

# Island of Hope

A bold strategy to keep nature safe from invasive species

FUNDING PROPOSAL MARCH 2025





## Our challenge

*Australia is a global biodiversity jewel. We live on a continental-scale island that evolved in isolation - our lands teem with wildlife and ecosystems found nowhere else on earth. An incredible 87% of our mammals are found only on our island home.*

*But our biodiversity strength is also our weakness. Our isolation makes Australia highly vulnerable to invasive species, the overwhelming driver of our shameful animal extinction rate.*

*Global travel and trade are speeding up this extinction process. Our protected areas are being trashed, trampled, choked and polluted by a tsunami of invasive species. Every day, we lose a little more of what makes Australia special.*

*The good news is research tells us tackling invasives is the highest impact conservation intervention to save our wildlife.<sup>1</sup> And our isolation gives us a chance to stop new invasive threats, from fire ants to frightening fungi, before they take over.*

*In spite of global uncertainty, we're poised to achieve big, positive changes for nature this year on our island of hope.*

*Thanks to our generous funders, we have accomplished what others said was impossible with fire ants and saving Kosciuszko from feral horses. We've never been more influential, more connected and more respected.*

*Almost every week there's a new win, a new shift in government or a new high profile story shaping public opinion for invasive species action. That's because we've made this issue bigger than us. We've started a culture shift.*

*We can turn Australia into an island of hope. That's why we're excited about our work on both critical local interventions and big, systemic changes. Regardless of who wins the upcoming federal election, we're well placed to champion ambition for a wildlife revival.*

*Bird flu and fire ants are some of the biggest environmental threats we've faced. We have already made the government act. However our ambition extends beyond these immediate threats - we aim to turn these crises into the biggest opportunities to drive the cultural and systemic transformation we need for nature.*

*We can have an Australia that is built on a big, bold vision for nature. We can harness the spirit of Australians connected to the land and awaken a sleeping giant for conservation advocacy.*

*We have outstanding opportunities before us. We just don't have enough resources to seize them all and convert them into scaled on-ground impact. Stopping invasives-led extinctions will take focus, collaboration and serious new funding from governments, funding that is leveraged from caring philanthropic people like you.*

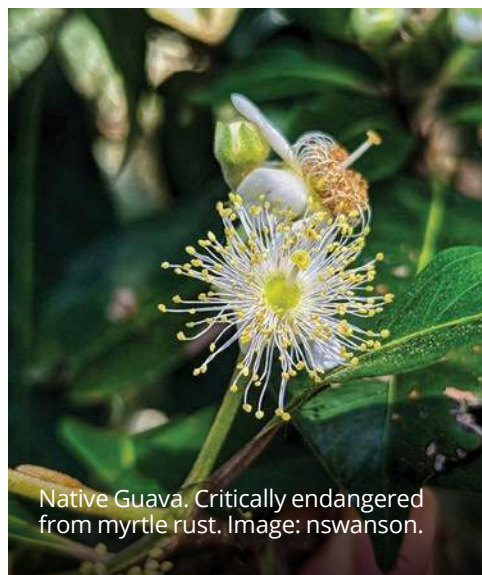
*As the only national advocacy organisation dedicated to stopping the invasive species mega threat, your backing is crucial for nature.*

*Together we can make Australia an island of hope.*

**Jack Gough, Interim CEO, Advocacy Director**



Lord Howe Island White Eye.  
Image: Eric de Leeuw.



Native Guava. Critically endangered  
from myrtle rust. Image: nswanson.

<sup>1</sup> Langhammer P. et al. (2024). The Positive Impact of Conservation Action. Science 384 (6694): 453-458

# Fixing the system to avert extinctions

## THREATS TO NATURE PROJECT

Recently, we secured \$700,000 in government funding to establish 15 trout-free havens for the Yalmy galaxias and 4 other critically endangered fish in Gippsland, Victoria.

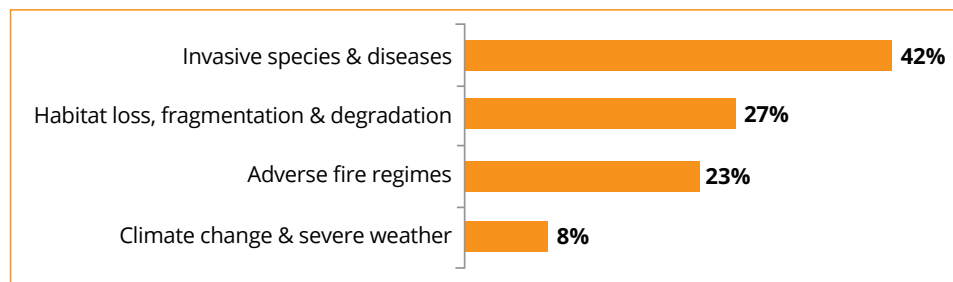
It may already be lost, the last count of the Yalmy galaxias was only 20.

The Australian Government has their zero extinctions pledge. But this can't be achieved only by last-minute rescues of almost-extinct species. That's why we're seeking to expand this extinction-averting action into a comprehensive national plan to tackle invasive freshwater fish, one of several neglected mega threats needing a systematic national focus.

A shocking 86% of modern animal extinctions were caused by invasive species. Of about 100 species confirmed extinct since colonisation, more than half were due to invasive species. And of an expected 100 species that face a high risk of extinction in the next 10–20 years, invasive species are the highest impact threat for the overwhelming majority.

The only way to break the cycle of invasion-driven extinctions is to systematically tackle the root cause, focussing on how to stop the worst threats with nationally coordinated, well-funded plans that are collaboratively implemented nationwide.

