



invasive
species council



IMPACT REPORT

2022-2023



Welcome

I'm proud to be with the Invasive Species Council because I believe what we do is going to matter. We're actually out there achieving and if we could rid Australia of invasive species we would achieve huge benefits for the Australian landscape and future generations.

It saddens me that where I live one of my totems, Gungwaan (the emu), is locally extinct due to invasive species. It is a crime against nature for humanity to cause these extinctions. It's been a pretty wild ride for Country the last 235 years and that's got to change quickly for our species and our water and our future

generations. This is either the decade of healing Country or the decade of saying goodbye.

We are making that change. My role as the Indigenous Ambassador is to enlighten all current Australians to the responsibility of custodianship, accepting this land and her species as their heritage, and caring for and protecting them as their culture.



The Invasive Species Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians throughout Australia and their connections to land and sea. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

Message from our CEO

It's been inspiring to see how nature can benefit from a stronger, more powerful Invasive Species Council.



I'm deeply grateful for the caring support that has enabled our outstanding achievements this year.

It was a proud moment when federal funds of \$25 million started flowing to eradicate yellow crazy ants in northern Queensland and protect the world heritage listed wet tropics. Two decades of work on feral deer has also paid off with the arrival of the draft national plan to stop the spread of deer, and feral deer are finally being removed from the world heritage Walls of Jerusalem National Park in Tasmania.

We secured impressive wins during the March 2023 NSW election, including better management of invasive species in NSW National Parks and the introduction of a new measure that would stop NSW plant nurseries from selling weedy plants.

After five years defending the NSW Alps from destruction caused by feral horses, ground shooting has finally begun. Whilst this is still not enough to arrest population growth of the 20,000 strong horse plague, it's a great success. We won't relent until the needed aerial control begins and the law that protects them is repealed.

Despite our success, Australia's invasive species threats continue to grow. A new deadly strain of avian influenza looms on our doorstep and governments dither and delay in response to Queensland's massive fire ant outbreak, now just 5km from the NSW border.

Extinction is a choice expressed in the laws passed by governments, the money invested in protection or destruction, and the actions we all take. It is within our power to change it. Thank you to those who enable us to do that. We must continue to think big and take bold action to save wildlife from invasives-led extinction in Australia.

Andrew Cox, CEO



The Ian Potter Foundation

We would like to dedicate this impact report to a very special funder **The Ian Potter Foundation**. Stopping invasive species driven extinctions would not be possible without you.



Our impact in numbers

Together we are holding governments to account, ensuring nature gets the investment it needs and creating lasting change.



Secured **\$164.2 million** for invasive species management, eradication or prevention



More than **50,000** people signed our petition calling on the Australian government to increase funding and take urgent action to stop invasive species-led destruction, deaths and extinctions



Over **1,600** people took action to end the feral horse culling pause in NSW



Over **1,200** people made submissions to ensure the National Feral Deer Action Plan will be successful



3,300 people pledged support for more action on domestic and feral cats



\$70,656 (1,536 hours) of in kind volunteer contributions



110% growth in supporters

Making elections count for nature

New South Wales

A senior NSW minister described our election work as the “most effective statewide environmental campaign”. We won commitments from the new NSW Labor government that are now being implemented, including:

- 100 new National Parks and Wildlife – Service pest and weed officers
- an independent biosecurity commission
- a permitted list to stop the sale of weedy plants through nurseries
- a commitment to reduce feral horse numbers in Kosciuszko National Park to 3000 by 2027
- a comprehensive independent inquiry into invasive species management in NSW.

Victoria

We secured an ongoing commitment from the Victorian government to control feral horses in national parks in the High Country.

New Federal Government’s first year

- The 2021 State of Environment report was released
- Nature Zero plan: Environment Minister Plibersek committed to a goal of no new extinctions. This ambitious target will require radical reform of our national laws and institutions
- Biosecurity: Sustainable funding options for better biosecurity and biodiversity marketing are being investigated

Stopping extinction

Invasive species are the leading cause of animal extinction in Australia. Since Australia’s environmental laws (EPBC Act) were written in 1999, most threats have escalated, and hundreds more native species are at risk. Dozens more are on the edge of extinction. Despite their inclusion in the EPBC Act, threat abatement plans and other conservation planning instruments have failed to stem the major drivers of ongoing biodiversity loss in Australia, notably invasive species, habitat destruction, inappropriate fire regimes and climate damage.

Threat abatement reform

Australia needs an effective threat abatement system. This includes the laws, policies and programs intended to systematically identify and overcome the major threats to nature. Threat abatement plans are the primary mechanism under the current EPBC Act used to drive coordinated action on invasive species risks. But Australia has a stagnant system that is bogged down in bureaucracy and crippled by a lack of resources.

In the lead-up to the government’s review of our environmental laws, more than 1000 supporters wrote personal emails to Environment Minister Plibersek to demonstrate their support for stronger laws and systems to prevent further extinctions.

There is a big opportunity to embed threat abatement planning within a national framework that drives coordinated conservation action at scale.

In April we released the report *GONE: Australian animals extinct since the 1960s*. The analysis led by Tim Low and Dr Carol Booth demonstrates 17 of the 23 probable wild extinctions of animals since the 1960s were caused by invasive species.



Mountain pygmy possum.

Australia’s extinction crisis is being exacerbated by our outdated national environment laws. With the government reviewing Australia’s environmental laws in the coming year, this is a once-in-a-generation opportunity.



