



Quarterly report No.1 July–September, 2023–24

Report to: NFAEP National Management Group
Prepared by: Program Office
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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 for 2023–2024 focusing on quarter one (Q1) of 2023–24. 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 2023–24 (the work plan). During Q1, 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 four (Q4) 2022–23. The NFAEP reported no new issues in the issue register that would hinder ability to mobilise and ramp up as originally intended from the work plan to the full response plan. The NFAEP is currently forecasted at track to the adjusted budget of \$87.26 million to complete the work planned within 2023–24 financial year (the end of year forecast is \$87.26 million against the adjusted budget of \$84.31 million work plan budget + \$2.95 million carry forward).

Scope

In July 2017, the NFAEP began implementation of the 10-year eradication plan 2017–27 (10-year plan). The 10-year 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), transitioning to the NFAEP National Management Group (NMG), with the changes to the governance model to be enacted at the start of 2024 (Q3) for the NFAEP provides information on the program's progress from 1 July to 30 September 2023 against the objectives of the response plan and KPIs of the work plan.

The Australian Government and the governments of all Australian states and territories provide funding for the program in a cost-shared response. 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, currently only in South East Queensland
- 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 (Q1 2023–24)	Planned for next quarter (Q2 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.</p>	<p>The NFAEP has been one of the collaborators with Murdoch University in partnership with the CSIRO that has an objective of developing a mobile application that identifies 7 types of invasive ant species of which, fire ants are one of the invasive type of ants.</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>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),</p>	<p>Limited progress on this strategic objective was made during Q1 of 2023–24.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A self-treatment campaign is scheduled to run in Q2 within the suppression zone.



Objective	Progress made this quarter (Q1 2023–24)	Planned for next quarter (Q2 2023–24)
<p>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 is critical. 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>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A compliance strategy will be developed in Q2.
<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. To ensure the NFAEP delivers on planned scale-up, an Organisational strategy 2023–25 is being developed. The strategy aims to increase the capacity and capability of the NFAEP for the delivery of consecutive annual workplans that will more than double the current capability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support the scale up of the NFAEP the procurement activities for the labour, treatment, and aerial services will go through the strategic procurement process (SPP) to ensure contracts are fit-for-purpose and can be leveraged as required to meet the changing needs of the NFAEP. This activity will be conducted as new contracts need to be entered into and when existing ones are up for review. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a new target operating model (TOM) will be commenced as part to the organisational strategy 2023–25. • The NFAEP plans to submit a Cabinet Budget Review Committee (CBRC) submission for consideration in Q2.

Progress against key performance indicators

Work plan 2023–2024

Progress against the NFAEP KPIs is summarised in Table 2. 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

Key performance indicator 2023–24	Target	Status	Progress made in Q1	Planned for Q2
Strategic goal: Treatment				
Three treatment rounds in outer 5 km Southern Downs local government areas (rural)	<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 	Off track	<p>No treatment was undertaken as part of round 1 in the outer 5 km Southern Downs areas, pending a scientific review of suitability of the terrain for fire ant habitat.</p> <p>Fire ant detections within the inner 5 km Southern Downs areas have been cleared, however, to mitigate the risk of spread treatment will be applied to this area during 2024-25.</p>	A program change request is planned to be submitted in Q2 to alter the scope to allow for no treatment to be undertaken as part of completing round 1 and commencing round 2 in the outer 5 km Southern Downs areas, pending the outcome of the habitat suitability analysis.
Three treatment rounds in outer 5 km Scenic Rim local government areas (rural)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scenic Rim 50,838 ha in round 1 Scenic Rim 50,838 ha in round 2 Scenic Rim 50,838 ha in round 3 	Monitoring	<p>As part of round 1 the outer 5 km Scenic Rim area completed with the remaining 12,353 ha treatment being undertaken.</p> <p>Round 1 runs from September – November 2023, so only 1 out of the 3 months was planned to have treatment completed.</p>	<p>50,838 ha of treatment is planned to be undertaken as part of completing round one and commencing round 2 the outer 5 km Scenic Rim areas.</p> <p>Round 2 is planned to run from December 2023 to February 2023.</p> <p>During Q2 variations to the work plan, to extend the outer 5 km</p>



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Key performance indicator 2023–24	Target	Status	Progress made in Q1	Planned for Q2
				treatment area to approach full containment, will be submitted for approval. This will result in an increase to the overall ha required to be achieved for rounds 2 and 3.
Two treatment rounds in outer 5 km Gold Coast City (urban)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gold Coast 17,703 ha in round 2 Gold Coast 17,703 ha in round 3 	Not started	During Q1 there was no planned treatment for the Gold Coast City.	<p>Twenty per cent (3,540.6 ha) of 1 treatment round of the outer 5 km Gold Coast City is targeted for completion.</p> <p>Round 2 is planned to run from December 2023 to February 2023.</p>
Outbreak treatment (additional to what is outlined in the work plan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kleinton and Minjerribah 4,505 ha in round 1 Kleinton and Minjerribah 4,505 ha in round 2 Kleinton and Minjerribah 4,505 ha in round 3 	Monitoring	<p>686 ha treatment undertaken as part of round 1 in outbreak areas.</p> <p>Round one runs from September – November 2023, so only 1 out of the 3 months was planned to have treatment completed.</p>	<p>4,505 ha of treatment is planned to be undertaken as part of completing round 1 and commencing round 2 in outbreak areas.</p> <p>Round 2 is planned to run from December 2023 to February 2024.</p> <p>During Q2 variations to the Work plan 2023–24, to include the addition of 2 and 3 rounds of outbreak treatment of the Tallebudgera and Tabooba detections of importance respectively, will be submitted for approval. This will result in an increase to the overall outbreak hectares required to be achieved for rounds 2 and 3.</p>



