



National Feral Cat and Fox Management Coordination Program Work Plan

September 2024



National
Feral Cat and Fox
Management Coordination

Abbreviations

AWI	Australian Wool Innovation
Cat TAP	Threat Abatement Plan for Predation by Feral Cats
COPs	National Codes of Practices
DAFF	Australian Government Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry
DCCEEW	Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
EIC	Environment and Invasives Committee
FCT	National Feral Cat Taskforce
Fox TAP	Threat Abatement Plan for Predation by European Red Fox
IDA	Indigenous Desert Alliance
ILSC	Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation
MLA	Meat and Livestock Australia
NAILSMA	North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance
NESP	National Environmental Science Program
NFCFMC	National Feral Cat and Fox Management Coordination
NFCFMCP	National Feral Cat and Fox Management Coordination Program
NIAA	National Indigenous Australians Agency
NLC	Northern Land Council
NRM	Natural Resource Management
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
SPA	Sheep Producers Australia
TAP	Threat Abatement Plan
TERN	Terrestrial Ecosystem Research Network
TSAP	Threatened Species Action Plan 2022-2032
TVWG	Terrestrial Vertebrate Working Group



Program purpose

The overall purpose of the program is to reduce the impacts of feral cats and foxes on Australia’s agricultural production and the environment. Key outcomes include:



Effective leadership and strategic national coordination resulting in reduced impacts from feral cats and foxes on agricultural and environmental assets, including a focus on the Threatened Species Action Plan 2022-2032 (TSAP) feral cat and fox targets and its feral cat and fox identified threatened priority species and 20 priority places, together with Threat Abatement Plans (TAPs) for Predation by Feral Cats and European Red Foxes.



Increased capability of land managers and community, NRM and biosecurity groups to adopt and apply best practice management to national feral cat and fox management, including monitoring plans to measure and evaluate reduction in impacts.

Workplan

The workplan outlines key activities that will be completed by the program, organised within seven key deliverables. These include:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
NFCFMC program governance	Drive national coordination, collaboration and inclusion	Work to remove barriers constraining feral cat control	Improve best practice feral cat and fox management methodologies, tools and systems	National awareness, communication and engagement	Build landholder and land manager capacity and capability	Monitoring and evaluation across different landscapes and land tenures



NFCFMC program governance

Outcomes

- 1.1 Implementation of the NFCFMC Program is supported by strategic advice and an achievable work plan of priority activities.
- 1.2 Stakeholder input to the program is maximised.
- 1.3 Program performance is reported to stakeholders.

Activities

- Advisory group formed and terms of reference agreed.
- NFCFMC Program Work Plan for feral cats and foxes developed and endorsed by advisory group, shaped by input from key stakeholders and focuses on actions that assist in addressing key barriers and priority actions for promoting best-practice and improving feral cat and fox management across Australia. Key stakeholders engaged in development and delivery of Work Plan:
 - States and Territories.
 - Australian Government (DAFF, Environmental Biosecurity Office, DCCEEW and Office of the Threatened Species Commissioner).
 - Industry and farmer groups such as Meat and Livestock Association, Sheep Producers Association and Australian Wool Innovation.
 - Landcare groups/networks, NRM organisation, biosecurity and environment groups.
 - Feral Cat Taskforce and Terrestrial Vertebrates Working Group.
 - Key Indigenous groups and Traditional Owners.
- TVWG and Feral Cat Taskforce advised of Work Plan and feedback provided from these groups on priority actions.
- Publish Work Plan on National Feral Cat and Fox Coordinator website.
- Publishing and disseminating yearly performance reports against Work Plan.



Drive national coordination, collaboration and inclusion

Outcomes

- 2.1 A broad and effective network of key researchers, land managers, agency staff, and environment and industry organisations is maintained and expanded to support improved feral cat and fox management research and control programs.
- 2.2 Regional and landscape scale control programs are enabled by facilitated engagement between key stakeholders.
- 2.3 Information, key challenges and lessons from feral cat and fox management and control programs are effectively shared to support community, landholder and biosecurity groups to undertake coordinated, best practice feral cat and/or fox management.
- 2.4 First Nations peoples and Indigenous Rangers are supported, in culturally appropriate ways, to engage in feral cat and fox management efforts consistent with their management objectives.

