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Stakeholder Group

Select the stakeholder group
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Question 1

The revised strategy sets out the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in weed management and prevention. Are these clear?

Question 2

Are the goals and priorities of the strategy focused in the necessary areas? why / why not?

Question 3

The strategy is intended to describe how weed management fits into Australia's biosecurity system. Is the link between Australia's biosecurity system and weed management made clear in the strategy? why / why not?

Comments / Feedback

Any other comments or feedback?

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File: 161005 Australian pest animal strategy Final.pdf

Submission

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Invasive Plants and Animals Committee
Department of Agriculture and Water Resources
GPO Box 858
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Submission: Australian Pest Animal Strategy 2017 to 2027

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the *Australian Pest Animal Strategy 2017 to 2027*. North East Catchment Management Authority (North East CMA) is a regional statutory authority created under the Conservation and Land Protection Act 1994. North East CMA works with community, government and funding organisations to protect and enhance land, water and biodiversity resources.

This submission highlights pest animal management challenges from the North East Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS), the regional integrated planning framework for land, water and biodiversity management in North East Victoria.

The community in the North East has been very proactive in addressing pest animal issues, with a range of community-driven groups managing issues such as wild dogs, rabbits, deer and less formal arrangements to manage foxes, wild goats, wild pigs and carp across the catchment. Landholders in these groups commit to addressing their pest animal issues and undertake control measures through utilising their own resources and other contributions (wild dog control is supported by the Australian Wool Innovation and the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources)

These action groups have a high level of collaboration and coordination between land managers in the prevention, containment and/or reduction of invasive pest populations, generally on a geographical basis (e.g. wild dogs and deer), to maintain agricultural productivity and reduce the risk of detrimental impacts on the natural resource base. The North East landscape is made up of 2 million hectares, of which 45% is private land and 55% is public land. Pest animal control is by its nature a partnership between land managers. Community groups including Landcare and production groups throughout the catchment have a low tolerance to pest animal populations and the unresponsive management options some land managers pursue.

Pest animal management is a key community priority in the catchment; the submission to the Australian Pest Animal Strategy, is based on the communities' desire to manage and where practicable eliminate invasive pest animals from the Landscape.

1. The revised strategy set out the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in pest animal/weed management and prevention. Are these clear? Why/why not?

• **Regional natural resources management groups:**

North East Catchment Management Authority is directed by the Regional Catchment Management Strategy which outlines the six year objectives and the twenty year strategic objectives as established by the partners we work with across the region. The Regional Catchment Strategy highlights the activities that will be supported and encouraged with respect to pest animals and their management through the lenses of social, environmental and economic themes.

- **Help monitor pest animal impacts and play a regional surveillance role for detecting high risk pest animal species that pose risks to their region or could spread to other regions.**

North East CMA works with a range of community and government organisations to prioritise and support groups to manage pest animals on private and crown land. Whilst there is some government funding to support communities to undertake the activity of monitoring pest numbers, their dispersal and their impact, it is largely undertaken by volunteers through wild dog groups, deer groups and Landcare groups. On Crown land it is generally through a land manager that monitors and controls invasive pest animal species.

Of great interest to the North East CMA is the current discussion around the release of the carp herpes virus; with 10,000km of water ways in the catchment this presents an ideal opportunity to be involved in the monitoring and evaluation of its impending release.

- **Play a role in coordinating and implementing regional and catchment-based pest animal management plans**

The Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS) is the current document that outlines the actions and activities that NRM related organisations will support, there is currently no specific regional pest animal management plan. However the RCS is a broad document and identifies the management of invasive pest animals as a key outcome in all of the North East RCS Landscapes (Urban, Lifestyle, Agriculture, Forestry and Alpine). North East CMA, through its community partnerships, support sub-regional pest animal management plans that address specific pest animal issues the community wishes to address.

The North East CMA as part of its charter and under the RCS twenty year strategic objectives represents the community interests in pest animal management through the coordination and facilitation of partnerships across the catchment, at a state level and where appropriate on a national level. Clearly the role of the CMA is to support and assist community, and when appropriate work with various organisations in coordinating and implementing regional and catchment-based pest animal management plans

- **Show leadership by working with landholders and government to develop effective regional pest animal management programs**

North East CMA through its role in natural resource management contributes to the overall community leadership in the management of pest animals across the catchment. Whilst providing a leadership role on pest animal management it is also our role to foster and support community leadership in pest animal management.

This model has worked well with the establishment of five community deer groups across the catchment and a higher level government, departmental and private sector roundtable to support the changes required to make their management achievable.

There are currently four to five wild dog committees across the catchment to facilitate their control in partnership with investors. There is also a rabbit round table that has been established in one area to bring together land managers to try and deliver to the community their goal of zero rabbits.

North East CMA supports a number of these groups as a facilitator, and where appropriate supports their attempts to source funding to allow the groups to undertake works and planning.

- **Assist with data collection and information exchange.**

North East CMA, through the implementation of projects, collects and reports on pest animal infestations and treatment activities funded through both Victorian and Australian Government. Support is also given to community groups and partners involved with undertaking assessments of pest animal infestations. An opportunity exists to improve data sharing by storing pest animal data on the Atlas of Living Australia so it can be shared to a broader audience. A number of community groups also collect data on populations, habitat and the lifecycles of regional pest animals, this is largely undertaken voluntarily and to support funded projects.

