



Feral Cat Taskforce

COMMUNIQUÉ

Meeting 13 on 17 and 20 March 2023

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 considered key points of a new draft Threat Abatement Plan for Predation by Feral Cats that may be made under the Commonwealth's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. There have been Threat Abatement Plans for Predation by Feral Cats since 1999, and this draft builds on the progress achieved under the 2015 plan. Substantial consultation of First Nations peoples took place to inform the plan and the Feral Cat Taskforce provided valuable advice in 2022. As required by the EPBC Act, a 3-month statutory public comment period will take place prior to the plan being made as a statutory document.

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 underway and in the planning phase. The *best-practice management of feral cats and foxes* is well underway, working with experts to determine best-practice management for cats and foxes and identify research to address knowledge gaps to improve the future management. Other projects are commencing and being scoped during 2023.

National Feral Cat and Fox coordination

Gillian Basnett, the National Feral Cat and Fox Coordinator presented the new Planning Guide for Feral Cat Management in Australia to members. This is designed to provide project planning basics and key questions for groups to consider in feral cat control. The 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 highlighted challenges with finding basic information on legislative and other requirements for conducting a feral cat control program in each state and territory.

Western Australia Feral Cat Symposium

The Western Australia Feral Cat Symposium, which brought together practitioners and researchers from all around Australia, was held in February 2023 and hosted by the WA Feral Cat Working Group. Highlights and key points were provided to members. The website <https://wafcwg.org.au/> provides useful information to those managing feral cats and abstracts of presentations are on the site. Videos of most presentations will be released shortly.

Felixer grooming trap

The Felixer grooming trap 1080 cartridge has been carefully assessed and is now approved for use by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA), paving the way for access to another tool for feral cat management. The requirements under the registration are slightly varied from the permits and users are reminded to carefully read the label. Further approvals may be required by state and territory governments. Further information on the Felixer grooming trap is available at <https://thylation.com/> and the approved APVMA label is at <https://websvr.infopest.com.au/LabelRouter?LabelType=L&Mode=1&ProductCode=89542>.

Australian Wildlife Conservancy

The Australian Wildlife Conservancy provided the Taskforce with an overview of their important work to manage the impacts of feral cats on their substantial estate across Australia. The approach to feral cat management is the dual approach of landscape management to minimise impacts and the use of fenced and island safe havens. The Australian Wildlife Conservancy owns properties and partners with First Nations peoples, governments and the pastoral industry to deliver biodiversity outcomes.

Proposal for national registration of the Eradicat bait for feral cats

The Eradicat bait for feral cats has registration with the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority for use by authorised persons in Western Australia. A project is underway to progress registration more broadly across the country, which will result in an expanded suite of feral cat management tools available across other states and territories.

Updates from Members

Members provided updates to the Taskforce on action within their jurisdiction or organisation. The updates reflected the complex range of legislative requirements related to feral cats across the country and within individual jurisdictions. State and territory governments highlighted where there are reviews or amendments of their legislation or policies occurring.

Members shared outlines of research to improve our understanding of feral cats currently being undertaken and shared research papers published.

The necessity of clearly communicating with stakeholders and the general public on the impacts of feral cats on native wildlife and the importance of continuing and improving management was recognised by the Taskforce.

Members touched on the interface to domestic cat management with updates to campaigns that encourage containment programs.

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

Members

Threatened Species Commissioner (Chair)

Government

Australian Government:

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Parks Australia

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 and Science

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

Welfare:

Royal Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Animals

Veterinary expertise represented by Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Advocacy and public communication:

Invasive Species Council

Zoos Victoria