



Consultation report on Hunter Regional Strategic Pest Animal Management Plan

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Consultation Report on Hunter Regional Strategic Pest Animal Management Plan 2018 - 2023

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More information

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Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing October 2018. However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of Local Land Services or the user's independent adviser.

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Background

The Hunter Regional Strategic Pest Animal Management Plan (the Plan) was placed on public exhibition from 12 March to 20 April 2018. This report outlines the main points that were raised in the consultation process and outlines how those points were responded to in the final plan.

The Plan was developed by the Hunter Regional Pest Animal Committee. The committee has representation from National Parks and Wildlife Service, Forestry Corporation of NSW, local government (MidCoast), Hunter Valley Wild Dog Association, beef cattle industry (Lower Hunter), sheep industry (Upper Hunter), mining industry, Department of Primary Industries, Invasive Species Council and Local Land Services.

The committee held targeted consultation with stakeholders in November 2017 to develop the draft Plan which was placed on public consultation.

The Plan was available online from 12 March to 20 April 2018 and three public meetings were held at Gloucester, Scone and Paterson. A targeted meeting was held with the Aboriginal community on 23 April 2018.

Consultation Report

In total 93 submissions were received through online, face to face and direct written submissions. The table below outlines the source of the submissions that were received.

Number of submissions by source	
25	Online state submissions
37	Online regional submissions
4	Written submissions received separately
27	Submissions received directly by LLS

Many of the submissions contained many separate points that authors raised. After the submissions were assessed, collated and the similar points identified and condensed, there were 128 separate points raised within submissions, some a number of times.

The committee reviewed the submissions report and agreed on the responses to the submissions outlined at appendix 1.

The committee is grateful to the authors of the submissions and all those who participated in the development of this Plan. We look forward to keeping you updated on its implementation through regular reports after each of our quarterly meetings.

Acknowledgments

The committee would like to thank Jamie Morton for his assistance in developing the Regional Strategic Pest Animal Management Plan.

Appendix 1 : Responses to points raised in public consultation

ID	Type	Consultation feedback	Reponse
1	Priorities	Disagree with listing of deer, a game animal, not a pest (and many also added they are a valuable resource)	Deer are regarded by many as a pest in the region, having increased significantly in numbers and geographic spread. While deer are a listed as a priority in the plan, they also remain a game species.
2	Priorities	Plan needs to balance dingoes versus wild dogs. Needs clear goals for dingo conservation. Some disagreed with listing of dogs at all, unless balance in place.	A number of changes have been made to the plan following consultation. Text in section 5.1, Strategy WD4 and action 5.1j all reflect an improved balance.
3	Priorities	Please consider including an objective like "Contribute to the understanding of dingo conservation status" considering the high pops of dingoes in the Hunter. Plus other wild dog actions included in the NC plan (various, see last col).	Included. See strategic objective WD4 in section 5.1.
4	Priorities	Use mapping and communities of predator friendly farmers to identify "areas with a low risk of negative impacts from wild dogs, to allow dingoes to fulfil their natural ecological role."	While this has some merit, we believe it would be too resource intensive and subject to constant change.
5	Priorities	Wild dogs should be added to the Human Safety Risk category.	Matters relating to public safety are taken seriously and potential risks are acknowledged in the plan in section 3 and again in section 5 which explains the rationale for listings. Dogs are not included in the public safety category as that is not a primary reason for their control.
6	Priorities	Agree with listing of deer	Feedback supporting plan in current form.
7	Priorities	Agree with listing of deer, and want this Samba population listed. They are hard on understory and any plantings and are in the Cattai Wetlands (which brings bird watchers from all around the world and is now at risk). Maybe North of the Lansdowne River should have some type of connection with Northern Rivers and Port Macquarie as that is where these things came from.	New deer incursions are seen as a priority and this Samba population will be investigated in consultation with Mid Coast council and local stakeholders and appropriate management actions put in place.
8	Priorities	Deer are a bigger issue in LH than recognised, and will only get worse with urban development	Text acknowledging deer as a growing issue in the Lower Hunter is included at the end of section 3.
9	Priorities	Agree with listing of brumbies and support shooting of	Feedback supporting plan in current form.
10	Priorities	Agree with listing of cats, make them a higher priority	We see cats as a high priority and plan actions reflect that, within the limitations of current control options. Until control options improve, the feasibility of control is low.
11	Priorities	Add Kangaroos to list	The plan doesn't cover native sp, see section 1.4.