Australia's governments must be ambitious and commit to long-term funding to stop the invasive mega threat. Encouraging steps have been taken for feral cats and invasive weeds with federal, state and territory commitments for joint action. But a serious commitment means serious investment.



*High-impact and medium-impact threats to nationally listed threatened taxa (expert assessments).*

## CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

**Goal:** To achieve ambitious, well-funded plans to stop the most destructive threats.

**Strategy:** Focus public concern about extinctions onto practical solutions to drive political will.

**Tactics:**

- Secure high-profile media and conduct direct advocacy to ensure national plans for weeds, goats and cats are ambitious and well-funded.
- Build upon the coordinator network for deer, pigs and cats to secure additional roles.
- Advocate for sustainable long-term baseline funding for threat abatement.
- Mobilise Australians to demand further focus and funding (page 15).

[View our Gone report here.](#)



## Economic solutions for biodiversity

Those responsible for bringing new invaders to our shores rarely foot the bill. Despite some progress in shifting costs toward risk creators, the environment continues to bear the brunt.

We want a fundamental shift in how we fund biosecurity. As members of a key ministerial advisory panel on funding, we're advocating for a groundbreaking new biosecurity insurance scheme. This innovative approach would fund rapid responses to new incursions, incentivise proactive risk reduction and ensure that those who create the risks contribute directly to the solutions. We'll drive this by leveraging parliamentary opportunities and building strategic alliances with industry leaders.



# Bird flu: Preparing for an era of new wildlife disease threats

Australia's Threatened Species Commissioner has warned that if a new deadly strain of bird flu (H5N1) arrives, it could be the nation's biggest single ecological disaster, potentially worse than the Black Summer bushfires.

We face mass deaths of pelicans, eagles, penguins and endangered sea lions, and even local extinctions of iconic black swans and Tasmanian devils.

Our advocacy secured almost \$50 million to prepare for the environmental impacts of bird flu, including \$16 million for rat, cat and fox eradications on islands to build wildlife resilience. We will maintain pressure on governments to prepare optimally.

Our campaign has also driven unprecedented collaboration across departments and governments. This has opened the door to a new national approach to preparing for new environmental threats.

Which is welcome news. Globally, new wildlife diseases are emerging at an alarming rate and are nearly impossible to eradicate. Meanwhile, Australia is considering allowing parrot imports – despite the risk of new deadly bird diseases.

We need an agreed national process for more effectively responding to new diseases. We will leverage the bird flu focus to advocate for stronger preparation, investment and responses to future wildlife disease threats.



Tackling bird flu overseas.

**In South America, H5N1 bird flu killed over 650,000 seabirds, over 30,000 sea lions, 95% of elephant seal babies in Argentina and 40% of Peru's pelicans. Millions have perished elsewhere.**

**We don't know if it will strike in 2025 and from which direction it will come. Since it arrived in Antarctica in late 2023, Australia remains the only unaffected continent.**

## CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

**Goal:** To achieve 1) Optimal preparedness for bird flu. 2) Improved focus and funding for prevention and response to new catastrophic wildlife diseases. 3) Environmental expertise embedded in emergency preparedness systems.

**Strategy:** Maintain public pressure for strong action; leverage importance of bird flu to expand focus to more wildlife diseases.

### Tactics:

- Maintain pressure on governments through media and direct advocacy.
- Maintain a strong media presence on other emerging diseases.
- Prepare a report on highly threatening emerging diseases and solutions to protect wildlife.
- Mobilise community support for our solutions.



Australia's iconic black swans are at serious risk of localised extinctions if H5N1 arrives.



# A new federal government is the opportunity

We've strategically built a powerful platform of influence within governments across the country, positioning ourselves as a respected voice for our wildlife. We're in an excellent position to capitalise on this influence, regardless of who wins the upcoming election.

Our immediate priority is securing substantial funding to translate policy gains into tangible action against invasive species. These must be backed in with serious, long-term and strategic funding.

Our message is clear: the next government must commit to significantly boosting funding for environmental biosecurity and invasive species action.

**View our 2025 federal election platform.**



This investment will help stop invasive species led extinction, protect vulnerable wildlife and drive research into solutions for persistent threats. By bridging the gap between policy and funding, we can ensure meaningful progress in combating the invasive species crisis.

## CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

**Goal:** To secure significant increased funding over the next 2 federal budget cycles to dramatically step up the level of investment in invasive species action and environmental biosecurity.

**Strategy:** Leverage the moment: our high media profile, influential reputation and deep political and stakeholder connections.

### Tactics:

- Launch our State of Environmental Biosecurity Report.
- Continue to drive media and direct advocacy pressure.
- Mobilise supporters, cross-sector alliances and parliamentary champions.





## Fire ant free Australia

Last year the Senate inquiry into fire ants, that we secured, produced critical recommendations to save Australia from a life sentence with fire ants. Disappointingly, the federal government hasn't implemented these to strengthen the national response.

A significant fire ant infestation was later discovered at an army base in Oakey, in creeks feeding the Murray-Darling system – a unique risk of waterborne fire ant dispersal during flood events!

Years of chronic underfunding and delayed action have enabled fire ants to spread, including to the Sunshine Coast. Despite eradication progress, nest densities in the south east Queensland suppression area have reached unprecedented levels. This is causing new outbreaks in New South Wales and Queensland, as fire ants are inadvertently transported via turf, soil, mulch, hay and other materials.

We made fire ants an election issue in Queensland in 2024. We won commitments from all major parties for a strengthened fire ant response, prioritising ongoing funding, suppression and containment. We're now working with the new government to turn these commitments into action. We also won 10 years of funding from Queensland, but only 4 years from other governments. The next federal government must commit to fully fund the 10 year fire ant eradication and suppression in 2025.

### CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

**Goal:** To 1) Secure full federal funding to complete 10 year eradication.  
2) Ensure implementation of Queensland election commitments.  
3) 250,000 hectares treated for fire ants.

**Strategy:** Maintain public and industry pressure on government; Use the federal election to win funding commitments.

**Tactics:**

- Ensure public support required for eradication baiting to remain effective.
- Maintain media spotlight on spread and counter misinformation.
- Mobilise supporters to contact their local members.
- Grow fire ant community leaders group.



Koalas are vulnerable when on the ground. Infestations were already found in koala sanctuary zones. Image: Koala Clancy foundation.

### If our nation fails to eradicate fire ants we'll likely see:

- Direct impacts to koalas, platypus, echidna and turtles.
- A devastating list of extinctions – the number is yet to be quantified. It's estimated that 45% of birds, 38% of mammals, 69% of reptiles and 95% of frog populations in south east Queensland could plummet.
- 6 deaths and 650,000 extra medical appointments annually and beaches, parks and sports fields closed.
- Economic impact greater than cane toads, rabbits, feral cats and foxes combined, projected to exceed \$2 billion per year.

Australia has successfully eradicated fire ants from Perth, Sydney and Gladstone. We must do it again in Queensland and northern NSW.



Fire ants form rafts in flood waters, following ex-cyclone Alfred in Qld.



Watch the shocking footage here.

# Nation-leading eradications in South Australia

An exciting opportunity exists to help protect South Australia's wildlife from invasive species.

**Eradicating feral deer statewide:** South Australia's ambition is impressive. The government has a detailed plan to eradicate all feral deer in 10 years. If successful it sets an exciting precedent for other states like Tasmania, Western Australia and Queensland where deer are not yet widespread.

Despite this, the plan is under threat from underfunding and efforts from the hunting lobby to undermine the social license for effective control. We've trained SA government staff in community engagement, and delivered high-impact advocacy and media to ensure public and political support, but more funding is needed.

**The world's most ambitious feral cat eradication:** The Dudley Peninsula feral cat eradication program on Kangaroo Island is a beacon of hope for Australian wildlife. If successful it will be the largest cat eradication on an inhabited island – a globally significant conservation breakthrough and pave the way for eradication of feral cats on the whole island. Iconic threatened species like the Kangaroo Island dunnart, southern brown bandicoot, western whipbird, Australian sea lion and little penguins would all be safe.

We've helped secure amendments to improve access to cat control tools, but the program is at a critical juncture, with an estimated 150 cats remaining but insufficient funds to get the job done.

**Eradicating feral pigs before it's too late:** Feral pigs are established in SA's Flinders Ranges. Coupled with constant illegal introductions by hunters, these mini bulldozers may start to spread across the state. 100 pigs can become 30,000 in a decade. Urgent action to eradicate them and prevent their establishment in the whole state is needed now.

SA's leadership can inspire a nationwide race to the top.



## CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

**Goal:** To 1) Secure full state and federal funding for feral deer eradication. 2) Win commitments to get the Dudley done and a plan developed for the whole of Kangaroo Island. 3) Expand laws requiring destruction of feral deer and pigs on private land to include feral goats.

**Strategy:** Build on government ambition and public support to secure funding commitments which match the on-ground needs.

### Tactics:

- Mobilise environmental and agricultural groups in favour.
- Through high profile media and activation of supporters counter the opposing narratives.
- Direct advocacy to federal and SA governments.



## Island sanctuary

Australia's islands are a critical habitat for about one-third of our threatened animals and the last refuge for many species extinct on the mainland. Many islands are also plagued by extinction-causing invasive species. Christmas island has turned from a biodiversity hotspot to an extinction hotspot in recent times. Of the 20 Australian birds most likely to become extinct in the next 20 years, 6 are confined to islands. Despite being less than 0.5% of Australia's land area, almost a quarter of Australian extinctions have been island species.

There is hope: Over 170 islands (of 8,300) have had successful invasive species eradications making this Australia's most successful conservation initiative in recent times.

An ongoing, national fund of at least \$16 million per year, jointly funded by all governments, could turbocharge the next wave of successful eradications and avert extinction.

This scale of funding is crucial to provide the long-term funding needed to secure community support and complete the full eradication cycle – planning, eradication, verification and prevention of re-invasion.

Our advocacy will ensure targeted feral animal eradications are successfully delivered on priority islands, including French (Vic), Kangaroo (SA), Bruny (Tas), Minjerribah (Qld), Lord Howe Island (NSW), and Christmas Island. We'll advocate for the funding and policy needed to finally get the Dudley Peninsula done at Kangaroo Island – the largest cat eradication attempt on an inhabitable island!

We'll also ensure the \$16 million of bird flu preparedness funding we won for eradicating feral rats, foxes and cats on islands, is strategically delivered

BM 1839.8.2.109

[Norfolk Island] (Australia)

Source: Sir T. Mitchell

Collected pre-1839



The White chested white eye of Norfolk Island, Australia's most recently extinct bird, was pushed to extinction by the invasive black rat. Specimen photo: Richard Holdaway.

### CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

**Goal:** To 1) secure a dedicated national island eradication and recovery fund of at least \$16 million per year. 2) Get Dudley done.

**Strategy:** Hold the federal government to account for no new extinctions.

#### Tactics:

- Showcase past success and benefits of island biodiversity.
- Develop a crucial island report.
- Mobilise supporters and empower local champions to build political pressure.



Pteropus melanotus natalis - the Christmas Island flying-fox.



