

WA FERAL CAT WORKING GROUP

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

SUMMARY OF MINUTES – MEETING #5

Held on Monday 29th November 2021
commencing at 9.30am (1pm finish) at
WABSI, WA Trustees Building, Level 2, 133 St George's Terrace, Perth
(via Zoom for those unable to attend in person)

In attendance in person:

Dr Tom Hatton	Chair WAF CWG
Victoria Aitken	Director of Invasive Species, DPIRD
Dr Dave Algar	Member, National Feral Cat Taskforce
Tim Allard	CEO, Australian Wildlife Conservancy
Mel Durack	A/CEO, PHCC (NRM WA) on behalf of Jane O'Malley
John Asher	Ecosystem Health Branch, DBCA, on behalf of Fran Stanley
Dr Judy Dunlop	Executive Officer, WAF CWG
Naomi Briggs	Volunteer Minute Taker

In attendance via Zoom :

Dr Rachel Paltridge	Member, Indigenous Desert Alliance
Dr Bruce Webber	Program Director, WABSI

Guest attendee:

Gillian Basnett	National Feral Cat and Fox Management Coordinator, CISS/Office of the Threatened Species Commissioner
-----------------	--

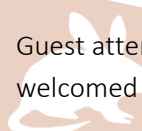
Apologies:

Elisabeth McLellan	Manager, Bush Heritage Australia
Professor Simon McKirdy	Chair, WA Biosecurity Council
Jane O'Malley	CEO, PHCC (NRM WA)
Fran Stanley	Executive Director, Ecosystem Health Branch, DBCA

GENERAL BUSINESS

The Working Group welcomed Dr Tom Hatton who joined the Group as Chair on 22 August 2021.

Guest attendee, Gillian Basnett, the National Feral Cat and Fox Management Coordinator was welcomed by the Working Group.



Protecting WA's Biodiversity

WORKING GROUP PLAN OF ACTION – STRATEGIC PLANNING

Next steps for identified priority strategies and objectives for Action, under each of the key pillars:

a. Accessible Information

The Feral Cat Working Group will make available and act as a conduit for information and experience on feral cat management solutions.

- i) **Ambassadors.** The concept of engaging volunteer ambassadors for the WAFCWG was discussed. Proposed ambassadors included Prof. Lyn Beazley, Nyaparu Rose, Dr Noel Nannup, Tim Winton. The ambassador role would include attendance at public events when available and being a public face for the Group. There was general support for the concept, however, it was agreed, that clear guidance for ambassadors is required before proceeding.
- ii) Dave Algar provided an update from the National Feral Cat Taskforce meeting. Minutes from the NFCTF meeting
- iii) **Website Progress.** Judy Dunlop showed the Working Group through the website development to date.
- iv) The Working Group agreed that where a primary source does not provide information, then the Working Group website can provide useful information as agreed and appropriate. Website should also be used to celebrate what groups are achieving, with Rachel Paltridge noting that this is exactly what rangers want to see.
- v) **Role of the Advisory Group.** General discussion about the role of the Advisory Group and what the Working Group need from this Group. To date members of the Advisory Group have been drawn on by the Research Sub-Committee, however this can be expanded in the future as areas are identified where more support/expertise is required.

b. Research Program

https://wabsi.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/WABSI_Mitigating-cat-impacts_FINAL.pdf

- i) Update on Research Committee activity from Bruce Webber. Three projects have been signed off by the Research Committee.
 - SouthWest Biodiversity Project. This project is led by DBCA and supported by South32, Newmont and Alcoa. This project will develop a targeted baiting strategy for the northern Jarrah forest based on GPS and camera monitoring. First results available March 2022.
 - Camera Array Project. Trish Fleming, Murdoch University is leading a project seeking improvements in camera array and analysis. This project is linked to the SouthWest Biodiversity Project.
 - South West Group development of cat exclusion zones in urban areas. Due to a change in personnel and delays in implementing Cat Laws this project is not progressing at this time.
- ii) Emerging Projects.

- Current project in Adelaide supporting bluetooth tags for cats. Proving difficult as cats have poor registration rates, so difficult to differentiate pet from non-pet cat. Fremantle Council and others are keen to get involved in projects such as this.
- DBCA projects. Current DBCA project in the Pilbara but need more information. Most projects are related to Eradicat but there are opportunities to broaden projects out to include 1080/Felixir/trapping.
- Urban Development Institute of Australia are looking for options for offsets.
- Research Committee template for feedback to funding providers has been trialled and is working well.

c. Co-ordinated Management

- i) Feral Cat listing as a key threatening process on the *Biodiversity and Conservation Act*. Applications can be submitted after November 2022. No legislative consequence of listing, but it will raise the profile of feral cat management issues.
- ii) Projects that are included on the website will be shown on a map as well as in written detail.
- iii) Proposal for WA Feral Cat Action Plan submission at the request of Minister MacTiernan. The Working Group worked through the draft document “*Transforming the Management of Feral Cats*”, which is to be submitted to Minister MacTiernan by the end of Nov. This timeframe was determined by Minister MacTiernan.

WA FERAL CAT SYMPOSIUM #2

- a) Gillian Basnett, National, Feral Cat and Fox Management Coordinator shared her insights from stakeholder engagement activities across Western Australia for consideration as topics at the planned symposium. Suggestions included:
 - Supporting the work of community organisations.
 - Accessing a cat bait that works. Lack of access to Eradicat is an opportunity lost.
 - Opportunities for greater cross tenure work especially with NRM and Western Shield.
 - Assist local government.
 - More research on outcomes required. Less research on impacts.
 - The Office of the Threatened Species Commissioner is interested in the WAFCWG model and is keen to implement this model elsewhere.
- b) Judy led the Group through a discussion of themes and ideas for the proposed symposium. Key themes:
 - Mandurah Performing Arts Centre tentatively booked for 1-3 November, 2022.
 - Highlight the profile of various groups working on feral cat research and management.
 - Presentation from Threatened Species Commissioner
 - Presentation from Sarah Legge on NESP activities.
 - Support people who wish to dial in to the symposium.
 - Message is one of hope – there is a way of getting things done.
 - Invite member/s from *Predator Free 2020 (PF2050)*, New Zealand
 - Session on genetics. Open up to all potential technologies.

- Aim for 400 attendees (last symposium had 250)
- Q & A forum. Need a good facilitator and 4-5 panel members

COMMUNICATIONS

Website discussed under Accessible Information. Mel Durack to provide Judy with a template for progressing the Communications/Stakeholder Engagement plan.

OTHER BUSINESS

More support required, especially for website development and coordinating symposium.

Next Meeting Date: April 2022.