ID	Type	Consultation feedback	Reponse
12	Priorities	Deer are less of a danger to drivers than roos.	The risk assessment, considers both probability and consequence. The consequences of striking a 300kg sambar deer are greater than striking a 30kg kangaroo. As outlined in section 5, matters relating to public safety are taken seriously and reporting of incidents and near misses is essential information in managing risks to human safety. RPAC will continue to seek reliable information to help manage and assess risks.
13	Control	Rusa and Sambar are both present at Old Maitland Road. How would they fence the areas around Aberdare SF it's not practical. Deer along highways are still jumping out onto the Hunter expressway down to M1 and near the Kurri turnoff.	We agree that programs in Cessnock will need to be practical and developed in consultation with stakeholders and the community. This is outlined in the plan.
14	Priorities	Red deer populations are really exploding in the Merriwa area and deer have injured thoroughbred horses.	Yes deer are a concern too many which is why they are included in the plan.
15	Priorities	Rusa deer in Coomba park area - want more proactive control, not just containment. Lot of damage to veg and foreshore.	See plan actions 5.8 a+b
16	Priorities	Disagree with listing of rabbits. Chip and register like other pets. Should a program for rabbits include a requirement to spay pet rabbits (or prior to sale) to ensure rabbits do not have a risk to breed if released/escape?	While such controls appear to have merit, we believe they would be resource intensive to implement, expensive for rabbit owners and provide only limited benefit.
17	Priorities	Agree with listing of rabbits and pigs	Feedback supporting plan in current form.
18	Control	Pig Hunting by traditional aboriginal hunting groups could be encouraged	Yes hunting is supported by the plan as one of a range of control options.
19	Control	Can indigenous fire management be a complementary control method in reducing harbour for wild dogs and other pests?	There are many good reasons for undertaking mosaic burns and fire management, but the value of burns in pest management is not clear. For example there is strong evidence for increased predation of native species by pest animals following burns. Under some conditions the effectiveness of pest animal control efforts may be improved after a burn, but either way fire management must be combined with intensive pest animal control efforts to reduce predation of native species.
20	Control	Rabbits - ferreting should be allowed and soft jaw traps work well	Ferreting and trapping are not effective methods of control as the techniques are labour intensive and warrens remain open for re-infestation. Ferreting and trapping also have animal welfare implications.

ID	Type	Consultation feedback	Response
21	Control	Rabbit warren ripping is not preferred because of the potential impacts on Aboriginal cultural heritage.	Protecting cultural heritage is important and warren ripping is a principle control technique in many areas. Managing the risk to cultural heritage is a land manager responsibility to be addressed in the planning stage of any warren ripping operation. As part of any co-ordinated program, we will do our best to ensure that land managers can access the information they need to address their obligations.
22	Control	Most people still don't know what a wild dog is or looks like. They think it is their neighbours dog. How do urban and peri-urban landowners differentiate between feral and stray dogs?	Education is ongoing and LLS has a range of educational materials on wild dogs available on the web and at LLS shopfronts. Wild dogs include all wild-living dogs: dingoes, feral domestic dogs and the hybrid descendants of these (all of which are currently considered to be <i>Canis familiaris</i>). Under the Companion Animals Act 1998 a dog is a nuisance dog if it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - consistently roams; or makes persistent, excessive noise; - repeatedly defecates on private property other than the property on which it is ordinarily kept; - repeatedly runs at or chases a person, animal (other than vermin or in the course of droving, tending, working or protecting livestock) or vehicle; - endangers the health of a person or animal (other than vermin or in the course of droving, tending, working or protecting livestock); - repeatedly causes substantial damage to anything outside the property on which it is ordinarily kept.
23	Control	Landcare and garden groups could be very helpful in Rabbit control.	Agree and relevant to implementation. Text included in item 5.4c.
24	Control	There has to be integration between foxes, rabbits and dogs so that pest management is in balance.	Agree, RPAC recognises the need and the plan strives to facilitate and work towards. Examples are 5.2h for foxes and 5.5h for cats.
25	Control	Pigs - increase checks and penalties for moving pigs.	Deliberate release of all ferals is of great concern, impacting many and undermining control efforts. This issue has been raised at a state level and is a concern across the state.
26	Control	Who is spreading deer?	
27	Control	Need to stop people dumping dogs in Natural areas.	

