

# Western Australian Feral Cat Working Group – Terms of Reference

*Endorsed 28 April, 2020*

*With amendments suggested Apr to Jun 2021*



## 1 Objective

To improve the trajectory of WA native fauna conservation outcomes through collaborative, effective, resource-efficient and humane management of feral cats.

### Purpose

Feral cats pose a significant threat to many nationally listed threatened species across Australia. They are a threat for 124 listed threatened species, and implicated in 28 mammal extinctions. In Western Australia they are a significant threat to native fauna across all regions, covering multiple land tenures.

The Western Australian Feral Cat Working Group (the Working Group) provides a strategic focal point for feral cat management in the state. The Working Group provides links to the National Feral Cat Taskforce and the Western Australian Biosecurity Council to drive delivery of more effective, resource-efficient and humane feral cat management outcomes in Western Australia by a tenure-blind, context specific approach to:

- a) communicating and linking initiatives, innovations and progress on managing feral cat threats;
- b) building and sharing knowledge and education on managing feral cat threats and management opportunities and techniques available in WA;
- c) building relevant partnerships and cooperation on feral cat management;
- d) coordinating and facilitating a prioritised and collaborative approach to addressing knowledge gaps for cat management via research; and
- e) providing a unified access point for information, data and methodologies on feral cat management activity.

The focus of the Working Group will be guided at a higher level by priorities shaped by policy at the State and National level, including:

- [The Australian Government's Threatened Species Strategy 2021-2031](#), with reference where relevant to the [Threat abatement plan for predation by feral cats](#);
- [The Western Australian Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007](#); and
- [The Western Australian Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016](#).

## 2 Authority and Accountabilities

The Western Australian Feral Cat Working Group is a community driven initiative, originating out of a working group recommendation from the 2018 WA Feral Cat Symposium. The Working Group was established in May 2018 and is approved and endorsed by the National Feral Cat Taskforce, the Western Australian Biosecurity Council, the Western Australian Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, and the Western Australian Department of Primary Industries and Development. The Working Group has a knowledge brokering, research facilitation and information sharing role, providing information and support to land managers and their nominated goals. The Working Group does not have a statutory or compliance role.

The State Government, in its recognition and support for the Working Group, has agreed to work with the Working Group, including seeking and providing advice and information relevant to the objectives of the Working Group.

## 3 Duties of members

Members of the Feral Cat Working Group will:

1. Advise on implementing state level feral cat management, including for islands, feral-free areas, and landscape-scale management;
2. Make available information and experience on feral cat management actions;
3. Make available context-specific information on feral cat management actions that are most likely to achieve effective, resource-efficient and humane feral cat management outcomes across the state;
4. Disseminate knowledge on cat management activities in order to improve outcomes and identify future management and research priorities;
5. Encourage those involved in feral cat control activities to monitor and report the impact of management on target feral cat populations and the resulting outcomes for native species;
6. Encourage collaboration, partnerships and knowledge sharing between those involved in feral cat management activities across the state, including governments, NGOs, and the community;
7. Act as conduits to subsidiary groups to support the sharing of information across Western Australia; and
8. Advocate and champion innovative feral cat management solutions.

## 4 Membership

Inaugural Membership of the [Working Group is defined in Annexure A](#). Modifications to membership is by invitation or endorsement of the Chair, taking into consideration recommendations of the Working Group.

Membership is to comprise suitably skilled and experienced people that are representative of community, government, industry and the research community involved in feral cat management in Western Australia. For efficiency, membership will remain at <10 representatives, including the Chair and Executive Officer. There is no defined term of membership. Membership is voluntary and endorsed members will remain unless their representative organisation request an alternative representative, or proxy. Any changes to membership must be endorsed, as defined above.

Membership is unpaid and members must meet their own costs. All members must declare conflicts of interest associated with any aspect of the Working Group deliberations.

The Working Group will be chaired by the establishing Chair (the Chair) and a Deputy will be elected by the Working Group. The Deputy may be an additional member if deemed appropriate.

## 4.1 Executive Group

An Executive Group (a subset of the Working Group) will be nominated to provide support to the Executive Officer and Chair in operational recommendations, and, to provide guidance to the Executive Officer between Working Group Meetings. The Executive Group of ~four (4) representative organisations will be recommended by the Working Group, with final approval being through the Chair. Inaugural membership of the [Executive Group is outlined in Annexure B](#). There is no defined tenure and the Executive Group will remain in place, unless further modifications are recommended and endorsed.

## 4.2 Advisory Group

The Working Group will form an associated Advisory Group consisting of additional representatives on matters of specific relevance to managing feral cats in Western Australia. Inaugural membership of the [Advisory Group is outlined in Annexure C](#). The Working Group can invite suitable representatives to join the Advisory Group, by agreement.

## 4.3 Research Committee

The Working Group will form a Research Committee, consisting of members of the Working Group and the Advisory Group, to provide leadership to the Working Group on matters relating to addressing knowledge gaps on cat management via research. The primary focus of this Committee will be to facilitate and enable the delivery of the WABSI Research Plan *“Increasing knowledge to mitigate cat impacts on biodiversity”*. Inaugural membership of the [Research Committee is outlined in Annexure D](#). The Working Group can invite suitable representatives to join the Research Committee (and therefore the Advisory Group or Working Group as appropriate) by agreement.