# Tasmania's natural advantage

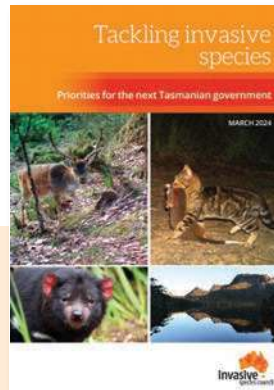
Tasmania hosts globally unique native wildlife in some of the most spectacular protected areas in Australia. But invasive species threaten this natural wonderland. Tasmania is in an extinction crisis, with at least 29 species extinct and the threatened species list increases each year.

Tasmania also has a natural advantage. Feral pigs, goats and foxes are not yet established in the wild. A strong biosecurity system can keep out new invaders. With over 50 offshore islands, permanent eradication of feral animals is possible, affordable and could spark an ecological transformation.

We can turn this natural advantage into a winning strategy and solve many of its invasive species problems to future-proof Tasmania's wildlife and protected areas.

Our work to protect Tasmania from the destruction of feral deer is building **into a whole state vision** for a feral-free Tasmania, to catalyze greater ambition for nature around the nation.

View our solutions  
for Tassie here.



We can stop the emerging threat of roaming pig and goat populations before they are a disaster. And we can capitalise on our growing influence and access in Tasmania and hold the government to account for their public commitment to take action, aiming for the adoption of a Tasmanian off-shore island eradication strategy, action on feral cat eradication on Lungtalanana (Clarke Island), mandatory pet cat containment and an enhanced state weed fund to tackle threats like scotch broom.

## CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

**Goal:** To 1) abolish the legal protection for feral deer. 2) eradicate feral deer from satellite areas around TWWHA, Bruny and King Islands, Freycinet and Tasman Peninsulas; prevent feral goats and pigs from establishing in the wild.

**Strategy:** Build a powerful coalition of local champions around a big vision for a feral-free Tasmania to drive ambition and neutralise opponents.

### Tactics:

- Strengthen stakeholders and build broad public support for local action.
- Commission economic report on the cost of feral deer.
- Build pressure for action via media and mobilising supporters.

Wineglass Bay, Tasmania.

With investment and commitment, Tasmania could become a major wildlife revival success story, free of the worst invasive species that plague the mainland.



## From Kosci to Australia

Australia has some of the world's most iconic protected areas – from Kakadu to the Australian Alps, from the Wet Tropics to Lord Howe Island. But these precious places are under attack by invasives that can drive the next wave of extinctions. Our World Heritage areas and national parks must not be just 'set and forget'. Failure to manage them and unstrategic short-term plans, as well as funding cycles, are wasting money and undermining effective control.

We've made substantial progress to defend the Australian Alps, Blue Mountains and Barrington Tops from feral horses, Tasmania's world heritage from deer and the Wet Tropics from yellow crazy ants.

This momentum and success in Kosciuszko has increased the appetite of governments to go further and faster on feral animal threats. We will seize this opportunity for greater government focus and funding and expose the damage in the media to keep up social licence, giving governments confidence for ambitious action. Importantly, we'll convince governments to take a smarter approach with existing funding.

Our efforts will broaden to eradicate feral horses in northern NSW, parts of Queensland and in Victoria. We'll ensure eradication of feral deer in the Blue Mountains and western Victoria. We'll ensure the Queensland government improves national parks management and prevents feral pigs from establishing in the Ikara-Flinders Ranges.

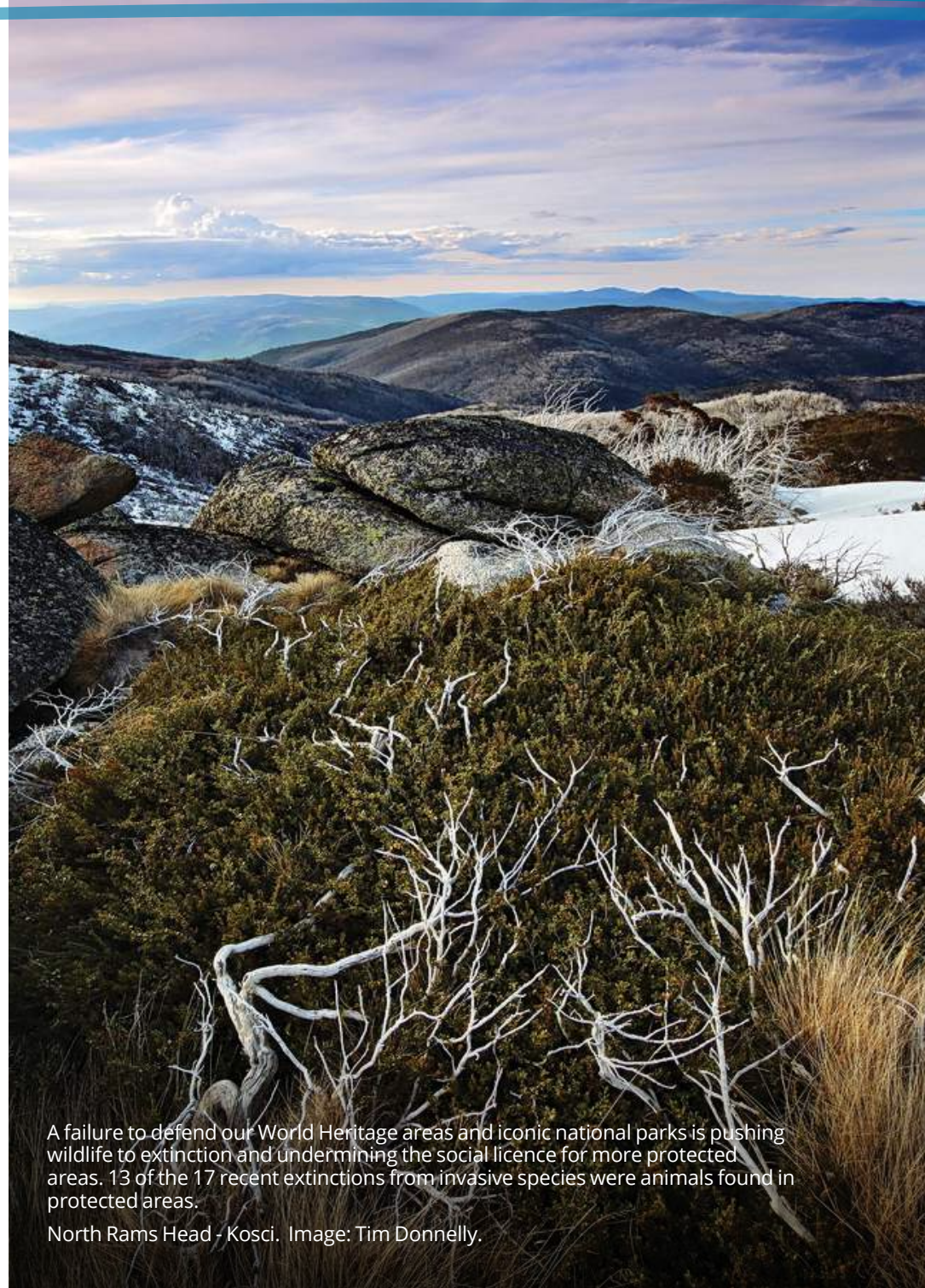
### CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