ID	Type	Consultation feedback	Reponse
28	Control	Who is going to be doing the work? Is the legislation there to make people do the work.	The Biosecurity Act makes it clear that biosecurity is everyone's responsibility. It ensures that all private and public landholders have the same obligations. Public landholders must continue to control pests along with private landholders,
29	Priorities	Priorities appear heavily focussed on agriculture, biodiversity focus seems very limited and needs to be strengthened	The focus of control for a number of priority species is primarily biodiversity (e.g. feral cats, goats, birds and fish) and a significant component of control efforts for many (e.g. foxes, pigs and deer). Some changes have been made in the plan to make the focus on biodiversity and dingoe conservation clearer.
30	Priorities	Plan lacks direction for urban/peri-urban landscapes and does not consider conservation and biodiversity as a major driving factor.	In section 5 the expectations of landholders for each species include additional examples specific to peri-urban and urban landholders. The complexities of the urban/peri-urban environment and the importance of including these areas in control efforts is also acknowledged in the new executive summary, in section 3 and the new implementation section 5.14.
31	Control	5.1 Wild Dogs - p15 the plan states that all land owners are expected to participate in the control, what is the expectation of Urban landowners?	Expectations relevant to urban landowners are listed under "Expectations of Land managers" in section 5.1 Wild dogs.
32	Priorities	Real pests are livestock and humans. Can humans be listed?	No, that is not the focus of the plan.
33	Priorities	Indian myna should be listed and managed for	Listing is subject to further investigation to assess the feasibility of control.
34	Priorities	Indian myna should be listed under biodiversity on page 13.	
35	Priorities	Utilise incentives, eg bounties	We support incentive schemes that build sustainable long term pest control programs and reference to incentives is included in the new implementation section 5.14. Unfortunately there are many examples of where bounties have failed or where poorly thought out incentive schemes made pest issues worse.
36	1080	Disagree with 1080 baiting of any animal	1080 is current best practice for several species with strict regulation on its use. Cost effectiveness is very important to feasibility of control and at present 1080 is a more cost effective option than many others, with aerial baiting the most effective.
37	1080	Disagree with expanding use of 1080 or aerial baiting	
38	1080	Aerial baiting works, we can see it in our annual records, a lower uptake of baits from our own ground program after Aerial baiting.	