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Key performance indicator 2023–24	Target	Status	Progress made in Q1	Planned for Q2
Polygyne treatment (additional to what is outlined in the work plan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1,800 ha of polygyne treatment in round 1 1,800 ha of polygyne treatment in round 2 1,800 ha of polygyne treatment in round 3 	Not started	During Q1 there was no planned polygyne treatment.	1,800 ha of treatment is planned to be undertaken as part of completing round 1 and commencing round 2 in outbreak areas. Round 2 is planned to run from December 2023 to February 2024.
Strategic goal: Surveillance				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved work plan set the target of 8% (12,320ha) of the surveillance area to be surveyed Approved surveillance plan sets a target of 18,600 ha 	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%, (1,026ha) of total surveillance completed per month in the surveillance period.	On track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10,807 ha of sentinel sites were surveyed 575 ha of targeted sites were surveyed 1,578 ha of responsive sites (delineation) were surveyed 12,960 ha of surveillance area was surveyed 	No surveillance activities are planned to be conducted during Q2 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	GBO guidelines have been developed and consultation is underway, feedback is due back 22 December 2023. Once feedback is incorporated guideline will be presented to Deputy Director-General (DDG), Biosecurity Queensland (BQ) for approval in January 2024 to be authorised under the <i>Biosecurity Act 2014</i> .



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Key performance indicator 2023–24	Target	Status	Progress made in Q1	Planned for Q2
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	Review completed and industry consultation to continue.
Penalty infringement notice review	Review of penalty infringement notice completed by 30 June 2024	Not started	Not completed. Will commence in January 2024.	
Queensland and New South Wales (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 scheduled but has been superseded with the detection in Murwillumbah.	
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	At the end of Q1, the compliance team was established for 17 staff with one position being vacant. Recruitment for this vacant position was in progress. Prior to Q1, the compliance team was established for 11 positions with one position being vacant.	Planned to commence in Q2 there are 10 new compliance officers (1 x manager, compliance, 2 x senior compliance coordinators, 1 principal compliance coordinator, 1 administration officer, and 5 x compliance coordinators). The planned number of total compliance officers will be 19 by the end of Q2. The remaining 21 new positions are scheduled to be filled in Q3.
Training and capability development for new staff members to enhance knowledge of the	<i>Biosecurity Act 2014</i> and powers of entry training for new staff members in every induction	On track	No training sessions were held to enhance knowledge of the <i>Biosecurity Act 2014</i> and power of entry.	2 training sessions are planned for 22 new staff members to enhance knowledge of the <i>Biosecurity Act 2014</i> and power of entry.



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Key performance indicator 2023–24	Target	Status	Progress made in Q1	Planned for Q2
<i>Biosecurity Act 2014</i> and powers of entry.	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 			
Strategic goal: Mobilising the community				
Per cent of stakeholders check their property and local area for fire ants (In the last 12 months).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents (65%) (Baseline 58% 2022–23) • Industry (45%) 	Waiting on data	This data is collected via a survey annually during in Q4.	During Q4, this data is planned to be collected via a survey.
Per cent of stakeholders that are aware of fire biosecurity zones.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents (80%) (Baseline 79% 2022–23) • Industry stakeholders (95%) (Baseline 92% 2022–23) 	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.
Percentage of stakeholders who are supportive of trying to eradicate fire ants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents (85%) (Baseline 80% 2022–23) • Industry stakeholders (80%) (Baseline 74% 2022–23) 	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 funding for the response plan will be secured 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 Q1
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 non-compliance 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.	Funding for the response plan 2023–27 was not secured so no work was commenced.
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 delivery of	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 the compliance cost centre.	Funding for the response plan was not secured so no work was commenced.



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KPI	Definition and purpose	Method and frequency	Targets	Status	Baseline	Progress in Q1
	compliance outcomes.					
Measure: Effectiveness (eradication)						
Confidence in surveillance methodologies deployed to rural, peri-urban, urban areas that provide evidence of proof of freedom.	This measure will track performance of surveillance as it is deployed to increase confidence.	Monitor outcomes of surveillance for accuracy against the proof of freedom methodology, (annual).	Proof of freedom through surveillance tools at pilot sites achieved by 2025–26.	Not started.	To be confirmed as per the proof of freedom.	Funding for the response plan 2023–27 was not secured so no work was commenced.
Measure: Effectiveness (eradication)						
In accordance with the Proof of freedom 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 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.	Funding for the response plan 2023–27 was not secured so no work was commenced.
Cost per hectare to initiate clearance surveillance.	This measure will monitor the costs associated with eradication efforts	Treatment and surveillance costs per ha calculated over a 2-year	Efficiency target to be determined after first year of the eradication plan.	Not started.		Funding for the response plan 2023–27 was not secured so no work was commenced.



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KPI	Definition and purpose	Method and frequency	Targets	Status	Baseline	Progress in Q1
	to clear land of fire ants and ultimately proof of freedom.	period within the eradication model.	Separate target for urban and rural need to be developed.			
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 (WHSMS).	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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and Safety Committee meetings are being conducted in line with the <i>Workplace Health and Safety Act 2011</i>. Site inspections at all NFAEP locations are undertaken in accordance with BQ's framework. Reporting of high-risk items to senior leaders is occurring. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3a. TABs reports – weekly 3b. Driving reports – 	<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. WHS Hazer and risk registers are up to date and reviewed at minimum annually. 	On track.	Baseline to be captured in 2023-24.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Health and Safety Committee met on 07/07/2023, 12/09/2023 and 12/10/2023. Meeting was scheduled for 08/08/2023 but this meeting couldn't take place due to not having a quorum. (wet weather stand down). Site inspections were held at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laidley on 25/07/2023 (previous inspection completed 21/03/2023) Wacol on 30/08/2023 (previous inspection completed 26/04/2023) Berrinba on 25/09/2023 (previous inspection completed 24/05/2023).