**Goal:** To 1) Overturn the law protecting feral horses in Kosci. 2) Increase targeted, timely and long term state and federal funding for invasive species control in World Heritage and other protected areas.

**Strategy:** Showcase the damage to mobilise public support to drive government action; neutralise opposition from brumby and hunting lobby groups.

**Tactics:**

- Increase public awareness via 'World Heritage under Siege' and Qld Protected Areas reports.
- Mobilise concerned Australians to protect areas they love.
- Regular, high-profile media to counter opposition and maintain effective pressure.



A failure to defend our World Heritage areas and iconic national parks is pushing wildlife to extinction and undermining the social licence for more protected areas. 13 of the 17 recent extinctions from invasive species were animals found in protected areas.

North Rams Head - Kosci. Image: Tim Donnelly.



# Stopping the cat-astrophe

Any credible plan for wildlife recovery in Australia must address this cat-astrophe. Feral and roaming pet cats are the single biggest cause of our mammal extinctions killing more than 2.3 billion animals a year. We know it will take long-term dedicated action to significantly reduce their impact, and that it's non-negotiable.

The good news is our national campaign to improve cat management is working. Our credibility and influence are at an all-time high with governments. We've helped deliver the federal feral cat Threat Abatement Plan including some funding. We're on the cusp of removing legal barriers to cat containment in NSW, we've joined the fight to do the same in WA, and we've removed barriers to feral cat management in SA. It's absolutely vital that we maintain this momentum.

The outcomes will be substantial and wins are within our grasp. State-wide cat strategies mean we can stop continuous cat population growth, start seriously reducing their impact in urban areas and increase targeted feral cat control to protect biodiversity hotspots, beyond the important felixer protection.

All native animals on this page were being defended by AI Felixer funded by Invasive Species Council. We have 10 across the country defending precious wildlife while we advocate for better solutions. Photo: Robert Dugand Arid Recovery.



## CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

**Goal:** To 1) Win federal funding commitments for \$60 million for feral cat control. 2) Secure cat containment laws in NSW and WA. 3) Secure ambitious, funded state-wide cat management strategies for SA and Qld. 4) Ensure meaningful targets and investment are set for cat management strategies in Tas and Vic.

**Strategy:** Increase social license by leveraging growing concern about the impact of cats, creating the political will to act.

### Tactics:

- Mobilise our supporter base in increase pressure.
- Direct advocacy and alliance building.
- Educate the public on little-known native animals endangered by cats.

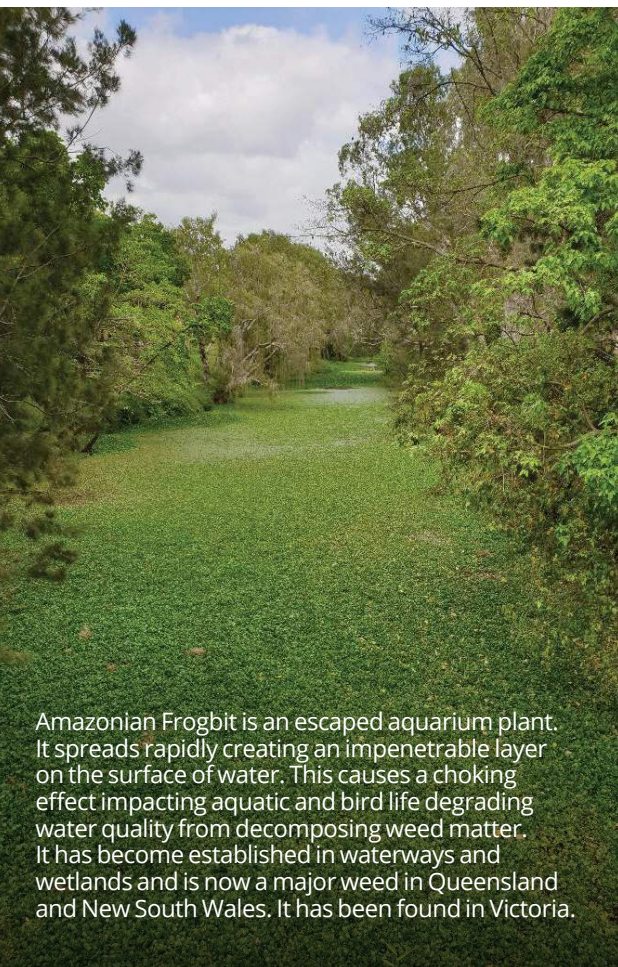




# Stopping the green bulldozers - a game changer for weeds

Weeds are the most widespread threat to Australia's nationally listed threatened species and our most expensive land management problem. Shockingly, the number of introduced plants exceeds the number of native plants in Australia. One in every 8 plant species in the Australian bush is alien and most have escaped from gardens.

