be traced through genetics back to the South East Queensland population (a previous detection in Port Botany in 2014 was a new incursion that was eradicated).
- Six fire ant nests were destroyed in Murwillumbah by DNI, and broadscale treatment and surveillance was undertaken out to 5 km from the nests. Additional surveillance out to 2 km found no further fire ant nests.
- The detection was assessed as a medium risk for further spread, but that there was a high probability that local eradication could be achieved using standard NFAEP protocols.
- A second stage of the response is underway with the objective of delivering IGR treatment out to 5 km from the detection for a total of 6 rounds over a 2-year period.



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The map below outlines the DOI within containment (red star) areas. Geographical locations are bound in local government (NSW - grey dots, and QLD – grey) and suburbs (light grey).





Appendix 5 – Stakeholder Mobilisation in Q2

Figure 4: Media stories

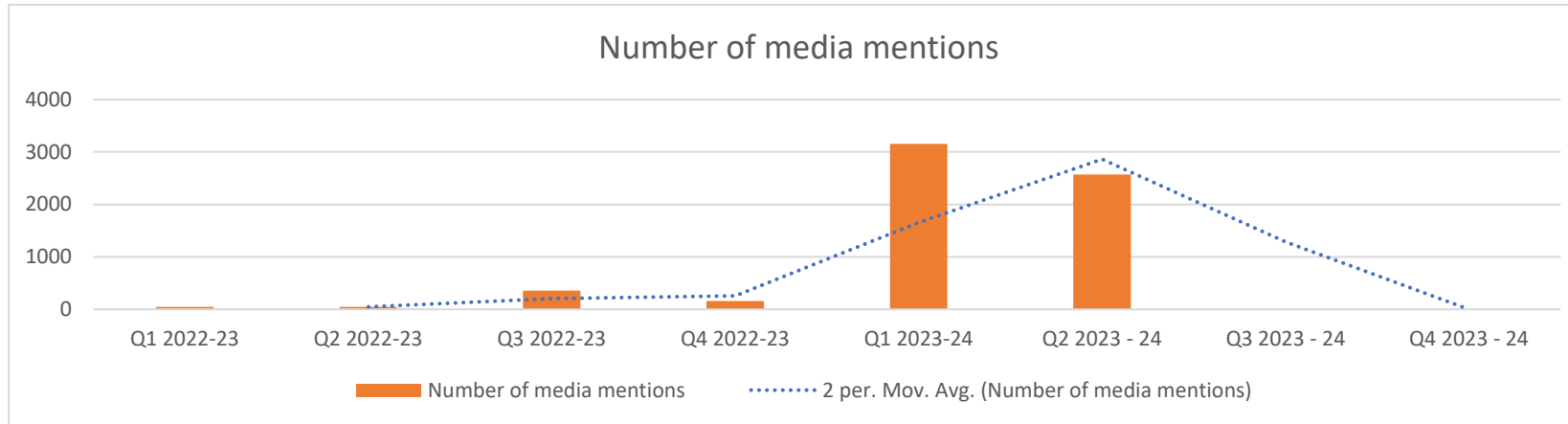


Figure 5: Number of website pageviews – fireants.org.au

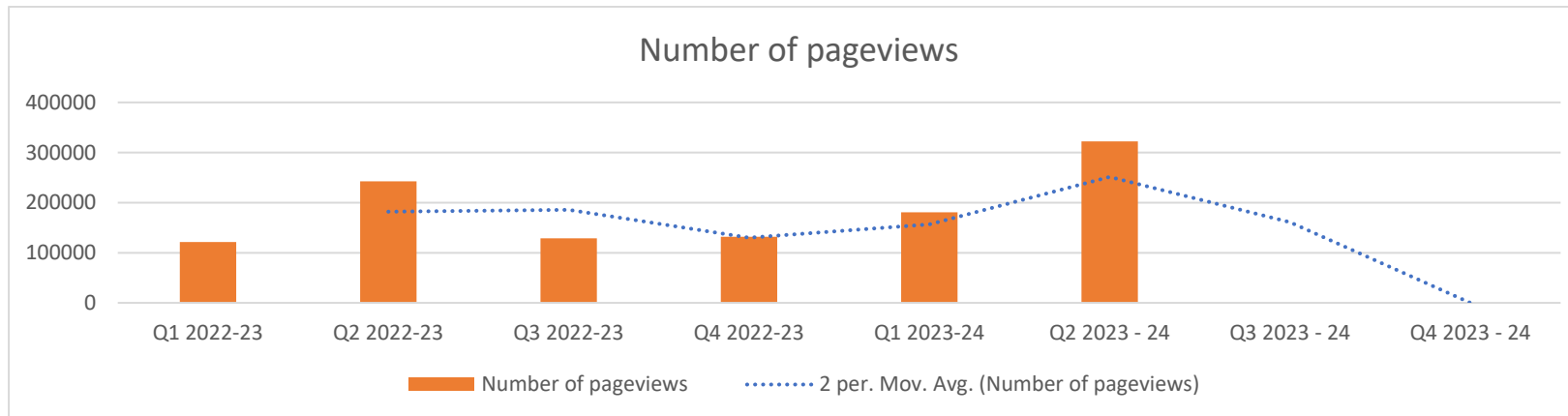




Figure 6: Social media reach

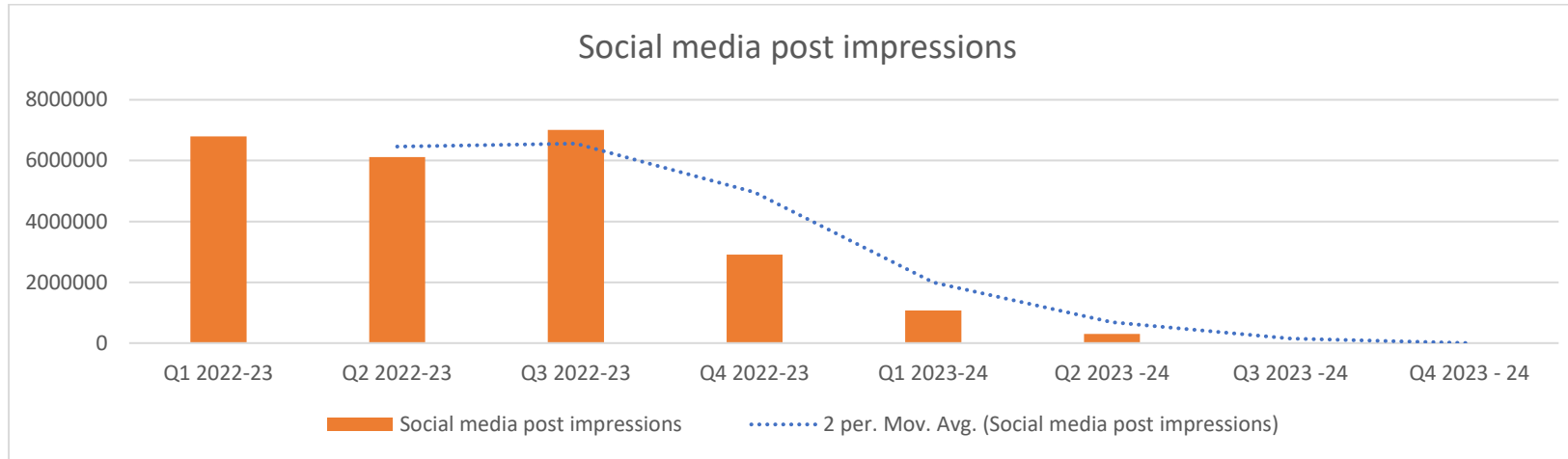


Figure 7: Stakeholder fire ant awareness training