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KPI	Definition and purpose	Method and frequency	Targets	Status	Baseline	Progress in Q1
		minimum of once per month <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reportable incidents to WHSQ are reported within required timeframes. Risk register framework in place HSR's appointed First Aid Officers Mental Health First Aid Officers Injury Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. Access to rehabilitation and return to work 			Therefore, all inspections have been completed within the 4-month timeframe for medium risk areas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were no reportable incidents to Workplace Health and Safety Queensland or the Electrical Safety Office. 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. The hazard and risk register was developed and approved for the NFAEP in February 2023 and have an annual review schedule. Therefore, the next



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KPI	Definition and purpose	Method and frequency	Targets	Status	Baseline	Progress in Q1
			arrangements in accordance with DAF policies.			<p>review is due in February 2024.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 HSRs 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 - Wacol x 3 • All team leaders are also first aid trained (26 currently). • First aid risk assessments have been completed (May 2023), which identifies the number of first aid staff for each depot



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KPI	Definition and purpose	Method and frequency	Targets	Status	Baseline	Progress in Q1
						<p>(compliant), including field staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All fire aid staff have current certificates.• The NFAEP coordinated 3 sessions of mental health first aid training in July–Aug 2023. This resulted in 54 staff completing the training. Signage has been updated to reflect trained staff.• 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 wherever safely possible and to promote



KPI	Definition and purpose	Method and frequency	Targets	Status	Baseline	Progress in Q1
						<p>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 arrangement.

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).	Not commenced.	Procurement processes will commence in Q2 for the supply of treatment products.
All weather treatment product (e.g. water resistant).	In progress.	A project plan is under development 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. Hydrogel crystals are also being investigated for their viability as alternative to the current corn grit treatment formulation. Initial investigation is expected to begin early in 2024.



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Deliverable (30 June 2024)	Status	Commentary
Provide university funding or grant funds to develop an all-weather treatment product.	Not commenced.	During Q1, the NFAEP did not provide any university funding or grant funds to develop an all-weather treatment product. It is not planned that that NFAEP will provide university funding or grants to develop an all-weather treatment product within this financial year.
Strategic outcome: Market across 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	Not commenced.	The NFAEP plans to submit a CBRC submission for consideration in November 2023, noting the decision is still outstanding.
Strategic outcome: Eradication band – treatment		
Based on 5 km eradication band: 158,000 (unique ha)	In progress.	13,347 ha (8.4%) of 158,000 unique ha was treated in Q1 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"> • Q1 – the GBO guidelines were developed and consultation with internal stakeholders, including NFAEP and DAF. In addition, regulation amendments were identified to progress later in the year. • Q2 – once internal feedback is incorporated, the GBO guidelines will be presented to the National Steering Committee and then industry. Feedback is expected to be completed by the end of December 2023. • Q3 – the GBO guidelines will be endorsed by the DDG, BQ to be authorised under the <i>Biosecurity Act 2014</i>. • It was deemed that the need to develop and implement GBO code of practice was no longer required.



Finance

Expenditure to budget

The NFAEP has a current expenditure underspend of \$5.86 million against a carry forward adjusted work plan budget of \$87.28 million as at 30 September 2023 (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	14,162	14,769	607	4%	87,261
Expenses	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Employee expenses	4,397	3,778	619	14%	18,894
Supplies and services*	16,108	10,870	5,238	33%	67,799
Depreciation	70	70	0	0%	287
Loss on sale	0	9	(9)	0%	0
Other expenses	54	42	12	22%	281
Total expenses*	20,629	14,769	5,860	28%	87,261
Surplus / (deficit)	0	0	0	0	0

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

Overall operating result

User charges and grants from the Australian Government currently budgeted for the financial year have been adjusted for the current approved funding position record in the budget system. This is anticipated to be adjusted as further approvals are received.

Total NFAEP expenses are currently \$5.86 million under that projected to date.

Employee expenses was \$619,200 underspent, primarily due to several vacancies in budgeted FTE positions throughout the NFAEP. Recruitment continues to propose challenges particularly for office-based positions.

Total supplies and services were \$5.238 million underspent. The underspend in supplies and services is primarily due to an underspend on treatment products \$2.169 million and aircraft hire \$1.661 million underspend, which is expected to regulate over the next few periods as treatment recommences. Payments to employment agencies and contractors were \$717,000 underspent mainly due to the number of treatment days. Other supplies and services were \$691,000 underspent.

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 NFAEP contribution partners. Any significant delay with this is anticipated to delay the scale up of operations considering the sessional window for treatment for current treatment option available.

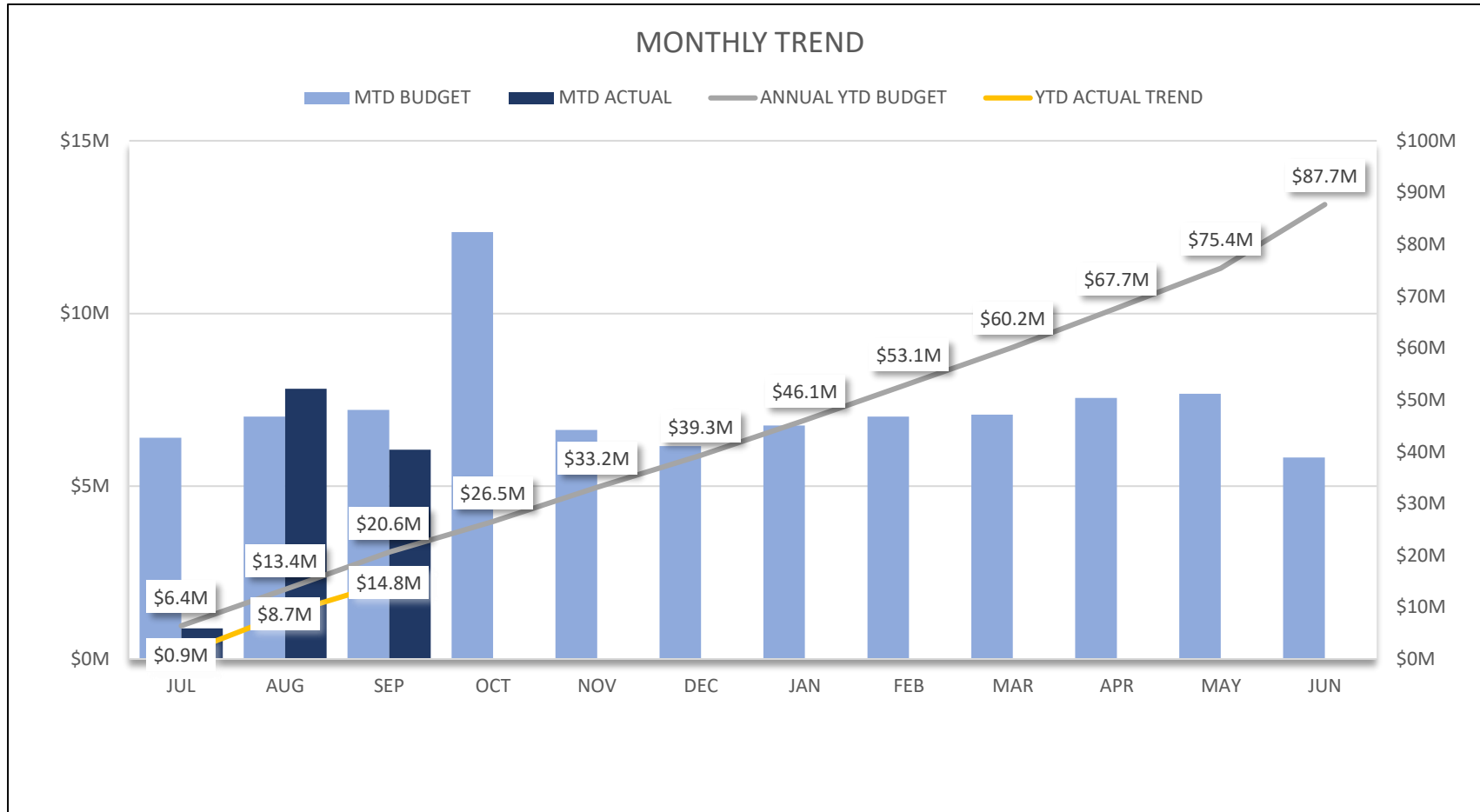
The NFAEP currently has a forecast of operational budget of \$87.261 million with commitments from NFAEP contribution partners, however the timing of these contributions will be dependent from each jurisdictions Treasury departments. Requests for the anticipated receipt from each jurisdiction will be raised at the next National Steering Committee meeting.