ID	Type	Consultation feedback	Reponse
39	1080	Disagree with 1080 baiting of deer	Use of 1080 is not approved for deer in Australia
40	1080	With Deer why are we not acting quicker- does 1080 not work?	
41	Control	The professional wild dog controller program should be supported for difficult dogs that don't take baits.	Yes we are happy with the results of the program in the Upper Hunter.
42	Control	The wild dog density map for Merriwa area seems to miss out the actual activity.	Maps reflect our best knowledge as at 2017 and will be updated with input from the biosecurity rangers from time to time. Contact the local biosecurity ranger with any intelligence on distribution or mismatches.
43	Control	Release feline flu & immunise pet cats	Plan program 5.5b supports development and testing of new control methods, strategies and solutions.
44	Control	5.5 Feral Cat - Local councils are identified as key stakeholders in most feral cat projects; what are councils responsibility in this and how are feral and stray cats determined?	We will consult with local councils and responsibilities will be documented in operational planning.
45	Control	5.5 Feral Cat - another program area required is the education to cat owners in responsible pet ownership to reduce domestics straying	Agree, responsible cat ownership is covered by plan program 5.5f
46	Control	Greater access for recreational hunters	The plan does support changes to regulations for hunting of wild deer in 5.7i but not for other pest animals. However, this is dependent on approval of an application to DPI.
47	Control	Greater recognition and use of recreational hunters in pest management	While recreational hunting is a valid pastime, professional ground shooting is something quite different. With few exceptions, recreational shooting has limited long term impact on pest animals.
48	Control	Want wild dog programs communicated through more channels. There should be a formal system to let people know there are baits out.	A range of systems are in place using a range of communication channels. Further improvement would require a lot of effort for minimal gain.
49	Feedback	<i>Not much info in plan on how this will be implemented and requesting that a broader approach including Hunters as part of the community be adopted.</i> 1.1 Overview: "The Hunter Regional Strategic Pest Animal Management Plan (RSPAMP) outlines how Government, industry and the community can work together and share the responsibility to eradicate, contain or manage pest animals in terrestrial and freshwater environments across the region"	New section 5.14 on implementation provides some more detail and operational planning documents will go into more detail.
50	Control	Use nationally qualified pest managers rather than shooting orgs for better results	We wish to use the full range of tools available, both have a place.
51	Control	There are not enough biosecurity rangers in the region - this should be supplemented with Aboriginal rangers as part of the team and indigenous fire management to achieve integrated control	There may be opportunities and new section 5.14 on implementation covers the importance of partnerships and support for pest management activities.

ID	Type	Consultation feedback	Reponse
52	Control	Shooting preferred, could utilise the army	Use of the army in pest management may have some merit, but is a matter for the federal government and beyond the scope of this regional plan.
53	Control	Can you shoot deer with a spotlight now?	For the Hunter, only in the Upper Hunter local government area for now.
54	Control	Archery can be used on Deer effectively as it is silent and does not spook the deer.	Nothing in the plan prevents.
55	Control	More road signage is required in deer areas for speed reduction which has a safety benefit for motorists this has a benefit for local wildlife also.	Agree, and a related program item is included for all deer species in section 5.7 to 5.10.
56	Control	There needs to be compliance on deer farming releases.	Agree, plan plan program "5.10f Develop best practice standards for farmed deer in the region" addresses in part. Adoption of best practice by deer farmers has been added to "5.10h Ensure land managers understand their obligations under the Biosecurity Act to control Red deer" and compliance activities added to the activities against that plan program.
57	Control	Use a system like airbnb to connect landholders with shooters	Beyond the scope of this plan. Such an initiative would be better suited to recreational shooting organisations.
58	Control	Feels effort to date slow and ineffective.	This plan is about more strategic and co-ordinated control , but eliminating pests is rarely achievable on the mainland. The best approach is to avoid their introduction and spread in the first place.
59	Control	Eradicate all introduced species	
60	Control	Want to see more control to eliminate pests	
61	Control	Not enough detail on how pests will be managed	Wild dog management plans and other annual/operational plans will include more detail, as outlined in new section 5.14.
62	Control	Fully fencing protected areas and excluding cats and foxes from would be a valuable conservation tool.	This may have merit in some circumstances. This and other control options will be considered as research outcomes and funding enable.
63	Control	Increase efforts on deer, wild dogs and kangaroos in UH. Concerned deer will impact hwy (UH) soon.	Plan includes co-ordinated control programs in the Upper Hunter for wild dogs and also for deer (subject to funding). Some funding opportunities are expected to come up. Understand concern regarding Kangaroos, but native species are beyond the scope of this plan.

