



**Hunter Regional Pest Animal Committee
29 November 2017
Communique**

The Hunter Regional Pest Animal Committee met for the second time on the 29th November 2017. The committee has representation across public and private land managers and have been selected for their contribution to best practice pest management outcomes.

The committee discussed the progress on the pest risk assessments for the Region and reviewed the risk assessments for foxes and wild dogs in some detail. The risk assessments are completed on a two tiered approach with all species considered in a broader risk assessment. Species most likely to be in the plan are reviewed in more detail. Risk assessments are based on the range of impacts that a pest species can have and how invasive it might be and then assessed against its feasibility of control. The background work has been completed through November by working groups of experts from within the committee and invited in from agencies. The pest risk assessments have also been completed for fish, deer species, horses, rabbits, pigs and other large herbivores. There are additional working groups currently reviewing birds, cats, reptiles and unusual mammals.

The committee discussed the approach to best practice wild dog management planning in the Hunter Region and used the example of the draft Western Hunter WDMP as a study. The value of the WDMP was appreciated especially the locally tailored solutions. The following principles were seen as important: Cooperation across tenure, coordination across timeframe, commitment to the cause, be big enough to reduce migration, programs must be integrated and use a variety of methods, be able to be monitored and reviewed for improvement.

This second meeting provided an opportunity for additional stakeholders to contribute what they see as working well in pest management; what they want to see continue; what they see as not working well and new ideas that need to be considered. Dave Worsley from Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre presented and facilitated a session on best practice pest management. Some key themes emerged surrounding communication with stakeholders across tenures as challenges that need additional effort by all parties, changing the balance of programs to be more proactive to better plan for resources and coordination, consider what the situations might be for appropriate use of exclusion fencing and review the amount of regulation and paperwork that it takes to put a pest program in place.

The committee will meet again on 20 December