Weeds eliminate wildlife habitat and can destroy woodlands and wetlands. Lantana, Amazon frogbit and gamba grass choke and smother native vegetation, transform fire regimes and devastate the homes of native animals.



Amazonian Frogbit is an escaped aquarium plant. It spreads rapidly creating an impenetrable layer on the surface of water. This causes a choking effect impacting aquatic and bird life degrading water quality from decomposing weed matter. It has become established in waterways and wetlands and is now a major weed in Queensland and New South Wales. It has been found in Victoria.

Alarming, many serious or potential weeds are still sold at nurseries across Australia.

Right now, a game-changing initiative could stop the green bulldozers. In response to our advocacy, all Australian governments have committed to developing a national plan to protect wildlife from escaped garden plants and aquatic weeds.

Last time a plan like this was proposed, the nursery industry killed it.

Our new campaign aims to ensure that governments stop the sale of invasive plants, systematically eradicate new invaders and boost funding for strategic weed control. We'll keep the pressure on so that governments can't walk away from the plan and the nursery industry can't block it again.

Our critical work has led us to this outstanding opportunity. In 2010, garden weeds were identified as a threat under Australia's national environmental law. It's taken over a decade for the government to agree that this mega threat needs serious action.

Developing a plan for such a complex threat will take at least 2 years. Australia cannot afford to squander this once-in-a-decade opportunity to slow plant invasions and start reversing the damage.

## CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

**Goal:** To ensure a comprehensive, ambitious and regulatory threat abatement plan is developed.

**Strategy:** Mobilise land management workers (page 15) and concentrate into powerful advocacy; eliminate the social licence for selling invasive plants in the media.

### Tactics:

- Apply sustained pressure on governments and industry through direct and public advocacy, media and grassroots mobilisation.
- Provide solutions and policy proposals by working with the relevant government advisory groups.



Serious or potential weeds being sold still is turning Aussie backyards into ticking time bombs!



# Backing in the Queensland election

Nature in Queensland is precious and must be protected. Home to 85% of our native mammals, 72% of native birds and more than 11,000 plant species, an increasing number are threatened, like the critically endangered Kroombit tinker frog and cassowary. Our World Heritage Wet Tropics remain a significant concern of UNESCO.

Queensland is also Australia's invasion hotspot, crawling with more invasive species than any other state.

This is made worse because the state's biosecurity system is slow to respond to environmental threats, frontline agencies are understaffed and overstretched and feral animal control is generally ad hoc and uncoordinated.

In 2024 we secured massive wins for better fire ant eradication efforts (page 6) and an extra 2 years of funding to defend our World Heritage Wet Tropics in Cairns from yellow crazy ants.

We ran a high impact election campaign which secured important commitments and now we are pursuing an ambitious agenda to tackle the scale of the invasion threat in Queensland: improved management of invasive in national parks, action on escalating feral deer populations, mitigation of invasive freshwater fish, a permitted list for weedy plants, funding for prevention and biocontrol research, and long-overdue biosecurity system reform.



The northern tinker frog of the Wet Tropics is likely extinct due to chytrid fungus, an invasive pathogen, the primary cause. The Kroombit tinker frog is critically endangered, threatened by feral horses in Kroombit Tops National Park. Photo: Martin Cohen.

In 2024, we won these key commitments from the new Queensland government:

- 150 new Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service rangers.
- \$6 million for 2 more years of yellow crazy ant eradication in the Wet Tropics.
- 100 additional Biosecurity Officers.
- A \$50 million increase to Biosecurity Queensland funding.
- A Queensland Feral Cat Management Plan.

[View our solutions for Queensland](#)



Our Protecting Queensland from Invasive Species policy document forms the basis of our ongoing advocacy efforts with the new Queensland government.



## CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

**Goal:** To 1) Ensure implementation of election commitments. 2) Secure further critical commitments on invasive species threats and systems change.

**Strategy:** Mobilise powerful alliances and public support to maintain pressure for ambitious reform and increased funding.

### Tactics:

- Collaborate with regional NRM and Indigenous groups on invasive weed and fish control.
- Support regional MPs to advocate for improved national park management.
- Leverage supporters to raise awareness and drive action on deer populations in south east Qld as a cross-border issue.
- Engage with all parties to achieve legislative and system reforms.



# Culture shifts to transform conservation

To save nature from the mega threat of invasive species, we need more than just prioritisation, funding and better policies. We need a cultural shift in both the public and governments. To achieve a lasting impact, we must break down barriers between sectors and agencies, awaken the community of landcarers, bust dangerous myths and reconnect people to Country. Through our work we're already seeing these shifts driving positive action for our island of hope.

## Culture shifts in the public

When Australians understand the stakes, they prioritise native species protection. When control measures are framed correctly, public support increases dramatically. This gives decision-makers confidence to take bold, rapid action.

