

App helps prevent native frogs being killed as cane toads

Travelling around the top end of Australia, would you be able to tell the difference between a poisonous cane toad and a bumpy rocket frog or a giant frog? While they look similar, they sound quite different.



Credit: ScienceImage

A new mobile app developed by The University of Western Australia (UWA) aims to help save those native frogs that so often become the victim of mistaken identity.

Pictures, sounds and information on different species of frogs and toads are included in the app, which the UWA originally developed as part of an enrichment program for secondary science teachers, in partnership with the WA Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC).

At the launch of the app, WA Environment Minister Albert Jacob described it as an easily accessible resource for students, travellers to northern WA, truck drivers and the community.

‘Cane toads are prevalent in the east Kimberley and despite the ongoing efforts of community groups and the State Government, they are continuing to move west.

‘There is a lot of community support for reducing the spread of cane toads and their impact on native species, and this simple mobile device app can provide people with useful information.’

Associate Professor in Science Communication at the UWA Centre for Learning Technology, Jan Dook, said the idea came from a student's assignment.

‘We had already developed an iPad app teaching resource for year seven students about feeding relationships and ecosystem set in the Kimberley region, including how cane toads affect Kimberley ecosystems. It made sense that this

iPhone/iPad app would support that.

'It's turned out to be not only a good educational tool for students in the Kimberley but also for the broader community and travellers to that region,' Associate Professor Dook said.

It's believed up to two-thirds of amphibians regarded as suspected cane toads are harmless native frogs. The [cane toad app](#) is available to download free from the iTunes store.

Source: UWA

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