ID	Type	Consultation feedback	Response
64	Control	What role do agricultural and urban areas play as refugia for pests to expand from following control ops?	They can act as a refuge and including these areas in integrated pest management is important. New implementation section 5.14 covers and the importance of these areas in control is also recognised in the executive summary and section 3.
65	Control	Concerned rabbit control affects those with rabbits as domestic pets	We appreciate the concern and Calici virus has been around for many years now. Other control operations will use best practice to minimise the risk.
66	Control	Not enough consideration given to alternative control methods	For some species we have pretty good control techniques and have had for many years. For others control options are very limited and there is a focus on supporting development of new control techniques. Use of complementary (alternative) control methods is a program plan item for many species and new implementation 5.14 makes it clear that the full range of control options available will be considered.
67	Control	Ensure collateral damage is minimised	Agree. Control methods are tightly regulated and LLS employs best practice.
68	Control	Like to see more use of and research into neutering and other more ethical solutions	The plan supports research into alternative control methods for many species, including neutering.
69	Control	Greater clarity on role for urban and peri-urban landholders in control and who regulates would be helpful, especially for dogs, foxes and rabbits. Council officers are not authorised under the Biosecurity Act for pest animals so cannot function to the same capacity as LLS officers but landholders in urban/peri urban areas are not LLS ratepayers. Council Weed Officers are already functioning under the Biosecurity act for weeds and cover these areas and have people on the ground. Should resources and legislative requirements be made available to them to work in this space?	We agree that greater clarity on the roles for stakeholders is important and partnerships with local government will be formalised to support more integrated and effective pest management. This is formally recognised in a number of changes to the plan - see text in Executive summary under "Implementing the plan", various references too in new section 5.14 Plan Implementation and the first listed KPI in 6.1.2.
70	Feedback	Communication channels with councils in region need improving, better model operating in weed space in region, suggest this be considered for pests	On local plans some are already developed, or close to completion such as Wild dog management plans. Others are yet to be developed and relevant stakeholders will be included in plan development.
71	Feedback	What is the timeframe and process (incl LGAs) for development of local plans?	

ID	Type	Consultation feedback	Reponse
72	KPIs	Unsuited to measuring effectiveness and suggest independent review of incident reporting to avoid any bias	KPIs with a greater focus on outcomes will be developed at a state level (see 6.1.1). Incident reporting serves several purposes. For example reporting of incidents relating to public safety and near misses is essential information in managing risks to public safety.
73	KPIs	5.12a says the Indian myna activity will be complete by end 2018 whereas the KPI says it will be completed by end 2020. Please clarify.	Corrected.
74	KPIs	Unclear. Do our metrics account for differential detectability?	Differential detectability is a valid issue and one that will be considered in our metrics. Plan text in section 6 has been updated to make this clearer.
75	KPIs	Measures are focussed on activities (roll-out) rather than outcomes/effectiveness. It is vital that indicators are meaningful measures of the effectiveness of activities on reducing invasive animal risks and threats, including the extent and density of each priority pest species and the damage they cause.	Agree and that was a conscious decision. Statewide measures that will focus more on effectiveness will be developed and that has been made clearer in 6.1.1.
76	KPIs	Better measure for foxes may be the number of groups participating in fox and dog control programs in conservation lands rather than agricultural lands, as most dog control programs involving baiting also targets foxes already.	Measures appropriate to operations focussed on biodiversity may be developed in consultation with stakeholders in operational planning.
77	Mgt	As a resource (game meat), deer require a better mgt plan	The plan is a significant step forward for managing pests in a more strategic way and is supported by new legislation. Deer are having significant impacts on the community in the region and their numbers and range have increased significantly. RPAC supports utilisation of carcasses provided doing so does not impede control operations.
100	Feedback	Support utilisation of carcasses	We agree in principle, but logistics and collection costs can be significant limitations in practice.
78	Feedback	Concerned that recreational hunters not consulted in plan development	All stakeholders had an opportunity to comment through the public consultation process and a number of submissions were received from individuals and groups representing recreational hunters. RPAC appreciates the effort recreational hunters have made in making submissions and these been considered.
79	Feedback	Concerned plan threatens recreational hunting	There is nothing in the plan that prevents recreational hunting and lifting of game restrictions will increase opportunities for recreational hunters.