2. Are the goals and priorities of the strategy focused in the necessary areas? Why/why not?

- **Goal 1 Improve leadership and coordination for the management of pest animals. Effective pest animal prevention and management depends on the coordinated and committed action of a large number of stakeholders. This goal identifies three priorities for all levels to further improve the coordination of stakeholder actions, now and into the future, across all stages of pest animal invasion: prevention, eradication, containment and asset protection.**

The coordination of pest animal activities at every level through strong leadership and ownership of the problem is required to ensure a whole of community approach helps all parties achieve their goals. Whether it be on ground management through to delivering research results or control options. In order for this to occur their needs to be a conduit of intelligence from the field and the responding information flow from research nodes. This exchange of information relies on a mutual respect for each partner and the actions and skills they bring to the table. Without this exchange being underpinned by strong leadership at every level the coordination of management of pest animals will fail.

There needs to be a strong communication theme based on real and supporting research and knowledge exchange between parties and to external entities. This involves the public and private sector working together to achieve desirable outcomes for all parties. With the current Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre there is a consolidated effort to manage pest plants and animals. This model supports the unified approach to understanding and managing pest animals but unfortunately has an end point, requiring a new model to take over the high level undertaking of research and policy development.

- **Goal 2 Minimise the impact of established pest animals**

Pest animals in Australia cause negative social, environmental and economic impacts. This goal focuses on promoting collaborative, consistent and coordinated approaches to minimise the impact of established pest animals. The three priorities identified, and outlined in detail in this section, to achieve this goal focus on national planning, encouraging and improving best practice, as well as encouraging greater participation in coordinated management approaches— a central part of shared responsibility. These approaches maximise national benefit, and provide overarching guidance and consistency for more localised pest animal management actions. This Goal addresses two broad stages of pest animal management containment and asset protection. Four priorities are identified.

The provision of leadership in addressing pest animals management, containment and the protection of rare and endangered natural assets, is important at all levels of government and across community. Supported is a risk based whole of community approach for the control of pest animals with prosecution where appropriate, to manage the pest animals.

Where it is determined and prioritised, funds should be made available to support the appropriate community and government based land managers undertake works that remove the threat of the invasive pest animals. The cost of invasive pest animals is significant in loss of natural ecology, loss of livestock or competition for feed sources and the opportunity cost of managing the problem when other productive activities could be undertaken. There is also a huge capital cost for equipment and controls largely borne by the land manager and the resulting inherent additional cost of food for the end consumer. To maximise the effectiveness of pest animal control, new and innovative research needs to be provided to land managers so that best practice integrated pest management can be undertaken. A coordinated whole of catchment approach is required, and could be achieved through strategic local planning influenced by best practice.

- **Goal 3 Prevent the establishment of new pest animals**

Australia's favourable biosecurity status as a nation that remains free from many pests and diseases that affect agriculture, natural and built environments, and people in other parts of the world confers significant economic, environmental and community benefits (IGAB).

To maintain this status, we take action to reduce the likelihood of exotic pests and diseases, which have the potential to cause significant harm to the economy, the environment and the

community (including people, animals and plants), from entering, becoming established or spreading in Australia.

Developing and continuously improving approaches that prevent new pest animals from entering and establishing in Australia is in the national public interest. The strategy is intended to describe how pest animal/weed management fits into Australia's biosecurity system. Is the link between Australia's biosecurity system and pest animal management made clear in the strategy? Why/why not?

At all scales the prevention of invasive pests entering an ecosystem, catchment, landscape, territory or nation is critical for both the environment, economy and social wellbeing and is of the highest community importance. Historically Australia's report card is not great with stopping the introduction of pest animals, of recent times the understanding of the side effects caused by pest introduction has grown in parallel to the level of research that has been undertaken and the communications of these shared costs across the community.

The introduction for example of the Varroa mite, also known as Varroa destructor could potentially threatening the North East Honey industry. It was estimated in 2007 through bio-economic modelling by CSIRO that the economic risk from Varroa incursion was great enough to justify spending between A\$21 million and A\$50 million annually over the next thirty years to delay incursion. Examples similar to this are plentiful with a need for all parties to be vigilant as to new incursions of species. The strategy highlights the importance of managing borders at all scales through strong leadership and using risk management tools to identify gaps and areas needing resources to support the exclusion of pest animals.

3. The strategy is intended to describe how pest animal/weed management fits into Australia's biosecurity system. Is the link between Australia's biosecurity system and pest animal management made clear in the strategy? Why/why not?

The Pest Animal Strategy does a very good job of incorporating the high level biosecurity requirements of invasive pest animal management and the on ground activities required to support the removal of pest animals once they have escaped; it clearly articulates the whole of community approach to the exclusion, research and on ground activities required to manage pest animals strategically. As mentioned, generally these strategies are poorly resourced with little funding provided to undertake works and activities at all levels. Given the significance community places on pest animals and their management the whole strategy, whilst being strategic in nature, will amount to not much if funding support is not commensurate with the risks identified.

Yours sincerely


Neil McCarthy
Chief Executive Officer