## 5 Ambassador/s

The Working Group may invite and support Ambassador/s to embrace and advocate for the vision and objectives of the Working Group.

## 6 Executive Officer

The first Executive Officer, Dr Judy Dunlop, was appointed on 19 April 2021. The Executive Officer will embrace the objectives of the WAFCWG, and under the guidance of the Executive Group and the Chair, lead the delivery of the vision across its three pillars;

- 1) **Accessible Information:** The WAFCWG will make available and act as a conduit for information and experience on feral cat management solutions.
- 2) **Prioritised Research:** The WAFCWG will lead and contribute to prioritised research programs that increase knowledge to mitigate cat impacts on biodiversity.
- 3) **Coordinated Management:** The WAFCWG will seek out and disseminate sources of information, including techniques, regulations and processes for use by stakeholders.

## 7 Meetings

It is anticipated that the Working Group will meet 2-4 times per year. The Working Group may also convene as deemed appropriate by the Chair and issues may be discussed out of session.

Any relevant/suitable persons (from the Advisory Group, Research Committee or otherwise) may be invited to attend meetings at the discretion of the Working Group Chair to address particular agenda items.

## 8 Attendance

Meetings may be conducted in person or by other means. The quorum for a meeting is at the Chair's discretion. Non-attendance or inactive participation may result in an alternative representative being sought.

## 9 Secretariat

The Executive Officer will provide the Secretariat for the Working Group, with support from the Chair,

## 10 Agenda and papers

The Working Group will have a standing agenda and the members have the opportunity to raise any other issues under Other Business. Submission of papers, agenda items and minutes of meetings is through the Executive Officer.

## 11 Reporting

The outcomes, advice and information generated by the Working Group will be reported to the National Feral Cat Taskforce and the Western Australian Biosecurity Council and provided to Members to distribute to their representative organisations.

**29 June 2021**

## Memberships

### Annexure A: Western Australian Feral Cat Working Group, Membership

Establishing Chair: Hon Kerry Sanderson, AO VOC

1. Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA): senior management representative
2. Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Environmental Biosecurity
3. Natural Resource Management Western Australia (NRM WA): Aligned CEO
4. Bush Heritage Australia: senior management representative
5. Australian Wildlife Conservancy: senior management representative
6. Indigenous Desert Alliance: feral cat expert
7. Western Australian Biodiversity Science Institute (WABSI): Threats & Processes Program Director
8. National Feral Cat Taskforce: Western Australian representative
9. Western Australian Biosecurity Council: Chair
10. Western Australian Feral Cat Working Group (WAF CWG): Executive Officer

### Annexure B: Working Group Executive, Membership

1. Western Australian Biodiversity Science Institute (WABSI): Threats & Processes Program Director
2. National Feral Cat Taskforce: Western Australian representative
3. Natural Resource Management Western Australia (NRM WA): Aligned CEO
4. Bush Heritage Australia: senior management representative

### Annexure C: Western Australian Feral Cat Advisory Group, Membership

1. Royal Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA): Animal Welfare Advocate
2. Australian Veterinary Association (AVA): Western Australian President
3. Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA): President
4. Western Australia Landcare Network (WALN): Chair
5. Kiwirrkurra Indigenous Ranger Group: Feral cat expert
6. Environmental Consultancies – Environmental Consultants of WA: Senior Representative
7. Resources Sector – Chamber of Minerals and Energy: Senior Representative
8. Albany and Surrounds Feral Cat Working Group: Senior Representative
9. Western Australian Farmers: Senior Representative (*added 28 April 20*)
10. Western Australian Pastoral and Graziers Association: Senior Representative (*added 28 April 20*)
11. Cat research expertise (Research Committee): Stephen Van Leeuwen, Curtin University (*added 9 Oct 2020*)
12. Cat research expertise (Research Committee): Trish Fleming, Murdoch University (*added 9 Oct 2020*)
13. Cat research expertise (Research Committee): Owain Edwards, CSIRO (*added 9 Oct 2020*)

## Annexure D: Western Australian Feral Cat Research Committee, Membership

*(formed 9 Oct 2020)*

1. Dr Dave Algar, Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA)
2. Tim Allard, Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC)
3. Di Evans, Royal Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)
4. Dr Judy Dunlop, Western Australian Feral Cat Working Group (WAFCWG)
5. Dr Owain Edwards, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)
6. Prof Trish Fleming, Murdoch University
7. Elisabeth McLellan, Bush Heritage Australia (BHA)
8. Dr Bruce Webber, Western Australian Biodiversity Science Institute (WABSI)
9. Prof Stephen Van Leeuwen, Curtin University

## Document History

Date	Version	Author	Comments
25 February 2020	1.0	Jane O'Malley	Draft, endorsed by WAFCWG 28 April 2020
22 April 2021	2.0	Judy Dunlop	Updates to Exec Officer position and Executive Group
29 June 2021	2.1	Bruce Webber	Updates to overall document, addition of Research Committee details