ID	Type	Consultation feedback	Reponse
80	Feedback	Urban/periurban community not considered/consulted. Feel community based groups and support needed were not included in the planning process or recognised in the plan. Implementation needs community support and ownership. Comm consultn insufficient, survey insufficient	All stakeholders had an opporuntiy to comment through the public consult process with a number of submissions received. RPAC appreciates the effort members of the community have made in making submissions which have been considered. We agree that community groups play an important role in implementing the plan and the new executive summary, new implementaion section 5.14 and program plan item 5.4c all recognise the role of community groups.
81	Feedback	Local government rangers often not well trained, better training would lead to better results.	In our experience most local government rangers are well trained on the Biosecurity Act (for weeds) and they can and do play an important role in pest management.
82	Feedback	Regional plan for pest mgt is a positive step.	Feedback supporting plan in current form.
83	Feedback	A bad plan	No comment as no further details were provided.
84	Feedback	LLS doing a good job on dogs in the Upper Hunter	Feedback supporting current activities and plan in current form.
85	Feedback	Are there links between fox and rabbit numbers?	There are links between predator and prey numbers, but a range of factors affect both and the relationship is not fully understood.
86	Feedback	Include social and mental impacts on landowners of wild dogs	Agree and this is now more clearly addressed in section 3 and strategic objective WD1 now includes impacts on landholders.
87	Priorities	Red fox, would like to see stronger support for relevant areas for the biodiversity and shorebird protection focus in the plan (ie extend beyond just Ramsar site).	The plan did accommodate other priority sites (5.2c), but Figure 6 and associated text suggested otherwise. Section 5.2 (under management) has been improved to make it clearer that a range of sites are included.
88	Feedback	Plan doesn't acknowledge that many landholders are turning the problem into an income stream. The trapping of feral Goats for sale, and the charging of hunting access are two cases in point. This extra farm income should be considered in any management plan, especially when enforcing control programs	This was acknowledged in preparation of the plan and income aspects considered in developing plan program. Farmed goats are dealt with as a regulated industry so they do not become pests. Wild goats are dealt with as pests where they are currently uncontrolled and causing a problem.
89	Feedback	Its important that implementing the plan and enforcing the GBD uses an evidence based approach	We are conscious of the need for evidence based practice, which is routinely implemented.
90	Feedback	1.9 Alert sp - believes conditions in the Hunter are unsuitable for Hog deer to establish and <i>are happy to provide support in ensuring correct identification.</i>	Hog deer are not known to occur. Any sightings will be investigated.

ID	Type	Consultation feedback	Reponse
91	KPIs	KPIs appear achievable. The ADA would like to assist the LLS in implementing the program with respect to deer.	We appreciate the offer and will consider opportunities when implementing the plan.
92	Feedback	The ADA is prepared to make itself and its members available to participate in programs with landowner and Government departments.	
93	Feedback	Too much repetition and jargon in tables	Abbreviations in a table are to some extent unavoidable. We have improved the tables where possible and reduced the use of abbreviations.
94	Feedback	Labelling sp as pests is ignorant and vilifying	It is the accepted term.
95	Feedback	Don't believe experts have been consulted	RPAC includes a range of experts in their field. Other experts also presented to RPAC or were consulted, in developing the plan.
96	Feedback	Is there an online APP such as Weedwise for Pests?	The Feral Scan APP is the equivalent and is being used.
97	Feedback	The data for the distrib maps is not referenced. There is no detailed reference list in the document.	Additional text on the source of data for the maps has been added to section 5 and the source of data was included in the caption of distribution maps. A detailed reference list was deemed unnecessary.
98	Feedback	Plan lacks an economic impact assessment and analysis of how implementation (control) costs compare with impact costs?	Cost was a factor considered in the pest risk assessment, but further information on costs and benefits was not readily available during plan preparation. For invasives such as weeds, costs and benefits are addressed in operational planning before proceeding with any operations. A similar approach will be adopted for pests.
99	Control	Activities should be costed and serve as a basis for determining the funding needs of each region	
101	Feedback	Dingo on front cover is not appropriate	Agree. The front picture on the cover has been changed.
102	Feedback	5.9 & 5.10 Fallow & Red Deer suggest all councils (or specifically Port Stephens Council) be included as a key stakeholder in relation to public safety and deer strikes on roads given the distribution of deer. At present only the Upper Hunter Council is identified.	Reference to councils in 5.9 and 5.10 has been corrected.
103	Feedback	Guard dogs moved deer from a property I managed.	The plan supports use of a range of methods (for eg 5.1g, 5.2i) which can be very effective. However some strategies are more effective in specific situations only or have the effect of simply transferring the problem to neighbouring properties. The plan strives for an integrated and co-ordinated approach, to improve outcomes across the landscape.

