



The following is based on 10 years being a group fox bait organiser and, as secretary of a local landcare group, been a member of a team initiating a very successful community engagement campaign [*Feral Fox Fighters*] to increase strategic group fox baiting in the Gunning and Yass districts.

In essence, four things are needed to reduce the environmental and economic damage caused by the fox. They are:

- 1 Continuous and concerted efforts to counter myths, misunderstandings and apathy about the fox problem and 1080
- 2 Offering land managers "free" baits and "free" training will achieve higher participation
- 3 Strategic group baiting should be the priority for funding and staff efforts
- 4 Group co-ordinators must be better supported

Myths and Misunderstandings

People have legitimate concerns about the danger 1080 poses to wildlife and the ethics of using it. But in many cases these concerns can be addressed by presenting facts. Local experience with the *Feral Fox Fighters* campaign and recruiting group baiters shows that, when presented with the facts, people respond positively.

Many native species are not at risk. Those that are would, if asked to vote in a plebiscite, be in favour of 1080 use because they are at greater risk from the fox than accidental poisoning. Despite it not being a humane poison, most authorities such as the RSPCA, recognise that foxes cannot be ignored.

Issues like these are not widely covered. *Feral Fox Fighters* exceeded its targets fivefold – largely by airing these matters in its publicity. Countering myths, misunderstandings and ethical concerns gets results.

Free Baits and Free Training Get Better Results

Feral Fox Fighters was a promotional campaign to encourage people to get into strategic group baiting. We had funds only to cover promotion and offering free 1080/Pindone accreditation. We did not offer free baits initially. We later did so with much better results – more people and many more baits.

This works! Perhaps a mandatory pest animal levy could be introduced to cover the cost of this if need be. 1080 kills all wildlife

Strategic Group Baiting Must Be the Priority for Incentives etc

If funding for incentives and/or LLS staff time is limited, it should be directed towards strategic group baiting as a priority. This gets better long term results.

Better Support for Group Co-ordinators

We currently rely on the good will of individuals. We would get more people taking on the quite time consuming task of co-ordinating groups with a modest investment. Why not offer a small payment to community groups [BFBs, CWA, landcare etc] to take on this role? They have members who would be the basis of a group, could be expected to do the job responsibly. It would also be a small investment in social capital.

Co-ordinators' work would be easier if authorities put out a lot more information to ratepayers about how we are going in the war against the fox. There is currently an information vacuum on this. Baiters have no idea how their efforts contribute to wider landscape outcomes