Total 2023–24 response plan revenues for the year are anticipated to total \$133.094 million in addition to the \$13.144 million carry forward from last financial year.



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Figure 1: Budget to expenses trend



Program risk and issues

There were no issues raised or closed during Q1. There were no active open issues recorded on the NFAEP issue register during this reporting period. During Q1, there were no new risks opened and no risks closed as of 30 September 2023. During this period, a baseline of all the risk within the NFAEP was occurring. At this point, all the risks recorded within the NFAEP had been consolidated into the one register but the duplicates had not been removed. In Q2, the number of risks decreases significantly as the baseline data is reviewed and consolidated. The risks that were closed prior to 30 June 2023 were not included in the baseline data set.

Table 6: Risk and issue summary

Rating	Residual operational	Residual strategic	Residual totals
Low	39	8	47
Medium	65	33	98
High	13	17	30
Extreme	2	1	3
Total (open)	119	59	178
Total (closed)	0	0	0

Table 7: Active program extreme risk

Residual rating	ID	Risk type	Controls	Treatments/mitigations
Extreme	PRG.RISK.136	Operational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biosecurity legislation. Compliance strategy to undertake compliance audits of high-risk businesses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and amend the Biosecurity Regulation 2016 to improve clarity and fitness for purpose and address gaps. Review and prepare guidelines for GBO discharge.



Residual rating	ID	Risk type	Controls	Treatments/mitigations
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidelines for discharging GBO. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Don't spread fire ant strategy. Amend the SPER to add and increase penalties for GBO discharge failure.
Extreme	PRG.RISK.140	Operational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborating with Corporate Procurement Services to apply strategic approaches. Contracts with extension options are being considered for execution of extension. Increase resource capacity and partner with businesses for forward planning. Weekly meetings with Director, Corporate Procurement Services for collaboration and streamlining approval processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure adequate additional resourcing to meet demand. Upskill current staff. Streamlining procurement processes.
Extreme	PRG.RISK.191	Strategic	No recorded controls registered in Q1.	None were documented at this point in time.

