

## Myna Control Underway in Far North Queensland

By Ron Moon, Cairns Men's Shed

Indian Myna control across Far North Queensland has gone through a number of iterations to be now firmly established under the umbrella of the Men's Sheds across the region.

The current program was borne out of a confluence of serendipitous events involving the Cairns Men's Shed, the Cairns Rotary Club, Warren Entsch the federal Member for Leichhardt, and the Canberra Indian Myna Action Group (CIMAG).

Research by Chris Tidemann on myna trapping in tropical Cairns had earlier concluded that trapping was ineffective: while Cairns had an extremely high density of mynas – up to 750 per sq km – the tropics have lots of insects to feed on and mynas appeared to avoid the traps. Separate to that, Warren Entsch had noticed, each time he came to Parliament in Canberra, the progressive drop in myna numbers as a consequence of the trapping program by Canberra Indian Myna Action Group members. When Mr Entsch visited the Cairns Men's Club in May 2011, he suggested they build a few myna traps for a bit of additional income. Within a few weeks Ron Moon of the Men's Shed had come up with a trap design. As it so happened a month or so later, Bill Handke from CIMAG was holidaying in Cairns and was invited to speak about the Canberra community myna trapping program to the Cairns Rotary Club – attended by Mr Entsch. As a result of that presentation, the Cairns Rotary Club promptly established a myna control group, and arranged for the Men's Shed to provide traps.

Ron Moon organised a small team and went into production. The traps sold well, but sales really took off when the local press came on side. There was no shortage of customers during all of 2012.

In just over 18 months after Warren Entsch first visited the Men's Shed he was back to help

celebrate the sale of the 1,000th trap – painted gold for the occasion. By this time the management of the community trapping program had passed from the Cairns Rotary Club to the Cairns Men's Shed. And by the end of May 2013, the Cairns Men's Shed has produced 1300 traps. A core team of dedicated and enthusiastic men spend 5½ hours in making a trap, so to produce 1300 traps shows the commitment these men have to reducing the myna numbers in the Cairns area.

The myna trapping program has now spread across the region and Men's Sheds in Atherton, Mareeba, Mossman, Babinda and Tully have joined in making and supplying traps and running the local programs. In addition the Cairns Regional Council has acquired 10 traps and is trapping in its depots around Cairns.



Warren Entsch with the 1,000<sup>th</sup> Men's Shed trap with Ron Moon and Warren Evans

The reported capture numbers are impressive: with the residents of one Cairns Retirement Village having caught 540 mynas with their 3 traps, and another resident having caught 482 in 20 months. It is thought that in excess of 25,000 birds have been caught in the Cairns area to date.

The difference in myna numbers across Cairns is very noticeable.

The Cairns Men's Shed website contains plans and trapping instructions. For details visit [http://www.cairnsmenshed.org/myna\\_birds.html](http://www.cairnsmenshed.org/myna_birds.html).