



**FAUNA**  
RESEARCH ALLIANCE

**Submission in Response to the  
State-wide Review of NSW pest animal management  
Issues Paper**

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Issues paper and for the opportunity to take part in the Environmental Focus Group meeting in Sydney on November 18, 2015. In the lead up to that Focus Group meeting FAUNA Research Alliance, an Australia and New Zealand-wide consortium of wildlife researchers and practitioners, raised the following as discussion issues. Before proceeding to comment on the Issues Paper specifically I will reiterate those issues because we see them as consistent with the Issue Paper's six guiding principles and reinforce many of the points made in in the paper. They were:

1. Recognition of the potential of innovation using ecosystem approaches to pest management using native species (quolls/ devil/dingo) to predate on, or compete with, feral pests. Such approaches offer long-term economic benefits as these ecosystem enhancements/restorations have the potential to be self sustaining.
2. Opportunities for greater priority targeting of conventional controls (baiting/shooting/trapping) to optimise threatened species protection including greater linkage to OEH Save our Species program. This would include support of the transition to landscape re-wilding of the fenced re-wilding of locally extinct species on NSW National Parks.
3. Greater recognition of the indirect impacts of pest species as reservoirs and vectors of diseases affecting wildlife, agriculture and human health (e.g. toxoplasmosis, mange, sarcosporidia).
4. Domestic pets as threatening process in peri-urban areas. Domestic dogs and cars are the major threat to koala populations in Port Stephens. Need for greater community engagement.
5. Need for greater and more consistent cross tenure coordination of pest control and broader community engagement such as seen in the 'Whose Living on My Land' program which uses camera trapping to monitor pests.

**Specific Comments on Issues Paper**

FAUNA Research Alliance strongly endorses the six Guiding Principles of the paper. Given our core business is wildlife related research – social, biological and ecological – we would place great importance on the outcomes being evidence-based and adaptive, however the other four principles are integral to the long term goal of more effective pest management in NSW and nationally.

**Section 3.1 Roles and responsibilities, 3.2 Shared Ownership and 3.4 Landscape Approach**

We endorse the comments and importance placed on clear Roles and Responsibilities and the need for Shared Ownership and Landscape Scale approaches. This is consistent with our issue of greater cross-tenure cooperation and coordination. We are aware of several regions where this is occurring already and having significant impacts both in pest control and community and land-holder engagement. For example for over a decade the Port Stephens Council has coordinated public and private landholders in an annual fox and wild-dog control program and sponsored targeted research by the University of Newcastle to optimise the outcomes. However, this initiative, and I suspect most if not all others in NSW, lack the resources to effectively monitor the outcomes and quantify the effectiveness of the control and are highly dependent on the leadership of individuals and local good will.

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We endorse the necessity to grow community engagement. More effective communication and engagement programs are needed to develop not only more awareness of the impacts of pest species on native wildlife but engagement and changed behavior. This must address the wide range of motives and perspectives with the community and the special problems posed by companion animals in particular cats. As noted absentee landlords are a challenge and any strategy must effectively address the animal welfare concerns of the largely urbanised general public. Traditionally communication and engagement would be seen to be simply a need for media and public relations actions. FAUNA RA would argue that it is an area needing robust research to provide an evidence-base on which to develop engagement strategies to support more effective pest species control.

### **Section 3.3 Priority Pest Species**

Arguably prioritization is the biggest issue. There must be a continuation of existing pest control methods prioritised on robust triple bottom line evidence - environmental and social impacts not second class to economic. However, there also needs to be a component of risk management that prepares for new and emerging pest threats. This would include building the evidence base and management options – threat detection, evaluation and response - including innovation in new control tools and decision tools to assist effective application of all available tools in integrated responses.

### **Section 3.5 Emerging Issues**

As the Issues Paper indicates Emerging Issues pose both threats and opportunities. Climate change and globalization have, and continue to move the pest species and pest management goal posts. Although Technological innovation is acknowledged in the Issues Paper there is the danger that funding the needed R&D will be seen as someone else's problem. In particular, the Commonwealths through programs like the CRC Program or the relevant R&D Corporations. This is problematic and NSW, presumably through the NRC, needs to send clear signals to these funding bodies and provide significant leverage to bids to drive the process if they are to be viable.

### **Section 3.6 Adequate Resourcing and 3.7 Knowledge Building**

All the concerns and issues raised in these sections are valid and we would endorse them. As indicated above, the needed resources are uncertain and contested. Smart policy and funding leverage from state's via stakeholder agencies can drive greater and stronger private and public funding partnership needed to leverage Commonwealth or other competitive funding such as the Cooperative Research Centres Program. In our experience, agencies in all states are ready to commit in kind resources to such funding bids but reluctant to contribute cash. In our view this is short sighted and often not effective as such public good bids are literally out bid by corporate linked competitors prepared to invest to win Commonwealth dollars. As indicated above knowledge building is needed not only in the biological and ecological spaces but in the social and economic. Triple bottom line decision-making requires a triple bottom line evidence-base. The Issue's paper draws attention correctly to the valuable outcomes of the research of the Invasive Animals CRC. This CRC is unlikely to continue in the current funding climate. If this CRC, or others working in areas relevant to pest and native species management, are seen as needed resources for evidence-based decision making and innovation then NSW and other states will have to help mount strong cases in their support.

Thank you for the opportunity to be involved in this process.



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