



WAFCWG

WA Feral Cat Working Group

Protecting WA's Biodiversity

Meeting 16 Communiqué

A Working Group to improve native fauna conservation trajectories with a focus on effective and humane management of feral cats.

This communiqué highlights key discussions and considerations from the Working Group's (WG) meeting as well as other important information.

Date: Thursday 21 May 2026

Location: WABSI, Level 5, 197 St George's Tce, Perth

Organisations represented: WAFCWG, WABSI, Bush Heritage Australia, NRM WA, National Feral Cat Taskforce, Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA), Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD), Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC). Invited guests from Cat Laws and Wildlife Survival (CLAWS) and the Chamber of Minerals and Energy.

The WA Feral Cat Working Group Meeting (#16) focused on the future direction of the Working Group, including governance, membership, funding, communications, research priorities and symposium planning. Members received updates on feral cat management activities, legislative reforms, research initiatives and opportunities to strengthen coordination across Western Australia.

Summary of Matter for Discussion:

1. The Working Group welcomed Professor Peter Klinken AC as the new Chair and acknowledged the significant contribution of former Chair Susan Hunt AM. Members also recognised the contribution of Gillian Bryant as Executive Officer and Elisabeth McLellan following their departure from the group.
2. Members welcomed the securing of philanthropic funding to support an Executive Officer position for an initial three-year period, with the potential for extension. Additional seed funding has also been secured to support future feral cat research projects in Western Australia.
3. Updates were provided on proposed amendments to the Cat Act that would enable local governments to introduce permanent cat containment provisions. Members noted the significance of these reforms and discussed the importance of coordinated communications and future Working Group position statements to support implementation.
4. Members discussed opportunities to refresh the Working Group's Terms of Reference, Advisory Group membership and governance arrangements to ensure the group remains effective as it grows and evolves.
5. The Working Group agreed to progress planning for the next WA Feral Cat Symposium, with March 2027 identified as the preferred timing. The Executive Group will continue discussions regarding venue and event planning arrangements.
6. Members discussed opportunities to improve coordination and communication across the feral cat management sector, including development of a SharePoint collaboration platform and future transfer of website management arrangements to support the incoming Executive Officer.

Summary of Matters for Noting:

- DBCA provided an update on the Western Shield program and ongoing feral cat management activities across approximately 4.7 million hectares of baited landscape. Work is continuing to investigate options to increase production capacity for Eradocat® bait.
- CLAWS provided an update on toxoplasmosis research investigating prevalence across domestic, stray and feral cats, wildlife and livestock, alongside ongoing community education and cat containment initiatives.
- AWC provided updates on a national feral cat communications campaign, AI image classifier technology, Smart Gate trials, feral predator management research and new conservation initiatives supported through the Alcoa enforceable undertaking program.
- Bush Heritage Australia provided an update on the federally funded AI-enabled trap detection project and completion of the five-year Fitz-Stirling Fauna Recovery Project.
- Members discussed future research opportunities associated with cat containment reforms, including establishing baseline monitoring to evaluate ecological, animal welfare and community outcomes before and after implementation.

Highlights of Working Group Activities:

Bush Heritage Australia

- Continued advocacy and engagement relating to Cat Act reform and permanent cat containment provisions.
- Progressed field testing of AI-enabled trap detection technology through the federally funded Game Changers program.

Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

- Provided updates on Western Shield program delivery, including large-scale feral cat management and monitoring activities.
- Continued implementation of the WA Feral Cat Strategy and management of the final funding round under the Strategy.

Australian Wildlife Conservancy

- Progressed development of a national feral cat communications campaign.
- Released its AI image classifier for public use and continued research into feral cat management technologies and monitoring methods.
- Advanced publication of Smart Gate trial results and long-term Eradocat baiting research.

Cat Laws and Wildlife Survival

- Continued toxoplasmosis research investigating disease prevalence across cat populations, wildlife and livestock.
- Expanded engagement with local governments, ranger groups and communities to support responsible cat management and containment initiatives.

The Western Australian Biodiversity Science Institute

- Committed funding to support new feral cat research projects and is progressing preparations for a future research funding call.
- Commenced recruitment activities for the new Executive Officer position and is supporting future governance and administrative arrangements for the Working Group.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held 13 August 2026.

Note

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

Prof Peter Klinken AC

Chair, WAFCWG