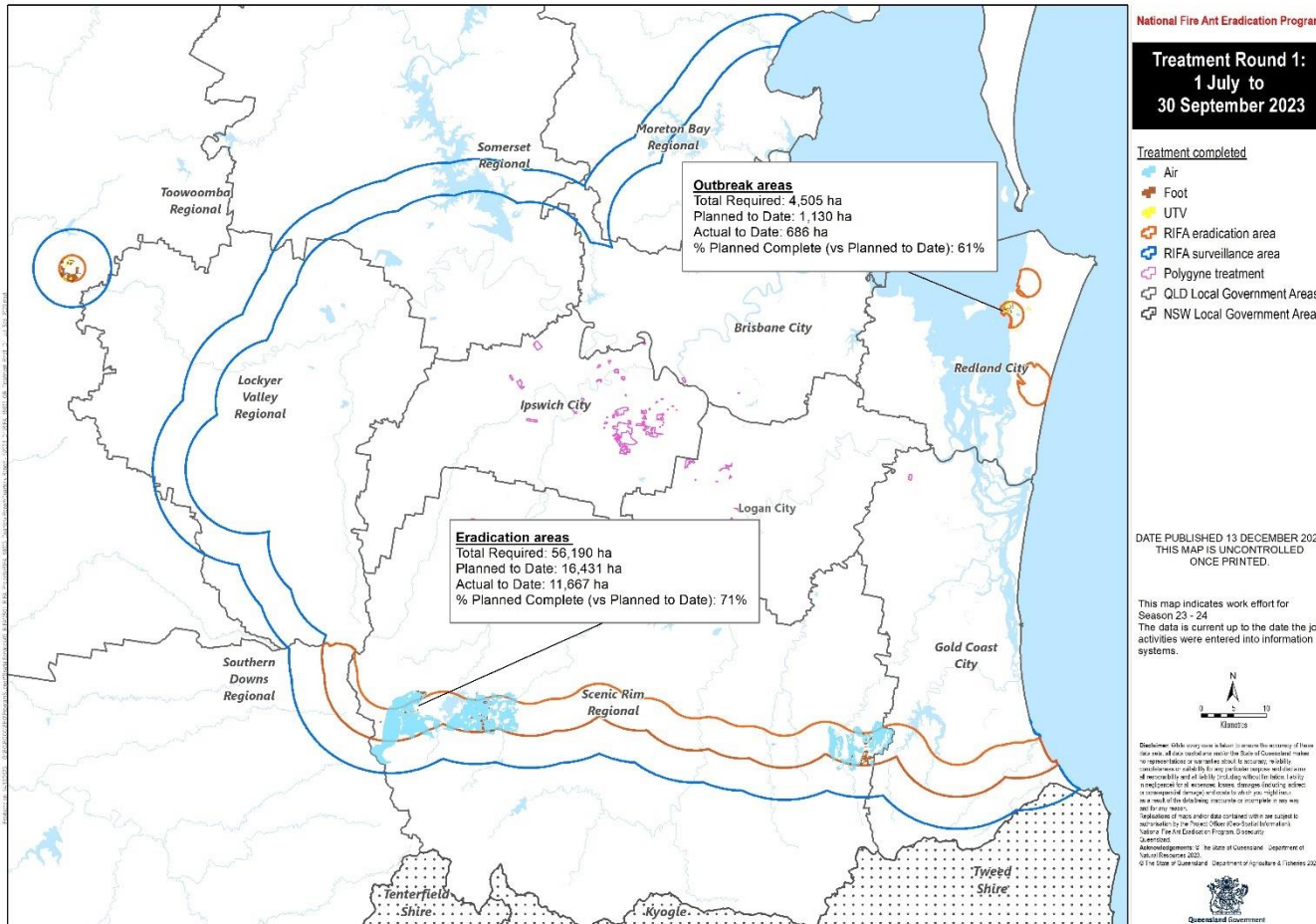
Risk framework triggers

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



Appendix 1 – Planned treatment progress (30 September 2023)

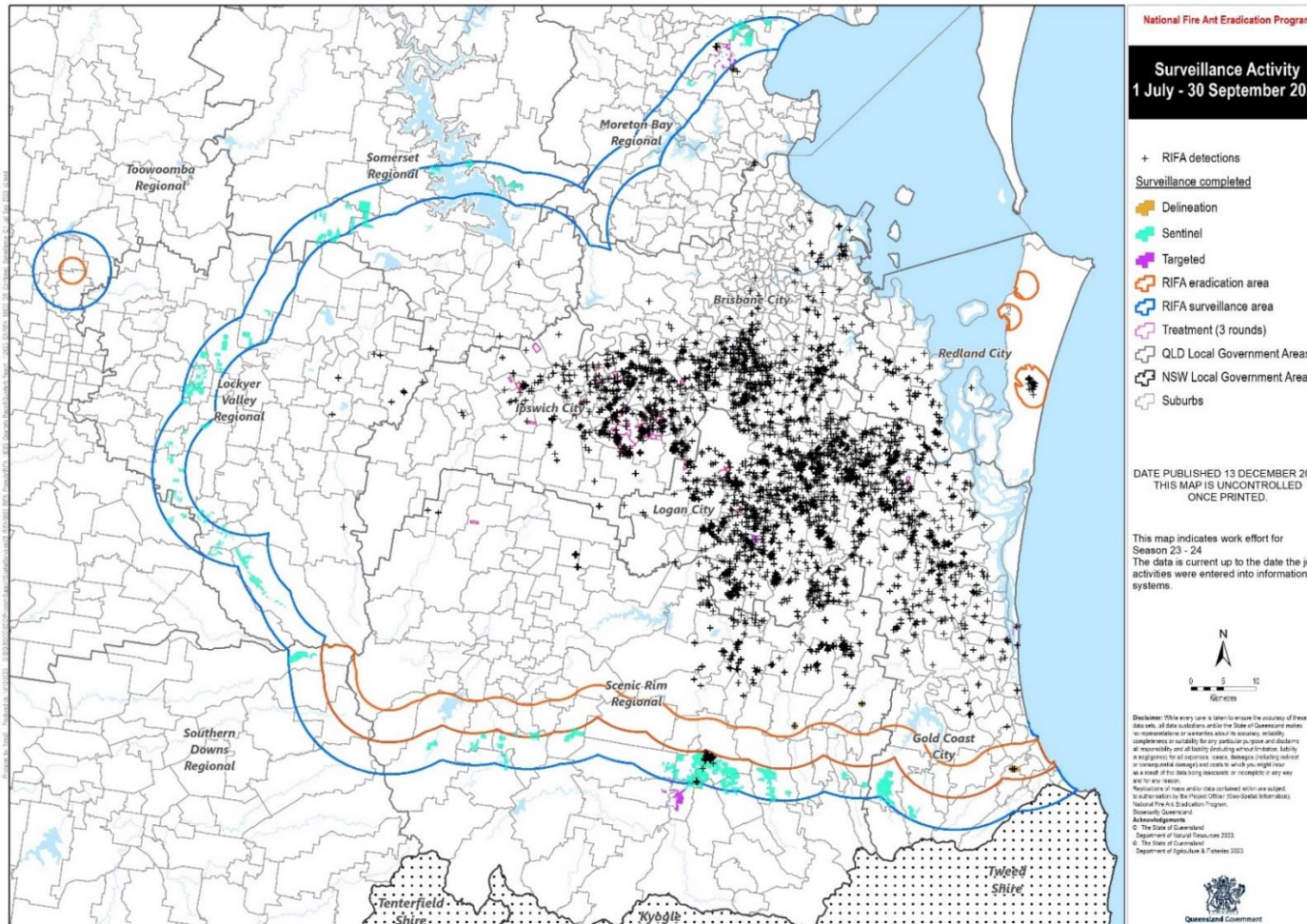
The map provided below outlines the round 1 treatment progress conducted during the reporting period. Details within the map indicate air (blue), foot (brown), and utility-terrain vehicles (UTV – yellow) treatments were carried out within the eradication area (red).





Appendix 2 – Planned surveillance progress (30 September 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).