Activities

- Continue to build on, and engage with, a national network of key researchers, land managers, agency and council staff, environment organisations and industry to support the achievement of vision and outcomes.
- Facilitate engagement between stakeholders (state and local government, NRM and Biosecurity groups, Landcare, landholders and farmers) to work together in delivering regional and landscape scale control programs. Target on-ground engagement activities in areas where it is needed most and where support will provide the greatest benefit. For example, in priority places where feral cats and foxes are a key threat, areas where fox impacts are greatest on agriculture or where interest is high and a successful program could be implemented for demonstration purposes. See grouping 6 for priority sites.
- Share, connect, link and communicate progress, successes, use of tools, methods of management, key challenges and learnings from feral cat and fox control projects through case studies, forums, newsletter, workshops, videos, networking, conferences, etc.
- Promote new research findings into best practice feral cat and fox management, including the outputs of NESP projects, and continue to connect researchers with land and project managers. For example, through case studies, newsletter, website, factsheets and forums.
- Promote best practice landscape-scale feral predator management where feral cats and foxes impact predator-susceptible threatened species.
- Provide support to community, landholder and biosecurity groups to undertake coordinated, best practice feral cat and/or fox management. For example, through:
 - Facilitate community meetings.
 - Assist with setting up pest management plans.
 - Provide materials for, and hold, workshops and training sessions.



- Linking community groups with each other and experts.
- Provide support/assist organisations, agencies and councils to develop and undertake feral cat and fox control projects funded under grants such as the Saving Native Species, other Australian Government biodiversity and state pest and biodiversity programs.
 - Provide best practice management advice.
 - Provide workshops and training.
 - Where possible attend workshops organised by others or provide input and materials into them.
 - Provide materials for programs, where relevant.
 - Link similar programs, staff and experts.
- Engage with First Nations land management organisations (e.g. National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance (NAILSMA), Northern Land Council (NLC), Indigenous Land and Sea (ILSC), Indigenous Land Councils and Indigenous Desert Alliance (IDA)) and ranger groups to build connections and relationships to identify opportunities to support feral cat and fox control on Indigenous owned land.
- Identify factors that are preventing indigenous rangers and first nations communities from undertaking feral cat and fox management and talk with relevant groups about how to most appropriately address these to support feral cat and fox control on Indigenous owned land.
- Work with State and Territory agencies to gain support (and funding if necessary) to develop and deliver a framework and checklist package tailored to indigenous ranger groups on steps needed to be undertaken to develop and deliver feral cat management programs. I.e. access to available tools, permits and training required, key agency contacts, etc.
- Pursue consideration of, and support culturally appropriate inclusion of, First Nations perspectives in feral cat and fox management plans. Extend on key outcomes from engagement with first nations identified during the reviews of the Feral Cat and Fox TAPs.
- Facilitate exchange of resources and materials with, and between, State, Territory and local government feral cat and fox managers.



Work to remove barriers constraining feral cat control

Outcomes

- 3.1** Land managers are assisted to source up-to-date legislative, regulatory and control tool information to inform their feral cat and fox management activities.
- 3.2** Assist with improving legislative, regulatory and control tool information.
- 3.3** Information about constraints to effective on-ground feral cat and fox is collated and the impacts are communicated to relevant agencies.

Activities

- Communicate to agencies and local governments the constraints impacting effective on-ground feral cat control, and work with stakeholders to drive action to remove these limitations. This will include providing information to assist in improving the clarity, consistent and accessibility of public information on existing feral cat management and legislative requirements and tool availability.
- Present a paper that identifies constraints to effective feral cat management (including legislation, policy and tool availability barriers) to the Feral Cat Taskforce (FCT) for feedback and input.
- Update Feral Cat Glovebox Guide legislation table and information in the next review, as well as provide this information on the NCFMFC website. (Members of the National Feral Cat Taskforce to provide regular updates on any legislative changes.)
- Support and promote activities, actions and information that reduces identified constraints.
- Where possible, support local, state and territory governments with responsible pet ownership legislation and sources of information.



Improve best practice feral cat and fox management methodologies, tools and systems

Outcomes

- 4.1 Information to support improved control methods, tools and systems is developed, collated and conveyed.
- 4.2 Fit-for-purpose and up-to-date Codes of Practice and Standard Operating Procedures are updated or developed and provided for endorsement.