Unfortunately, misinformation about solutions remains a major barrier. We're proactively countering false narratives like 'eating the problem', and dispelling myths about critical fire ant baiting and aerial culling.

Whilst strong media engagement ensures the right message reaches the public before misinformation takes hold, real change happens when the right voices unite.

## Culture shifts in governments

The invasive species environmental mega threat has long been deprioritised by agricultural departments focused on industry priorities and environment departments who do not feel responsible. Our successful advocacy for bird flu preparedness, fire ant eradication and threat abatement, is now driving a profound and exciting cultural shift.

Across the country we are finally seeing improved collaboration between environment and agriculture departments, and across state and federal governments. Further elevating and empowering the Chief Environmental Biosecurity Office will be a key reform to take this to the next level. We'll work to improve collaborations for greater outcomes for nature.



Read our opinion piece:  
Eating invasive species is  
a recipe for disaster





# Awakening the sleeping giants to transform conservation

Nature needs more. More funding, more focus and more on-the-ground action. We need a culture shift that drives political and systemic change for scaled-up invasive species action. Connecting, coordinating and activating the everyday Aussies already taking action on the land is our secret weapon to do this.

To turbocharge political action, we can harness the advocacy power of the groups and individuals who are already doing great work tackling weeds and feral animals. We can unite and equip them with the tools and resources needed for effective advocacy.

Awakening the sleeping giants is our new strategic campaign to tap into the passion and commitment of these Aussie heroes and assist them to be politically powerful.

We can bring the community of landcare groups, farmers, conservationists, ecologists and backyard biodiversity champions together and activate them with purpose-built local actions. Together we will fast-track changes that drive lasting, positive environmental recovery.

By transforming localised passion into a robust regional network of informed and empowered advocates, we'll amplify community concerns and show politicians that bold action on invasive species has widespread support – making it a priority across all sides of politics.

## CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

**Goal:** To achieve sustained, dedicated funding for invasive species management. To open doors for critical, long-term systems change.

**Strategy:** Establish a powerful, unified force of local advocates who are already taking action on invasive species to build political pressure.

### Tactics:

- Awaken the invasive species champions within existing groups.
- Build a presence within the land carer community at regional events.
- Train and organise regional political champions in direct advocacy.
- Strategic regional media engagement for public awareness campaigns.



Reece and Tom from BMRG inspecting restored section of Mary River.



A thriving Country and rampant invasive species cannot coexist. Invasive species significantly contribute to the destruction of sacred sites, the death native wildlife and the extinction of culturally significant totem species.

Caring for Country and its plants and animals is deeply embedded in Aboriginal culture. First Nations people have historically been excluded from policy decisions and lack adequate resources to protect culturally significant species on Country. It is time for that to change.

This campaign aims to empower Indigenous voices through the media and in the establishment of a Caring for Country Commissioner who will advise governments and act as a public advocate.

Led by the Invasive Species Council's Indigenous Ambassador and Dabee Wiradjuri man, Richard Swain and supported by our broader team, this work will cut across all invasive species issues in all states and territories.

Together with you, we want to create a culture where all Australians unite around a living Country that allows for our native species to thrive and reclaim our shared role as custodians of this land.

In 2024, we successfully secured an Indigenous Assistant Commissioner for Country for NSW within the Natural Resources Commission.

Now, we will build this momentum and amplify the chorus of voices calling for a national commissioner, including our national alliance of 13 Indigenous environmental leaders and organisations.

At a state level, we will continue to rally influential Indigenous voices, demonstrate a grassroots call for the empowerment of First Nations' voices on regional natural resource management and raise awareness in the media about invasive species damage to Country and culture.

Through this work, we envisage a Country with flourishing sacred sites, an abundance of totem plants and animals and our lands regenerated after being liberated from a 230-year siege of feral pests, weeds and exotic diseases.

## CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

**Goal:** Remove the threat of invasive species to culturally significant species and Country.

**Strategy:** Empower First Nations leadership in decision-making about invasive species management via a Commissioner for Country.

### Tactics:

- Build on the existing advocacy capacity of First Nations peoples including elevating voices and stories of impact and solutions.
- Commission a report to map totem species impacted across the country.
- Host face-to-face and online events and consult with Indigenous communities.
- Direct advocacy to decision-makers.



Richard Swain ISC Indigenous Ambassador in Kuranda for the Protect Your Patch festival.



# Knowledge for action: Reports on invasive solutions

Invasive species are Australia's most complex mega threat, with around 5,000 new species established since colonisation – at least a quarter likely causing ecological harm. As thought leaders in environmental biosecurity, we unravel these complexities by clearly communicating threats and mounting evidence to advocate for urgent action and deliver solutions to prevent and reverse damage.

## This year, we are launching key reports:

**State of Environmental Biosecurity Report** – a first-of-its-kind assessment of invasive species impacts, state of extinctions and nature-focussed biosecurity reforms.

**Islands of Hope** – a technical and advocacy report to make the case for a National Islands Eradication and Recovery Fund (page 9).

**A win for biodiversity and climate** – teaming up with the University of Queensland to quantify how better invasive species management reduces carbon emissions.

**Wildlife disease threats** – a report urging for stronger prevention of emerging pathogens.

**Heritage at risk** – a report to accompany the the World Heritage Report 2025, highlighting invasives' growing threat to World Heritage sites.

**Saving Blue Mountains from feral deer** – a detailed economic assessment to counter hunter propaganda in Tas and work with government and stakeholders to publish a comprehensive plan to stop feral deer degrading the World Heritage Area in Blue Mountains, NSW.

**Fire ant research** – conduct social research into community attitudes toward fire ant eradication to develop a powerful messaging strategy and education for key stakeholders.



