



WAFCWG

WA Feral Cat Working Group

Protecting WA's Biodiversity

Meeting 17 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 12 August 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) WALGA, RSPCA WA, RSPCA NSW, Murdoch University, WA Wildlife and the Chamber of Minerals and Energy.

The WA Feral Cat Working Group Meeting (#17) focused on emerging approaches to cat management, progress of Cat Act reforms, research priorities, funding opportunities, governance matters and future coordination activities. Members discussed balancing animal welfare and biodiversity outcomes, reviewed progress on strategic initiatives, and considered approaches to improving collaboration and information sharing across Western Australia (WA).

Summary of Matter for Discussion:

1. Members received a presentation from Dr Gemma Ma (RSPCA NSW) on the "One Welfare" approach to cat management. Discussion explored the management of owned, unowned and feral cats, behavioural change, community engagement, cat containment, welfare considerations and the balance between cat welfare and native wildlife protection.
2. An update was provided on the proposed Cat Act Amendment Bill, which would enable local governments to introduce permanent cat containment provisions. Members noted that while legislative progress has been slower than anticipated, there appears to be broad bipartisan support for the reforms.
3. AWC announced a new research project, undertaken with CSIRO's Genetic Biocontrol Team, to develop a large-scale whole-genome dataset of feral cats across Western Australia. The project aims to strengthen understanding of feral cat populations and support development of future management technologies.
4. Members welcomed AWC securing three years of funding for a national feral cat communications campaign and agreed to invite campaign representatives to present to a future Working Group meeting.
5. The Working Group acknowledged the significant contribution of departing Advisory Group member Di Evans (RSPCA WA), recognising her as a founding member and thanking her for her longstanding involvement. Members also welcomed Debbie King as the new RSPCA WA representative and Dean Huxley from WA Wildlife.
6. WABSI provided an update on the recruitment process for the Executive Officer role, now readvertised as Senior Project Coordinator, and outlined plans for progressing a future call for feral cat research projects once recruitment is finalised.
7. Members discussed opportunities to improve data sharing and coordination through the Shared Environmental Analytics Facility (SEAF) platform. The concept is initially focused on the Pilbara but could potentially support statewide information sharing and coordinated feral cat management in the future.

Summary of Matters for Noting:

- DBCA advised that the endorsed 2026-27 Predator Management Plan will support feral predator management across more than five million hectares of DBCA and stakeholder lands.
- The final grant round under the current WA Feral Cat Strategy has closed and is awaiting ministerial endorsement prior to announcement of successful projects.
- DBCA is progressing recruitment of a Communications Officer to improve access to feral cat management information and support priority website updates.
- Members requested a future presentation from DBCA on outcomes and achievements delivered through previous WA Feral Cat Strategy grant funding rounds.
- Planning for the next WA Feral Cat Symposium will continue, with symposium preparation expected to be a priority activity for the incoming Senior Project Coordinator.

Highlights of Working Group Activities:

Australian Wildlife Conservancy

- Secured funding for a three-year national feral cat communications campaign.
- Commenced a WA Feral Cat Management grant project investigating feral cat population genomics in collaboration with CSIRO.
- Continued research on cat monitoring, Eradicat® baiting effectiveness, Smart Gate technology and predator impacts on native fauna.

Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

- Finalised the 2026-27 Predator Management Plan and expanded coordinated predator management activities to more than five million hectares.
- Progressed recruitment of a Communications Officer to improve information accessibility.
- Continued planning for future research investment and feral cat management funding initiatives.

Bush Heritage Australia

- Continued leadership on Cat Act reform advocacy and Working Group governance matters.
- Progressed development of future research opportunities relating to cat containment and biodiversity outcomes.

The Western Australian Biodiversity Science Institute

- Continued recruitment for the Senior Project Coordinator position to support Working Group operations.
- Progressed planning for a future call for feral cat research proposals.
- Investigated opportunities to develop a SEAF-based platform to improve feral cat data sharing and management coordination.

National Feral Cat Taskforce and Working Group Members

- Continued contributing expertise and strategic advice on emerging research, management technologies and legislative reform opportunities.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held 24 November 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