Activities

- **Cats**
 - Identify improvements needed to methods, tools and systems for feral cats and work with stakeholders to deliver these improvements.
 - Support research into improving use of feral cat management tools and techniques, development of new tools, multispecies interactions and management and community engagement.
 - Coordinate a review and update of the relevant National Code of Practices (COPs)/Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and provide to the TVWG for endorsement to EIC.
 - Promote best practice landscape-scale management for feral predator susceptible species.
- **Foxes**
 - Identify improvements needed to methods, tools and systems for managing foxes and work with stakeholders to deliver these improvements.
 - Support research into improving use of fox management tools and techniques, development of new tools, multispecies interactions and management and community engagement.
 - Identify ways to improve and support urban and peri-urban fox control.
 - Coordinate a review of the relevant National Code of Practices (COPs)/Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and provide to the TVWG for endorsement to EIC.
- Promote and communicate learnings from the NESP Resilient Landscapes research projects to develop best practice management for feral cats and communicate learnings.
- Provide end user feedback on usefulness of tools and materials with product creators to improve products over time.



National awareness, communication and engagement

Outcomes

- 5.1 The support that is available through the NFCFMC program is effectively communicated and widely known.
- 5.2 Information about best practice feral cat and fox management tools and their use requirements is widely available in practical resources.
- 5.3 Consistent messaging about the impacts (including costs, where available) of feral cats and foxes is conveyed through appropriate channels to raise community awareness about, and support for, the necessity of feral cat and fox management.

Activities

- In consultation with Commonwealth (DAFF and DCCEE) and Advisory Committee, develop and implement a NFCFMC Program Communication and Engagement Strategy. Share outgoing communication materials to ensure messaging is amplified.
- Establish, maintain and promote National Feral Cat and Fox Coordination Program website and PestSmart feral cat and fox online toolkits.
- Establish and maintain a monthly National Feral Cat and Fox Coordination Program monthly newsletter.
- Monitor usage of NFCFMCP and PestSmart websites and get feedback from end users to determine effectiveness of information, ease of use and future needs to improve, where necessary and possible, both websites.
- Promote and provide updates to PestSmart website and assist with ongoing development of FeralCatScan and FoxScan.
- Promote other online resources, websites, and other tools to support landholders in managing feral cats and foxes.
- Program general-use communication materials (currently the PestSmart toolkit and soon to include NFCFMC website) maintained and new materials developed that promote best practice management and provide information on available, effective and humane management tool availability and use.
- Provide consistent messaging about impacts of feral cats and foxes and to raise community awareness about, and support for, the necessity of feral cat and fox management to protect and conserve threatened species and ecological communities and livestock production.
- Collaboration with other communications personnel to ensure messaging is consistent and amplified.
- Disseminate research findings on feral cat, fox and general pest management to improve decision-making.
- Work with vets, managers and researchers to advocate for and support up to date research and disseminate information on costs and impacts of foxes on agriculture.
- Work with vets, managers and researchers to advocate for and support further research into costs and impact areas of Toxoplasmosis and Sarcocystis.



- Connect with peak bodies like MLA, SPA, AWI, National and State Farmers Federations, Livestock SA, Australian Veterinary Association, Landcare networks, and NRMs etc to communicate impacts (including costs) of feral cats and foxes on agriculture and encourage greater adoption of best practice control.
- Support coordinated, cross tenure best practice feral cat and fox management programs on farmland and, where relevant, neighbouring publicly managed estate and conservation areas.



Build landholder and land manager capacity and capability

Outcomes

- 6.1 Land managers and community groups have access to targeted and up-to-date information and practical resources to support them in best practice feral cat and fox management.
- 6.2 Land managers know how to plan for and apply various control tools for feral cat and / or fox management relevant to their context and management/ conservation objectives.
- 6.3 The benefits of collaborative, coordinated, and integrated best practice feral cat and fox management are demonstrated.
- 6.4 Connections are established with groups not previously engaged.

Activities

- Providing information, links and materials to landholders, groups and stakeholders (e.g. providing Glovebox and Planning Guides, videos, case studies, SOPs and COPs)
- Deliver information and training forums on research, current projects, existing and emerging control tools and management options.
- Promote outcomes from relevant research into new tools, management techniques and community engagement.
- Key topics for online and face to face forums and workshops include:
 - What can the NCFMCP do to help with management of feral cats and foxes.
 - Impacts of feral cats and/or foxes and why and how we need to manage them (community style talks).
 - What tools are available to manage cats and/or foxes in specific jurisdictions.
 - Benefit of integrated, coordinated, best practice management using multiple tools
 - Case studies of feral cat and/or fox management programs – successes, challenges, outcomes.
 - How to best to connect between community and agencies.
 - Importance of planning and monitoring and how to do it.
- Identify First Nations ranger group and community needs with regards to feral cat and fox management.
- Support the provision and delivery of relevant information, resources and training tailored to First Nations stakeholders.
- Where applicable, support peer to peer ranger learning.
- Together with others, assist local and regional stakeholders (e.g. pest management coordinators, NRM organisations, biosecurity groups, Landcare groups etc) to form regional practitioner networks to help managers connect and share, improve and promote regional-scale humane, effective, and justifiable feral cat and fox control.
- Support these groups with information and training on best practice feral cat and fox management tools, planning and community



engagement to assist them with supporting landholders with on-ground management programs.

