

## **TOAD-ALLY AWESOME! BUSTING KIMBERLEY STYLE**

On 7 March 2012, Lee Scott-Virtue informed and entertained the Kimberley Society with a PowerPoint presentation on the work done by the Kimberley Toad Busters. Lee was born in Derby, is a qualified archaeologist and historian, and has spent 29 years recording rock art sites throughout the Kimberley. She is the founder of Kimberley Specialists in Research, a non-profit organisation set up in 1991. This organisation has sponsored 60 independent research projects in the Kimberley, facilitated and run several Environmental Educational Forums and Exhibitions, and in 2005 set up the now highly successful volunteer non-profit organisation Kimberley Toad Busters.

Lee and her husband Dean Goodgame have continued to support and run rock art research, various environmental issues and the cane toad campaign on a full-time voluntary basis. Lee has also been the personal recipient of several major state, national and international awards for her rock art research and environmental volunteer work. Along with that, the Kimberley Toad Busters volunteer organisation is now the winner of 15 major awards, the most recent being (for the second year running) the United Nations 2011 Community Group award for their work in biodiversity education and Indigenous youth.

Lee's presentation provided a brief introduction to the cane toad and showed how to identify one and what to do when you find it. Examples of a male and female toad were on display. The presentation also dealt with the following points: Who are the Kimberley Toad Busters? What is Kimberley Toad Busting about? What do Kimberley Toad Busters actually do? Are community toad busting efforts working? Can we measure the impact the toads are having? What areas of the Kimberley have toads invaded? And what areas of the Kimberley will be invaded by the end of 2012 and in the next decade? The politics of toad busting and the future of toad busting and community efforts!

### **Details of the Kimberley Toad Busters.**

Kimberley Toad Busters is a non-profit tax deductible organisation founded in 2005 with a membership base of around seven and a half thousand volunteers. KTB key objectives are to:

- Keep cane toad population numbers down by removing as many adults from as many eco systems as possible and by destroying any new breeding located.
- Monitor & map progress of cane toads as they move through the Kimberley.
- Sponsor scientific & other research projects that are focussed on finding a solution to stopping the cane toad.
- Energise and engage Indigenous and non-Indigenous community across the Kimberley to undertake biodiversity recording and monitoring before and after toads arrive.
- Record appropriate toad data in order to understand toad behaviour and impact on native biodiversity across the Kimberley.
- Provide cane toad educational programs to schools and community groups throughout WA through visits, distributing educational material, media and regular Newsletters.

KTB are a very proactive environmental group and have successfully:

- Won 15 major state national and international awards.
- Facilitated two environmental educational conferences.
- Launched the community "What's in your Backyard?" recording and monitoring program into schools and communities across the Kimberley.
- Engaged the Kimberley Indigenous community in toad busting.
- Sponsored and facilitated 13 cane toad research projects.
- Removed over 2.4 million adult toads or 600,000 kilos of biomass from the environment.
- Controlled population numbers of cane toads invading the Kimberley.

- Mitigated the impact of cane toads on native biodiversity.
- Mapped the cane toads' progress and prepared the community ahead of the front.

While the topic was serious, Lee's delivery contained some humour and her sense of the ridiculous shone through. For more information, go to [www.canetoads.com.au](http://www.canetoads.com.au) where you will find lots of great photos as well reports, newsletters, statistics and a sound clip of the cane toad call.