



WAFCWG

WA Feral Cat Working Group

Protecting WA's Biodiversity

Meeting 8 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: 28th March 2023

Location: WABSI, WA Trustees Building, Level 2, 133 St Georges Terrace, Perth and online

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 (#8) received information on Executive Officer activities and updates from the recent, successful Feral Cat Symposium.

Summary of Matters for Decision:

Complete: A successful Feral Cat Symposium (February 2023) where 249 delegates attended from all Australian states, New Zealand and a student from the Netherlands. There were attendees from 20 Indigenous Ranger groups and affiliates with presentations from five of these organisations. Abstracts already on website: <https://wafcwg.org.au/2023-feral-cat-symposium/>.

Action: Videos and PDFs of talks from the symposium to be added to the webpage.

Action: Undertake a presentation to the major sponsors, Lotterywest on the symposium outcomes.

Action: Draft version of the WA Feral Cat Strategy to be circulated to the WG to view.

Action: EO job description to be circulated to WG for further distribution to recruit new EO to the WG.

Action: WG to have a strategic planning day to assess the WAFCWG as an organisation and to set tasks for the incoming EO in mid-June 2023.

Summary of Matter for Discussion:

1. WG were provided an update on the draft WA Feral Cat Strategy. WG emphasised the value of having the WG provide input into the document for a broader approach that reflects more voices. DBCA outlines the next steps would include:
 - a. Design finalised;
 - b. To be provided to the Minister for comment (with an associated budget);
 - c. Minister's feedback to be incorporated;
 - d. Feral Cat strategy to be released via a media release.

Summary of Matters for Noting:

- Chair thanked all presenters and Judy and all who helped make the symposium a success.
- Briefing with Minister for Environment, Hon. Minister Whitby with topics of importance of 1080 as a tool for feral cat management, issues with cat-definitions, the success of the Feral Cat Symposium.

- Chair thanked outgoing EO, Dr Judy Dunlop for her amazing contribution to feral cat management over the last two years.

Highlights of Working Group Activities:

Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

- Western Shield baiting underway.
- DBCA working with Department of Health and the APVMA to modify code of practice to incorporate Felixers.
- Agreement with Thylation on Felixers reached.

Natural Resource Management WA / PHCC

- All NRMs currently going through a tender process for funding for the next 5 years with a focus on protecting threatened species.

Australian Wildlife Conservancy

- Private land conservation conference in Canberra in October 2023.
- Amendments to WA Land Administration Act 1997 passed recently.
- Working on pastoral lease reform in South Australia.
- 'Outside the Fence' reintroductions.
- High density of cats in Kimberley and Cape York. Cat containment experiments and culling programs not yet effective here.

Bush Heritage Australia

- Ongoing BHA on-ground work:
 - o Six Felixers deployed in the mid-west – achieving good results;
 - o Autumn baiting coordinated with DBCA at and around Kalbarri National Park;
 - o Coordinated landholder project on the south coast;
 - o Tenaya Duncan, PhD student, looking at artificial refuges protecting native species from cats.

National Feral Cat Taskforce

- 13th meeting of National Feral Cat Taskforce held online on 17 and 20 March 2023.
- Taskforce now sends Communique following each meeting rather than minutes.
- Next National Feral Cat Taskforce meeting to be held in-person.

WABSI / CSIRO

- WABSI program director position to be advertised.
- Research Officer helping with collation of research proposals received to deliver against WABSI's 14 priority research topics to mitigate cat impacts on biodiversity.
- Engaging with media around domestic cat containment including Triple J Hack, 730 report, The Project and radio.

Next Meeting

The next WAFCWG meeting (#9) will be held 9th August 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