ID	Type	Consultation feedback	Reponse
104	Feedback	Disagree with aerial shooting in Cessnock area, not safe or feasible	Program plan item 5.7b does state where possible and its implementation will require community and stakeholder support to proceed.
105	Feedback	Adjust boundaries of wild dog mgt areas (fig 5) so that the whole catchment of Wallis Lake and its rivers are contained within the Great lakes area, not some in the Lower Manning.	A catchment is a useful management unit for many natural resource management issues. However a wide range of factors were taken into account in the development of the current boundarie, which all considered, are the best fit.
106	Feedback	Participation - how will we encourage landholders to participate?	New program plan item 5.1k will make it easier for landholders to participate and the importance of enabling participation is recognised in new section 5.14 under community capacity.
107	Priorities	Plan doesn't go far enough with controlling species occupying smaller areas of the region - especially horses and goats.	The plan recognises the need to remove isolated populations occupying smaller areas and that first assessing feasibility is sometimes necessary. This has been made clearer in Program plan text on Horses and Feral birds. Control of Chestnut mannikins is not considered feasible.
108	Priorities	Obvious eradication targets would be peafowl, guineafowl and mannikins in the Hunter.	
109	Alert	We support the inclusion ofIndian ringnecked parrot..... and other species on the list of 'alert' species in certain regional plans and suggest a definition of alert species be added to the plans.	Agree. Indian Ringneck and a definition for alert species has been added to section 1.7.
110	Control	The South East and North West regional plans propose to suspend Game Act regulations for all local government areas within their regions. This provision should be extended to all plans to facilitate effective deer management.	Agree. See new text in section 5.7.
111	Control	Aerial baiting should only be considered in areas where there are clear benefits for high priority assets and should not occur within the core areas of national parks and where threatened species could be affected. New approaches to wild dog control are much needed, including to distinguish real from perceived impacts (especially with increased reports of fox predation on lambs) and to safeguard livestock through better fencing, guardian animals and other animal husbandry techniques. The focus in wild dog workshops and working groups should expand to the control of all feral predators – foxes and cats as well as dogs.	See strategic objective WD4 and program plan item 5.1j in section 5.1 on management of dingoes. On integration and inclusion of foxes and cats in wild dog work we agree and this is already reflected in the plan.

ID	Type	Consultation feedback	Reponse
112	Control	There is strong and mounting evidence that native animals are highly vulnerable to cat and fox predation in recently burnt habitats. We recommend that the regional plans recognise the need for intensive control of feral predators to protect threatened species after fire.	This is now acknowledged in section 5.2 under management.
113	Control	Focus more on prevention, including state-wide fencing requirements to prevent escape of farmed animals, strategies to combat illegal pet keeping or release of invasive species and a phased-in ban on high-risk pet species.	Agree. Program plan item 5.10f "Develop best practice standards for farmed deer in the region" addressed this and in section 5 "raising the level of community awareness concerning the illegal release of feral animals" is recognised as an issue requiring a statewide effort. Additional examples relating to pets and farm animals have been included in Expectations of landholders in section 5.
114	Priorities	We endorse the listing of feral deer as a priority pest in all regions in the draft plans. There is an urgent need to remove deer as a game animal in the Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002 and to reclassify them as a feral animal (along with the likes of foxes and feral pigs). This will remove unnecessary and onerous rules for land managers (red tape) designed to sustain deer populations. This would not affect recreational hunting, for deer would still be available for hunting.	Agree.
115	Control	Prioritising the interests of recreational hunters has contributed to NSW's worsening deer problems. The goals of recreational hunting and feral animal control are different. Hunters are often motivated to maintain feral animal populations for future hunting, by leaving young and females. Recreational hunting can make professional control more difficult and expensive by altering the behaviour of targeted animals. In some cases, skilled shooters can contribute to feral animal control when they participate in well-designed control programs and when they exert sufficient sustained pressure over small accessible areas.	Agree.
116	NRC general comms	All plans could be further improved by: 1 focusing more in plain English on how to promote best practice pest animal management by landholders 2 improving specificity and measurability of objectives 3 encouraging co-ordinated programs across regions for common functions and/or pests.	1 - Plan text in sections 1 to 4 especially has been reviewed and language simplified 2 - Some objectives were reviewed, and we believe most plan objectives are fit for purpose. 3 - Agree and the need for this is recognised in the new executive summary and in section 3.
117	NRC general comms	The plans could have had a greater focus on improved surveillance, reporting and tracing systems. For example ongoing monitoring of the effectiveness of RHD controlling rabbits needs to be a priority.	Agree and the suggested text re monitoring effectiveness of Calici virus has been added to 5.4d monitoring of programs

