



# WAFCWG

WA Feral Cat Working Group

Protecting WA's Biodiversity

## Meeting 7 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:** 10<sup>th</sup> October 2022

**Location:** WABSI, WA Trustees Building, 133 St George's Terrace, Perth

**Organisations represented:** WAFCWG, Natural Resource Management WA (and PHCC), National Feral Cat Taskforce, CSIRO, Australian Wildlife Conservancy, Bush Heritage Australia (BHA), The WA Biodiversity Science Institute (WABSI), Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions (DBCA), Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD).

The WA Feral Cat Working Group Meeting (#7) received information on Executive Officer activities and introduced our new Chair, Susan Hunt AM PSM.

### Summary of Matters for Decision:

**Complete:** The WAFCWG website went live in June and was "launched" in September, supported by a social media campaign.

**Action:** WAFCWG members are to engage with the website on an ongoing basis and provide comments / inputs / changes to the EO of the WAFCWG.

**Complete:** NRM grant progress reporting finalised in April 2022.

**Complete:** EO has been engaged with the Pilbara Environmental Offsets Fund (PEOF) and some resource companies to discuss cat management as possible 'habitat improvement' actions.

**Action:** Workshop research priorities with support from WABSI staff is planned.

**Complete:** The WA Feral Cat Research Committee met on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

### Summary of Matter for Discussion:

1. EO of WAFCWG has engaged with some news media around pet cat Catio subsidies and large feral cat seen in Lancelin.

2. The upcoming Feral Cat Symposium planning has progressed. The venue has been booked and invitations to relevant ministers and the Threatened Species Commissioner have been sent out. An application for funding has been submitted to Lotterywest to make the symposium more accessible (e.g. entry fee). General discussion was had about suitable plenaries, symposium themes, funding opportunities, promotional channels and activities, and sourcing relevant research papers. The agreed Symposium themes will include:

- Feral cats and people: cat legislation and social license
- Improved and emerging management techniques
- Cats in the environment: the impacts of cats
- Threatened species management and success stories
- Managing predators in a complex environment: interactive threats

## Summary of Matters for Noting:

- The WAFCWG website went live in June and was “launched” in September, supported by a social media campaign.
- The National Feral Cat Taskforce met in Canberra 8-9<sup>th</sup> June 2022.
- DBCA updated the WG on the draft Feral Cat Strategy document. Both the Agricultural and Environment Minister are interested to see action on feral cats in WA. The strategy will seek to provide for feral cat management activities on government, private and pastoral lands. A draft Feral Cat Strategy will be circulated to all working group and advisory members and the EO will coordinate feedback to DBCA and DPIRD.

## Highlights of Working Group Activities:

### **Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions**

- Western Shield activities involve integrating fox and cat management. Research is being undertaken to understand habitat use in the southwest of WA, where Eradecat bait uptake is not demonstrated as hoped.
- Felixer trials are underway under research approvals. Current trials are trying to understand where the Felixer will be most useful.

### **National Feral Cat Task Force / DBCA**

- Pen trials are currently being conducted to improve the palatability of Eradecat.
- Research is underway to document the effectiveness, efficacy, and toxicity levels for Felixer dose rates.

### **Natural Resource Management WA / PHCC**

- PHCC's *Numbat Neighbourhood* project will conclude in January 2023. The project is centered in the Dryandra Woodland, and feral cat management activities have included DNA testing of feral cats; strong engagement with the community and stakeholders; engagement of a contractor to control foxes and cats two days/week. Notably, populations of native species, including woylies released into unfenced areas, have maintained their numbers.

### **Australian Wildlife Conservancy**

- Large-scale aerial baiting program in Mt Gibson Sanctuary and camera trap arrays in the Kimberley and Mt Gibson to identify feral cats.
- The Kimberley project has been able to get a high identification rate of individual cats, which will help with population estimates and targeted management strategies. More work is being done on cat face recognition.
- There has been a recorded increase in feral cat and fox activity in unfenced AWC areas.
- AWC would like to deploy Felixer and is currently preparing an application. AWC has noted a sustained population of some woylies, chuditch and possums released into unfenced areas.

### **Bush Heritage Australia**

- Bush Heritage is in the toxic phase of trialling Felixer in the Midwest region. Using camera arrays, seven feral cats were identified and targeted with the Felixer trap resulting in seven successful hits.
- The Eradecat baiting program has continued in the Fitz Stirling Fauna Recovery.
- PhD student is being supported at Eurady Reserve

### **CSIRO**

- CSIRO project for biocontrol of mice is going well, with 15–20-year timelines being revised down.

## Next Meeting

The next WAFCWG meeting (#8) will be held 28<sup>th</sup> March 2023 in person/online at WABSI.

## 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.

Susan Hunt AM PSM  
Chair, WAFCWG