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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 30 September 2023

Surveillance task	Planned ha	Progress actual ha	Progress % completed
Planned*	6,219	11,382	183%
Responsive**	0	1,578	NA
Total	6,219	12,960	208%

*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 (30 September 2023)

The map below indicates the compliance check activities within the biosecurity zones. Compliance is indicated by a green triangle, non-compliance a red triangle. There are 2 biosecurity zones indicated in yellow and grey.

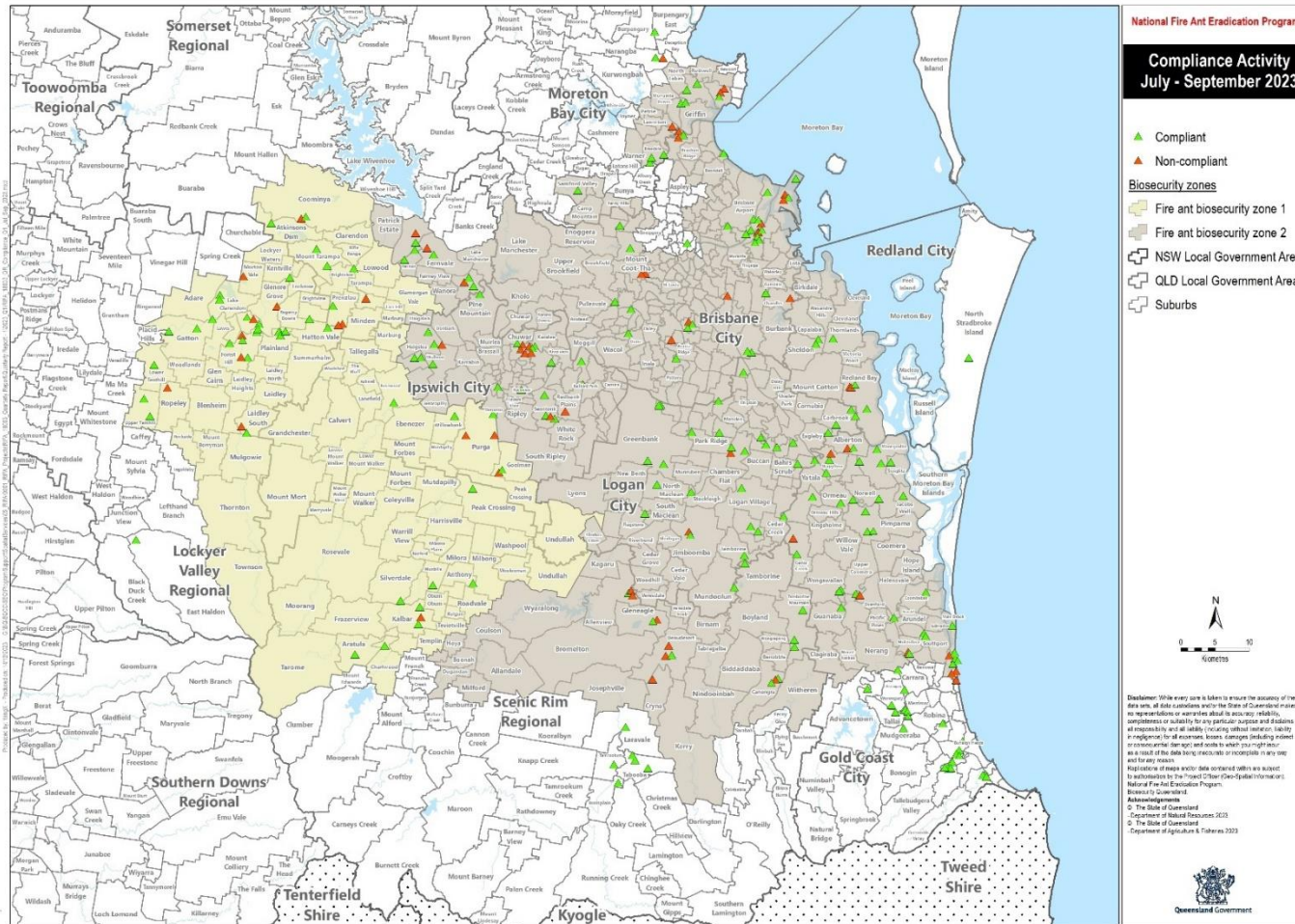




Table 9: High risk industry audits – numbers compliant vs. non-compliant

High risk industry	No. audits	% non-compliant	Outcome
Hay	55	25	13 Advisory Notices and 4 Biosecurity Orders issued to hay producers for not storing or treating around storage sheds in accordance with section 71 of Biosecurity Regulation 2016.
Earthmoving	35	17	6 Advisory Notices and 2 Biosecurity Orders issued to several earthmoving companies. Including 1 Penalty Infringement Notice failure to comply with section 71A of the Biosecurity Regulation 2016.
Civil construction and builders	36	19	2 Advisory Notices and 1 Biosecurity Order for various general biosecurity obligation (GBO) offences and failure to comply with 71A of the Biosecurity Regulation 2016.
Landscaping supplier (potted plants)	49	22	8 Advisory Notices and 3 Biosecurity Orders mainly or failing to disturb carriers in accordance with section 71A of the Biosecurity Regulation 2016.
Quarry	28	39	7 Advisory Notices and 3 Biosecurity Orders for failing to comply with Biosecurity Instrument Permit, GBO and disturbance with section 71A of the Biosecurity Regulation 2016.
Local council	2	50	1 Advisory Notice and 1 Biosecurity Order failing to comply with GBO.
Waste management	9	33	3 Advisory Notices failing to comply with Biosecurity Instrument Permit.
Produce agent	8	0	All produce agents that were audited were compliant.
Nursery/potted plants	34	24	7 Advisory Notices, in relation to section 71 of the Biosecurity Regulation 2016 storage and treatment.
Turf	10	30	3 Advisory Notices and 1 Biosecurity Order for not treating in accordance with Australian Pesticide and Veterinary Medicine Authority (APVMA) Permit.
Total	277	23	All non-compliance rectified and risk mitigated.