- Increase the network of demonstration sites, to promote best practice feral cat and/or fox management options, lesson sharing and community-of-practice models (this could include development and use of management plans)
 - *In this instance, demonstration sites are sites where best practice feral cat and / or fox planning and management is undertaken by landholder or community groups as a key focus and other relevant stakeholders. These sites will be used by the NCFMFC program to demonstrate to other landholders and groups successful management tools and techniques, outcomes, engagement strategies, benefits of a coordinated and cross tenure approach and other learnings.*
- In key selected sites, help facilitate development or extension of, landholder or community led, best practice, feral cat and /or fox management programs that can be used to demonstrate outcomes to others or support targets in TSAP and Feral Cat and Fox TAPs.
- Demonstration Site areas: (note that while these five areas, and the additional areas listed below them, are focus areas, the NCFMFC remains available to support efforts in other areas).
 1. South West and South Coast WA – Key outcomes: Increase feral cat and fox management in the region, improve management coordination, cross tenure management of feral cats and foxes with a focus around key national park and reserve areas with key threatened species, reduce impacts on livestock. Includes TSAC priority area Fitz-Stirlings.
 2. Grampians (VIC) – Key outcomes: Improve coordinated, best practice, cross tenure, fox management on private property surrounding the Grampians National Park. Reduce fox impacts on livestock.
 3. Landcare Tasmania Partnership – Key outcomes: Community capacity building and outreach toolkit including workshop series and materials which can be used by other Landcare and community groups wanting to help community groups manage feral cats.
 4. Astrebla Downs and Diamantina National Parks and Surrounds (QLD) – Key outcomes: Support planning, engagement, training and cross tenure, coordinated management of feral cats on and around Astrebla Downs National Park to protect key threatened species including Greater Bilby, Night Parrot and Plains-wanderer.
 5. Flinders rangers and surrounds (SA) –Key outcomes: High conservation area. Assist with programs already running to improve cross tenure management, survival of key threatened species, re-introductions. Coordinated feral cat and fox management. Multiple tools already in use, providing good demonstration of integrated management.
- Other key areas of support (direction, materials, contacts, etc):
 1. Eastern Forests of Far North Queensland Priority Place (QLD)
 2. Yorke Peninsula (SA)
 3. Mallee Birds Ecological Community Priority Area (SA / VIC / NSW)
 4. Shoalhaven / Kangaroo Valley / Jambaroo (NSW)
 5. Otways (VIC)
 6. Mornington Peninsula (VIC)
 7. Bruny Island (TAS)
 8. Perth Urban Foxes (WA)
- Direction, materials, contacts, information provided in other areas and programs as opportunities arise



Monitoring and evaluation across different landscapes and land tenures

Outcome

7.1 Monitoring of outcomes from feral cat and fox management programs improved and increased.

Activities

- Work with key experts to develop and deliver basic monitoring protocols and data storage and evaluation guidelines and information materials that are useful in determining basic outcomes of management programs and are usable by landholders, managers and groups with minimal resources or expertise. Look at how this aligns, or can be adapted from, TERN and NESP protocols.
- Test basic monitoring protocols and guidelines to determine their effectiveness in providing basic evaluation information on feral cat and/or fox management programs.
- Project demonstration sites to include monitoring and evaluation plans and collection of data to determine outcomes of programs in terms of effectiveness of feral cat and fox management techniques, reduction of environment and/or agricultural impacts and uptake by project stakeholders.
- Assist with input into any development and refinement of feral cat and fox monitoring protocols and information, e.g. NESP Resilient Landscapes hub and TERN.
- Promote monitoring, evaluation and data collection and evaluation models developed and tested through NESP Resilient Landscapes hub and TERN to relevant land managers, pest controllers and management groups.



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The National Feral Cat and Fox Management Coordination Program Work Plan September 2024

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