

Toads have moved 85km

From page 1

Environmental pressure group Environs Kimberley's executive director Martin Pritchard said he was unaware of any local movement to prevent the toad's journey.

Malcolm Douglas Wilderness Park director Mark Jones said the region might be somewhat apathetic.

But now was the time for individuals or groups to get involved, said the DEC's State Cane Toad Initiative project leader Corrin Everett.

She said unless a biological solution was found quite soon, the toad's entry into the West Kimberley would be inevitable, but there were

things people could do. "People can prepare by being aware of what native frogs they have in their area, through Frog Watch or the DEC," she said.

"And the last thing we want is for the toads to reach Broome before they get there under their own steam, so if you are travelling in toad-infested areas, check your gear before you start back," she said.

"When the toads do start to come through, you don't have to be part of a group to do your own toad-busting. People in Kununurra who don't want toads in their own backyard make sure they have Colorbond fences — without gaps —

and rubber matting under fences and gates."

Ms Everett said the DEC would look at manual removal of toads in priority areas such as those popular with tourists.

In the East Kimberley, groups such as the Stop the Toad Foundation have abandoned the fight simply to kill as many toads as possible, for example through its annual "toad muster" which won't happen this year.

Instead it is focused on preserving particular areas.

Volunteers are fencing the 2km entrance to Emma Gorge at the El Questro Wilderness Park to protect its rich biodiversity.

STTF campaign manager Kim Hands said there were plans for El Questro to conduct tours to educate tourists about native fauna and cane toads.

Ms Hands said the design would include "wildlife gates" so native fauna could move through the fence line.

She said the group would look to fence other important places in the region.

But Ms Everett said DEC was yet to confirm results of a trial of this type of fencing at a Point Springs site.

She said the method was not a long-term concept, and had not been proven to be effective or viable.