Royal Penguins, Macquarie Island. Image: Kimberley Collins.

## CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

**Goal:** Increase understanding and issue salience amongst decision-makers, treasury and media.

**Strategy:** Provide compelling, evidence-based, solutions-focused reports that persuade decision-makers and provide blueprints for action to redirect focus, increase funding and improve policy to save nature from invasive species.

### Tactics:

- Launch reports into the media spotlight at key moments for political impact.
- Mobilise supporters to urge local MPs to take action based on relevant reports.

## A crucial investment

As the only national environmental advocacy NGO focussed on stopping the invasive species mega threat, the Invasive Species Council is a crucial investment for nature.

Last financial year, philanthropic investment from people like you helped us to leverage critical government funds – for every \$10,000 given we generated \$1.83 million for protecting nature.

Your investment of core or project funds can help us become a stronger organisation that can capitalise on winning opportunities on our island of hope, scaling our impact.

This is how we can successfully defend wildlife from extinction and lead a wildlife revival in our spectacular world heritage areas, national parks and island sanctuaries.



Tasmanian devil. Image: Christian Grelard.

Our list of wins are a testament to what your investment can achieve. These are some of our successes in the last 3 years:

- In 2025 won \$700,000 from the Australian Government for trout-free havens for 5 critically endangered native fish species.
- In 2025 protected NSW's Kosciuszko National Park from feral horses with population numbers now down to 3000-4000, following a win in 2023 that overturned the ban on aerial shooting in NSW national parks.
- From 2023–2025 we've secured commitments for 262 new national parks staff to help manage pests and weeds: 150 in Qld, 12 in ACT and 100 in NSW.
- In 2024 we won commitments from the incoming Queensland government: 100 new Biosecurity Officers; a \$50 million funding increase to Biosecurity Queensland.
- In 2024 won \$102 million in federal funding to prepare for the new deadly bird flu (H5N1), including over \$50 million for wildlife.
- In 2024 secured a record \$593 million of government funding to eradicate fire ants. This followed \$411 million committed in 2017, totaling over one billion dollars.
- In 2024 protected Blue Mountains World Heritage and Barrington Tops National Park surrounding World Heritage Gondwana Rainforests from feral horses.
- In 2024 ensured all governments (except Qld) signed onto an ambitious national feral cat plan.
- In 2024 protected Tasmania's Walls of Jerusalem National Park in the Wilderness World Heritage Area from feral deer.
- In 2023 secured a National Feral Deer Action Plan, signed onto by all governments, with a critical strategy to stop the westward spread.
- In 2023 won commitments from the incoming NSW Labor government that are being implemented, including a review of invasive species management, an independent biosecurity commissioner, urgent action on feral horses in Kosciuszko National Park; a permitted list to stop the sale of weedy plants (not yet implemented).



# Funding needed

Invasive species are driving Australia's extinction crisis. Without our urgent action, more unique wildlife will suffer extinction. And our iconic protected areas will no longer resemble our beloved Australian bush and forests.

The Invasive Species Council's science-driven strategy will deliver immediate interventions and lasting systems change to convert these big threats into our biggest opportunities yet. We rely on renewed or increased funding from our existing philanthropic community and new visionary philanthropic partners who share our commitment to protecting nature.

Your investment will play a leading role in stopping invasive species-led extinctions and saving wildlife.

Together we can lead a wildlife revival on our island of hope.

Please contact Interim CEO and Advocacy Director Jack Gough on 0427 713 101 or email [jackg@invasives.org.au](mailto:jackg@invasives.org.au)

*Thank you. We can't do any of this without you.*



*It's taken the dedicated, highly effective team at Invasive Species Council some 20 years of unrelenting science-based activity to elevate the understanding of governments, and the conservation community, as to the effects of invasive species on our flora and fauna, big and small. Arguably the greatest contributor to our sad record of extinctions, addressing present and avoiding new feral invasions is now recognised at the highest levels as a very high priority in protecting our natural environment. Prevention is cheaper than cure and the Council promotes highly cost effective solutions at local and national level to leverage donor and government funds to maximum effect. Whether fire ants, feral deer and horses, cats, weeds or bird flu, the Council actively finds solutions. Our biodiversity is a most precious resource. I encourage everyone concerned to protect it by adding the Council to your conservation efforts financially and in kind.*

**Chris Grubb,**  
Funder and Treasurer of Invasive Species Council



The Invasive Species Council is a registered charity with DGR 1 status.

Visit [www.invasives.org.au/donate](http://www.invasives.org.au/donate)

Via EFT: Account: Invasive Species Council Inc.

Bank: Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Limited BSB: 633000 Account: 117645358



Swamp Wallaby Wilsons Promontory, Victoria. Image: CCDOH



## Our vision

By 2050, invasive species are no longer a major driver of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation in Australia.

## Our mission

We catalyse strong, collaborative biosecurity to protect and restore Australia's extraordinary wildlife and ecosystems.

## We value being



Advocates  
for nature



Collaborative  
with First  
Australians



Committed  
to science



Fearless  
and persistent

**Our 2030 goal is for Australia to have a strong environmental biosecurity system, enabling more effective:**

**Prevention:** the establishment of new invasive species in Australia has substantially slowed, and no new very-high-risk species have permanently established.

**Eradications:** priority invasive species are being systematically eliminated from the Australian mainland and islands.

**Containment and control:** invasive species have not caused any more extinctions, high priority invasive species are being effectively contained or controlled, and priority biodiversity sites are being protected.

March 2025



**invasive**  
species council

*Thank you for your support*



Quokkas.

ANNUAL REPORT



STRATEGIC PLAN

