



# Feral Cat Taskforce

## COMMUNIQUÉ

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### Meeting 15 on 29 and 30 April 2024

#### Feral Cat Taskforce

The Feral Cat Taskforce is an advisory and coordinating group supporting action to reduce the impact of feral cats on Australia's native wildlife. It provides information and support to the Threatened Species Commissioner, the Commonwealth, state and territory governments and other members on best practice feral cat management. The Taskforce was established in 2015 and is chaired by the Threatened Species Commissioner. Membership is by invitation of the Chair.

#### Revised Threat Abatement Plan for Predation by Feral Cats

Taskforce members received a post-public consultation update on the development of the draft updated Threat Abatement Plan for Predation by Feral Cats that may be made under the Commonwealth's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

The statutory public consultation process for the draft updated threat abatement plan received over 1,600 responses. This is a significant response so it is taking the department some time to thoroughly work through, and give due consideration to, all the feedback, and the department will amend the draft plan, as required.

The Taskforce heard an overview of and discussed some of the common themes arising from the feedback. Initial discussions were held about how the Taskforce members can assist in communicating key messages and mobilise action when the Threat Abatement Plan is finalised.

#### National Environmental Science Program project: Best-practice management for feral cats and red foxes

National Environmental Science Program Resilient Landscapes Hub researchers provided the Taskforce with an update on feral cat management projects.

The *best-practice management of feral cats and foxes* is progressing well, with a draft website for the feral cat decision tool demonstrated to the Taskforce. The tool estimates the results and costs for different management actions for feral cats. An expert workshop is planned for June 2024 to progress the fox best practice management decision tool.

A second project by the Hub on informing management of feral cats and foxes in priority areas of Kangaroo Island (SA) and Fitz-Stirling region (WA) will commence in 2024.

### **National Feral Cat and Fox coordination**

Gillian Basnett, the National Feral Cat and Fox Management Coordinator provided an overview on activities in progress that build capacity in landholders to adopt best practice control methods for cats and foxes.

The Coordinator now has a full-time support officer for assistance.

A monthly newsletter has started providing information about activities around the country, information and resources for feral cat and fox managers.

Activities undertaken since the last meeting included attendance at conferences and field days, working with governments on policies and putting together content for the new National Feral Cat and Fox Management Coordination website.

### **Western Australia Feral Cat Working Group**

Executive Officer Gillian Bryant provided an overview of the Western Australian Feral Cat Working Group activities including a series of educational videos on the website (<https://wafcwg.org.au/>), working with local governments on community sentiment about pet cat containment and funding for projects to address objectives of the Western Australian Feral Cat Strategy 2023-2028.

### **Managing feral cats on Country**

Members heard from Nyangumarta Rangers on how they managed feral cats on their country. Feral cat control has been undertaken by Rangers for a number of years now and includes trapping, shooting, use of Felixer Grooming Traps and traditional methods. Navigating government permitting and long-term funding to enable effective work are key challenges for the Rangers on their vast Indigenous Protected Area. A recent trip to visit Kiwirrkurra Rangers provided a valuable opportunity for knowledge exchange.

### **Proposal for national registration of the Eradocat bait for feral cats**

The Eradocat bait for feral cats has registration with the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority for use by authorised persons in Western Australia. WA Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions provided an update on a project underway to progress registration more broadly to several other jurisdictions. The APMVA made additional data requests in early 2024 and is now evaluating the application.

### **Updates from Members**

Members provided updates to the Taskforce on action within their jurisdiction or organisation. The updates reflected the wide range of activities underway across the country, including:

- Victorian Government Cat Management Strategy under development
- Western Australian Feral Cat Strategy has two new coordinators
- New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service have a major new project for feral cat control in the far west of the state
- Semi-arid areas that have had recent rain causing native animal explosions are finding a need to increase in feral cat control efforts.

Members shared links to resources and papers recently released.

### **Note**

This communiqué presents a synthesis of the meeting and should not be taken to represent the position of any individual Feral Cat Taskforce member.

**Dr Fiona Fraser**  
**Chair, Feral Cat Taskforce**

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## Members

### Threatened Species Commissioner (Chair)

#### *Government*

Australian Government:

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

Parks Australia

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Department of Defence

ACT Government: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate

NSW Government: National Parks and Wildlife Service

NT Government: Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security

Qld. Government: Department of Environment, Science and Innovation

SA Government: Department of Environment and Water

Tas. Government: Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment

Vic. Government: Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action

WA Government: Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

Australia Local Government Association

*First Nations peoples:* Kimberley Land Council

*National and Regional coordination:*

National Feral Cat and Fox Coordinator

WA Feral Cat Working Group

*Research and Innovation:*

Centre for Invasive Species Solutions

National Environmental Science Program: Resilient Landscapes Hub

Thylation

Invited scientists

*Land management:*

NRM Regions Australia

Australian Land Conservation Alliance

*Welfare:*

RSPCA Australia

Veterinary expertise - *member tbc*

*Advocacy and public communication:*

Invasive Species Council

Zoos Victoria

### Invited guests to this meeting

Threat Abatement Plan authors

Australian Government – Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority

Nyangumarta Rangers and Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation

North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance