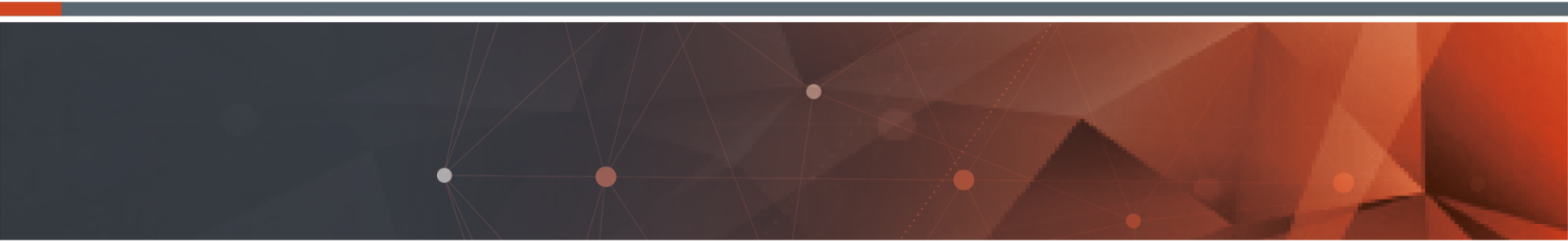




Australian Government

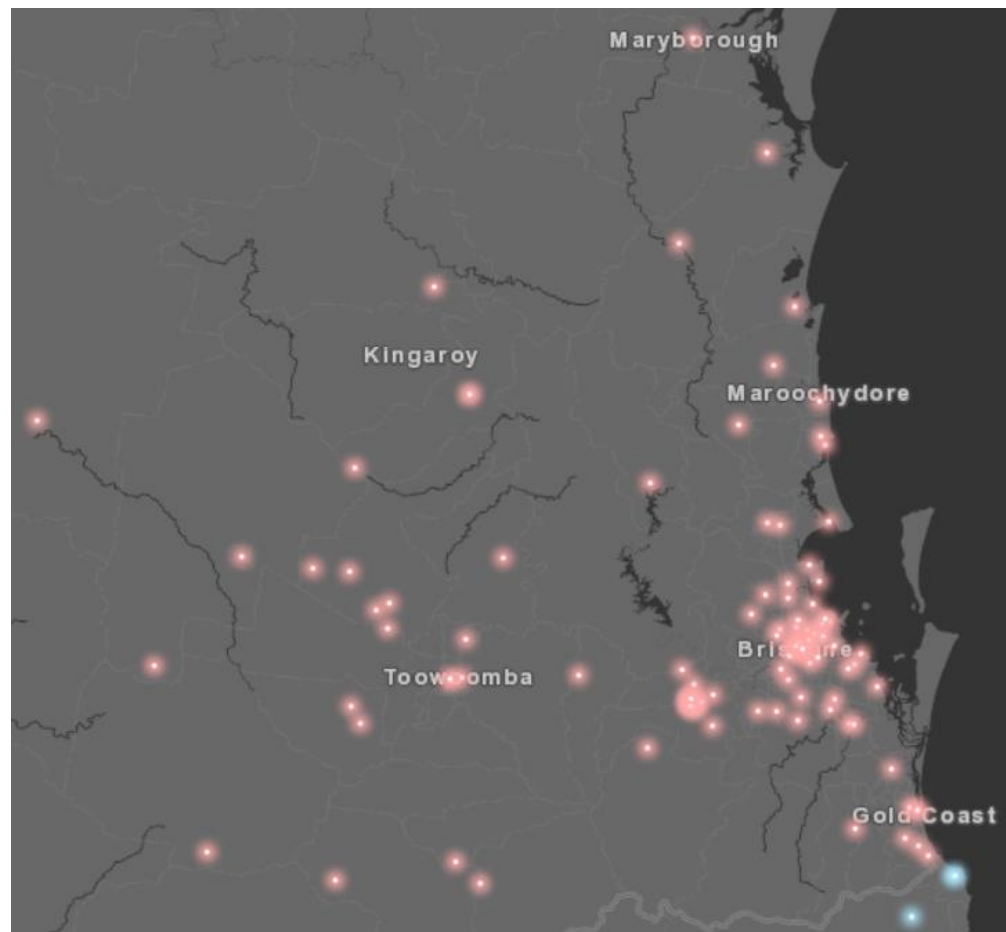
Department of Defence
Security and Estate Group

Red Imported Fire Ants – Defence Response



Department of Defence is the largest Commonwealth land holder maintaining stewardship of over 3.8 million hectares.

Defence has 112 sites across Southern Queensland



On April 16 2024, RIFA were detected at Swartz Barracks, Oakey. This detection was the first time RIFA has been found that far west.

The spread of RIFA to Swartz Barracks was the result of organic materials being brought onto the Defence estate as part of a Defence construction project.

This detection triggered a review into the management of RIFA across the Defence Estate.

Red Imported Fire Ant Assurance Program

Defence developed and implemented a five tiered assurance program focused on:

- Education
- Surveillance
- Detection
- Treatment
- Reporting

Education

Defence committed to delivering a comprehensive Red Imported Fire Ant education campaign.

It aimed to increase Defence personnel's awareness of RIFA, improve biosecurity policy compliance, and promote proactive identification and management.

This is achieved through a multi-faceted approach that includes both Defence and Industry Partner training, RIFA identification and biosecurity information outreach and inter-agency collaboration.

Surveillance

Defence has implemented a proactive RIFA surveillance program.

The program has been tailored for sites across the Defence portfolio based on risk and location and achieved through close collaboration with industry partners.

A key element of the program is the integration of RIFA surveillance into general duties across Australia.

Detection



While surveillance and detection achieve a similar outcome, there is a distinct difference of their actions within the program.

While surveillance is achieved through the training and upskilling of staff and existing resources, the detection pillar is a specific RIFA identification program that will see a targeted audit of Defence bases and training areas.

Defence has taken the initiative to extend the program to training areas and bases that frequent personnel and vehicle movements from SQ and are outside of the RIFA biosecurity zone

Treatment

The RIFA Assurance Program focuses on both responsive and preventative treatment to support the suppression of RIFA.

The approach is based on advice from the NFAEP and is delivered through Defence Industry Partners.

Key components will include widespread treatment in line with best practice guidelines coupled with responsive treatments of identified nests.

Reporting

Defence is adopting technologies used by other government agencies and industry creating an interoperable portal for reporting RIFA detections and treatments, ensuring timely and accurate data collection and dissemination.

Analytical and statistical data will be collated and reported to Defence by our partners providing assurance of surveillance and detection processes and effectiveness of treatment protocols.

Defence supports the government of the day through briefing and submissions.

Until fire ants are completely eradicated from the community, not just Defence sites, it is expected that fire ants will continue to be detected.

Questions?