ID	Type	Consultation feedback	Reponse
118	NRC general comms	The alert species section focuses on non-indigenous species. Mice should be included as a priority alert species, given the past history of plagues and their impacts throughout the grain belt of NSW. Early detection of mouse plagues is critical for effective management	The alert category is reserved for species not already present in the region. Both the risk of new plagues and the need for a co-ordinated program were considered a low priority in the Hunter.
119	NRC general comms	This is an ambitious plan and needs better prioritisation. For the range of activities proposed there needs to be an indication of what must be done and what is optional.	Agree and this is recognised in new section 5.14 Implementation under "Prioritising activities". This addresses how priorities for implementation will be set.
120	NRC general comms	Many of the programs apply to the entire region. Very few plans provide an operational scale that provides confidence that it is achievable. The distribution maps show some indication across the LLS region but often do not identify specific priority areas for management intervention.	The scope and clarity of programs in the plan was reviewed and changes made so items were more focussed or easier to follow where appropriate. For example 5.2d Fox breeding sites is now limited to within 10km of the coast (ie to assist shorebirds and the bulk of urban/peri urban areas).
121	NRC general comms	Even in a strategic plan the priority areas, where groups need to be established and plans needs to be prepared, should be identified. The reader should be able to get a sense of what will be done and where.	
122	NRC general comms	The plans should make more reference to best practice guidelines, such as the DPI Vertebrate Pest Control Manual. Reference should also be made to best practice guidelines produced by industry (MLA, AWI etc.) and the Invasive Animal CRC.	Reference to best practice guides has been improved in the plan.
123	NRC general comms	There is no indication of ongoing evaluation and adaptation and its not clear what steps are taken to routinely implement adaptive management. For example the regional pest animal committees should periodically review and adapt the plan.	Agree this was not clear enough and this has been addressed in 6.3 Plan review
124	NRC general comms	The land manager expectations for each pest animal species should be outlined in the description section that leads each section.	Agree. "Expectations of land managers" is outlined much earlier for each species. These were clearly outlined in the plan, but at the end of each pest animal section under landholder activities.
125	NRC comms on regional plan	This plan could be improved by: 1 the inclusion of simply expressed and time bound regional goals. 2 clarifying alignment with state government priorities 3 providing an upfront summary targeted to landholders 4 ensuring KPIs measure the effectiveness of the plan's pest animal management strategies	1 - We believe the strategic objectives outlined in the plan are clear and sufficient for now. 2 - A range of changes to standard text in the first four sections of the plan have clarified alignment. 3 - An executive summary has been added to the plan. 4 - KPIs have been reviewed and some changes made. Text also added on development of statewide measures focussing more on outcomes.

ID	Type	Consultation feedback	Reponse
126	NRC comms on regional plan	Section 3 "Our Region" provides basic information that could be more specific for example: geography, demographics and risk of incursions?	Agree. Section 3 text was updated to reflect.
127	NRC comms on regional plan	The plan does not specifically refer to community capacity.	This has been more clearly acknowledged throughout the plan and specifically addressed in the new executive summary and implementation sections (5.14).
128	NRC comms on regional plan	All plans should include pictures of the alert species or at least refer to where further details could be found. The plans ask for landholders to be on the lookout and then do not provide any picture.	Agree and pictures have been added for a range of alert species.