Appendix 4 – Detections of importance in Q1

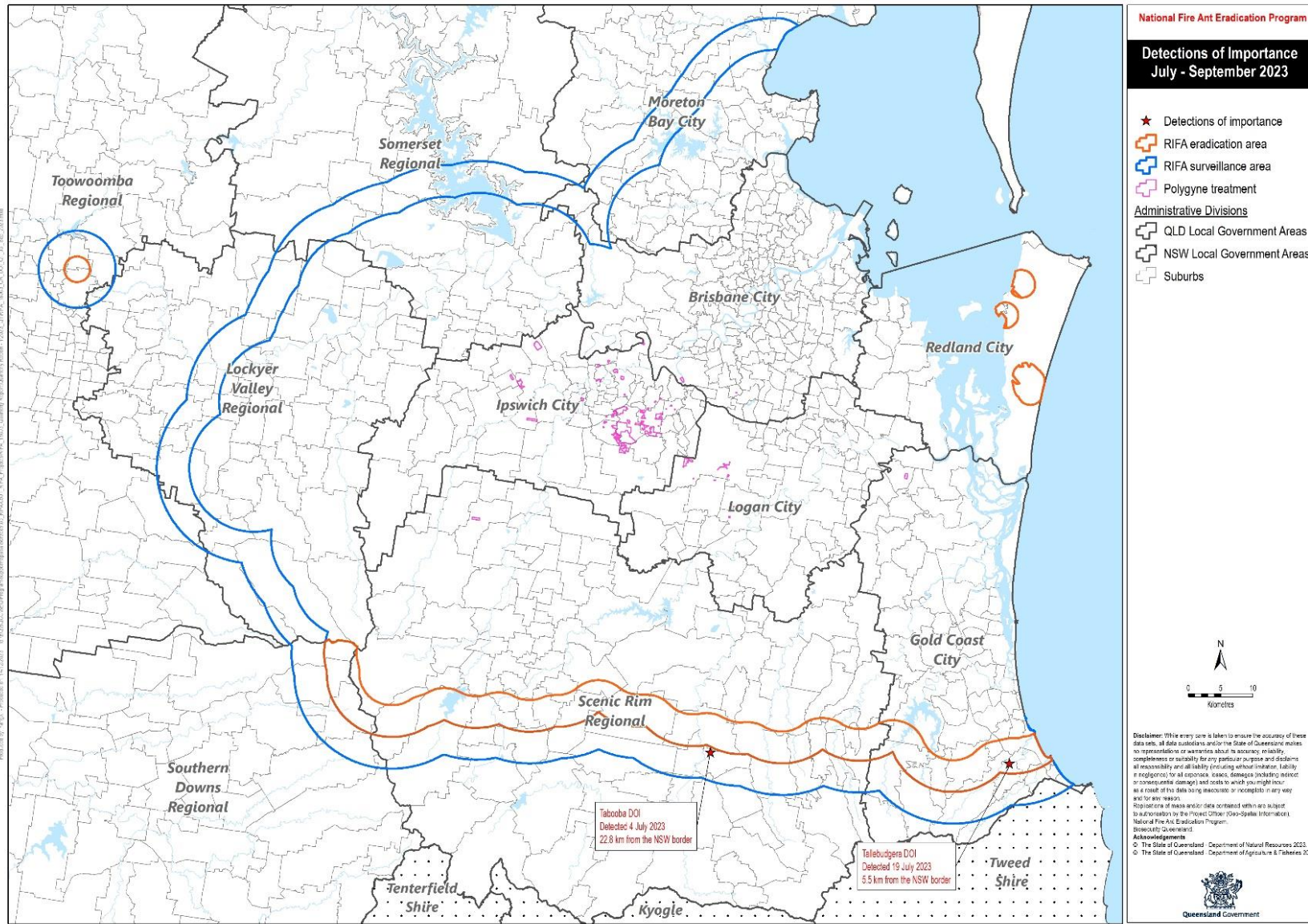
Detections of importance are detections that present a risk to the NFAEP's ability to achieve objectives. These comprise detections in the outer eradication area that result in a change to the treatment boundary, and detections within and beyond the surveillance area. Detections within and beyond the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

- During Q1, the NFAEP confirmed 2 detections of importance – one in the outer 5 km treatment area in Tallebudgera, Gold Coast City; and another in the surveillance area in Tabooba, Scenic Rim.
- Both detections were of concern given their proximity to the NSW border. At 5.5 km north of the border, the Tallebudgera detection was the closest to NSW the NFAEP had encountered to date, whereas geographically the Tabooba detection was the most southern.
- Both detections were destroyed using a combination of direct nest injection and a broadscale treatment out to 500 m and surveillance out to 500 m from the nests was undertaken to determine the extent of the infestation.
- A risk assessment was completed for each detection and recommendations for additional treatment were made out to 5 km from the Tallebudgera detection (medium risk) and out to 10 km from the Tabooba detection (high risk) to mitigate further risk of spread.
- Six rounds of broadscale treatment are proposed for each detection over 2 years, followed by annual surveillance over 3–5 years to provide confidence that the pest is cleared.
- A notional allocation of 40,000 ha was set aside in the work plan budget to respond to detections of importance. The increased treatment for the Tallebudgera and Tabooba detections will exceed this figure so approval for a variation to the work plan will be submitted so additional funding can be allocated as a priority.

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



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Appendix 5 – Stakeholder Mobilisation in Q1

Figure 2: Media stories mentioning the NFAEP

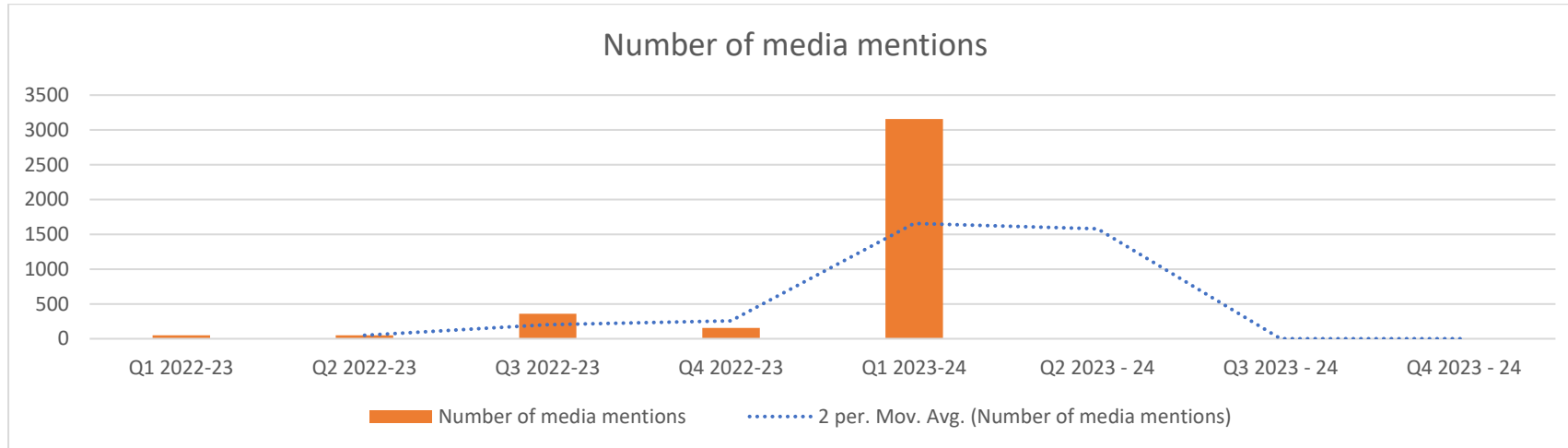


Figure 3: Website page views – fireants.org.au

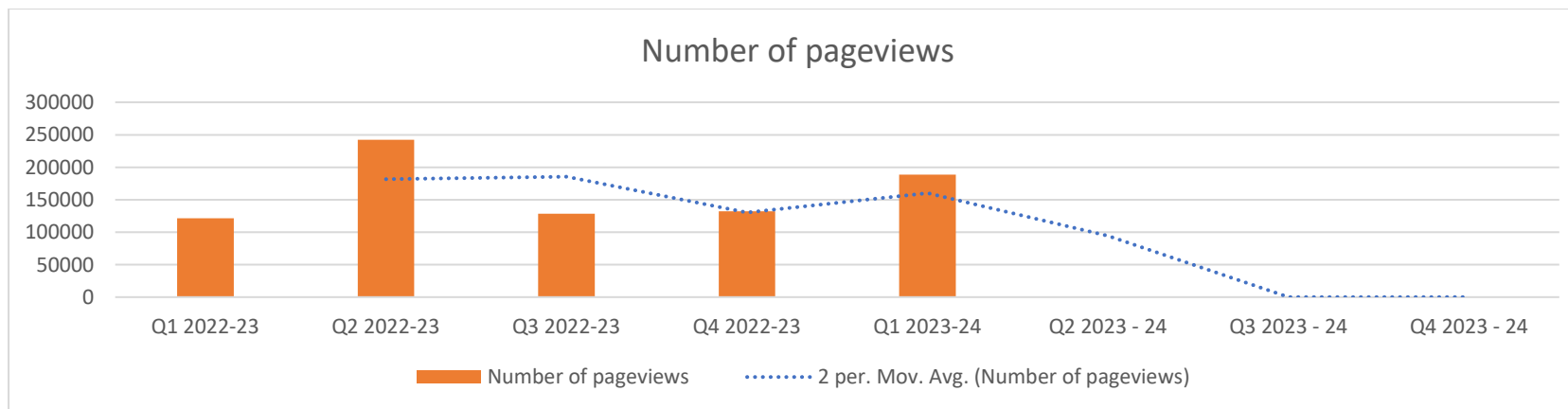




Figure 4: Social media reach

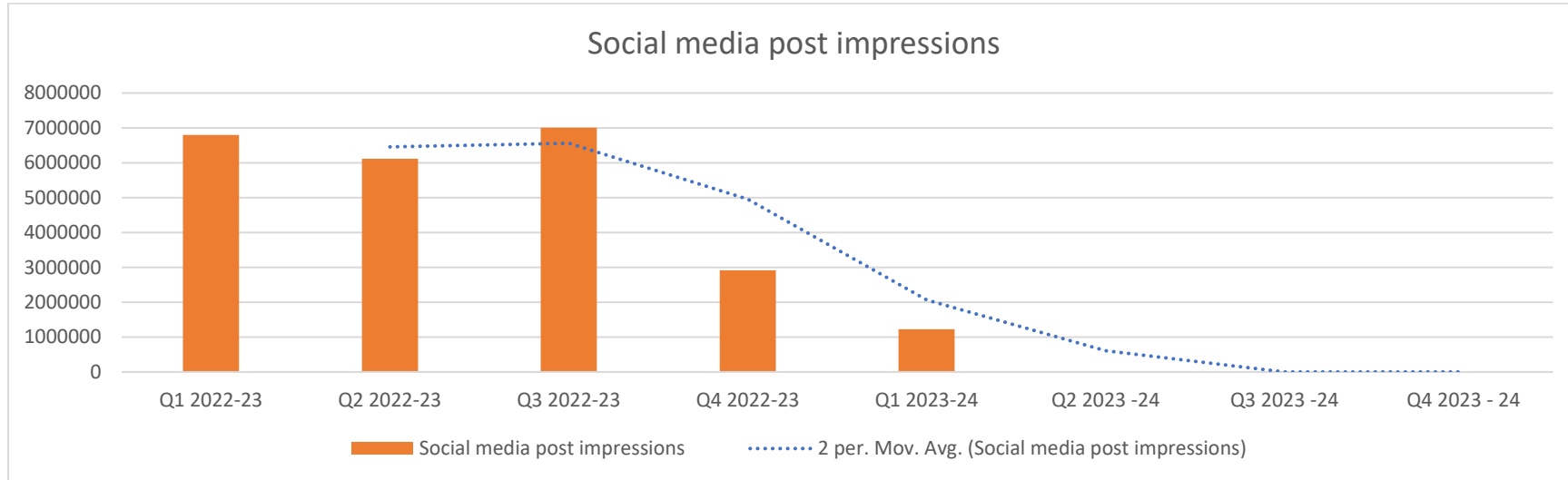


Figure 5: Stakeholder fire ant awareness training