Dr Carol Booth,
Invasive Species Council principal policy analyst

The scale of the problem is quite large. Looking across Australian species groups, mammals are one of the groups that have been really badly affected by invasive species. So we’ve lost 34 species and subspecies since colonisation, meaning that over a third of all modern global mammal extinctions have occurred in Australia.



Dr Sarah Legge



What’s next?

We will ensure invasive species are a high priority in the lead up to the reforms of national environmental laws and strong Threat Abatement Plans are developed by government.

THANK YOU

Thank you to our funders who enable our critical work to happen: **Robert Hawes, Ken Mason, Letcombe Trust, Ray Ison, Diversicon Environmental Foundation, James N. Kirby Foundation, Gras Foundation, Moonlit Sanctuary Wildlife Conservation Park and Australian Wildlife Society.**

Message from our President

Invasive species are a fast-growing problem and the major factor in the loss of native species. There is an urgent need to do more now. That's why we have upped our ambition to the next level. Barely two years into the 2030 strategy - designed for impact - we can see the difference it's making.

Invasive species threats such as feral horses, feral cats and more recently fire ants are making the headlines often. Invasive species are being recognised as the number one driver of extinction, but many people are still unaware. Many people when aware do not accept the nature of the solution required. I am proud of the courage and boldness of this organisation, striving to win the necessary social licence for the removal of invasive species to save our native animals. The social research conducted this year shows there is a clear path forward to help other Australians understand the necessary task - but lots of work is required to get the message out.

We are very proud and thankful of our community of funders. I want to give special thanks to The Ian Potter Foundation for the multi-year grant that made this recent growth possible, as well as the outstanding support provided by the Purves Environment Fund, J.T. Reid, Curlew Foundation and Beetlebones. Due to their steady and significant support we are able to take the large steps forward with stability and confidence.

We have seen our supporter base increase by 110% this year, and our fundraising team has achieved our ambitious growth target of 31%. Our strengthened team of 21 committed and passionate people allows the Council to ramp up its vital work across multiple fronts tackling many threats.

The board is proud of the leadership of Andrew Cox, backed by the team. I would like to thank our supporters, volunteers, partners, members of the board and the science and conservation committee, contractors and staff for their passion and generosity that will help us win this for nature.

David Rickards



Wombat.

What is the issue?

Tim Low, Invasive Species Council co-founder, ecologist and author

When I first visited Tasmania 30 years ago an old man told me he'd seen the last known Tasmanian tiger pacing about its cage at the Hobart Zoo. I was caught off balance. The idea of the tiger, now extinct, eyeing the same eyes I was, sent a shiver through me. I was a nature lover, one degree of separation from something once alive that I could never see.

Another time I was visiting the Conondale Ranges with a friend who lifted a few rocks along a stream and found us a southern gastric brooding frog. We weren't to know that extinction loomed, driven by an invisible alien, chytrid fungus. I have recalled that day so often that all I have left is a memory of the memory. That muddy looking frog wasn't as eye-catching as the Tasmanian tiger, but each one was outstanding in its own way.

The world lost its largest marsupial carnivore and lost its only animals that stored their young in their stomachs.

In 2013 I was on Christmas Island, looking into a glass vivarium at the last surviving forest skink. A few months later it was dead, marking the demise of that species from Asian wolf snakes, which had reached the island on a supply ship.

Today I look back on these moments with sorrow because, like many biologists I know, I have lived long enough to have seen species go extinct. Biologists overseas seldom get to see species that then go extinct, but in Australia, tragically, it is not that unusual.

Faith remains high that protecting habitat saves wildlife, but the double protection afforded by World Heritage listing and national park status did not save three Wet Tropics frogs from chytrid fungus.

Understanding the past is important to stopping extinctions to come. Yet the mistakes of the past continue. Our governments are understanding too slowly the connection between biosecurity lapses and Australia's very high rates of extinction and endangerment. We need to change that.



THANK YOU

We are immensely grateful for the donors who choose annual pledged giving. Your ongoing support provides secure capacity from which we can build ambitious goals for nature and wildlife.

Thank you for your trust and commitment.

- Anne Reeves
- Beetle Bones Fund
- Brennan Family Foundation
- Christopher and Gina Grubb
- Curlew Foundation
- Garry White Foundation
- Jamie Pittock
- Melliodora Fund
- Mullum Trust
- Naylor Stewart Foundation
- Paddy Pallin Foundation
- Water Dragon Fund

We are also grateful for the support of many anonymous donors.



Containment: Feral horses

This past year we built the political will and shifted the social licence for feral horse control. We achieved widespread media, building public awareness of the environmental impacts of feral horses and broad support for greater action.

In NSW, National Parks and Wildlife Service staff have been doing an incredible job under difficult circumstances to safely, professionally and humanely remove feral horses from Kosciuszko National Park. In 2022 their efforts were undermined by underfunding, political interference and arbitrary restrictions on effective control methods. They have also faced appalling threats of violence, intimidation, abuse and disruption of their work from pro-feral horse activists.

In September 2022 an indefinite state-wide culling ban was quietly put in place by Environment Minister Griffin to investigate an allegation by a feral horse advocate that an aerial deer cull occurred near park users. While the safety of people is paramount, there are no records of aerial culling endangering people because of the thorough precautions taken by professional aerial shooters. We also couldn't allow an indefinite pause on all culling, including pigs, deer, goats and horses in NSW as it would allow these populations to skyrocket and cause immense damage to our environment.

We put the ban in the media spotlight and made it known to Griffin's NSW constituents the risks of shutting down all pest animal management.

Combined with pressure from our supporters, minister Griffin and premier Perrottet lifted the culling pause.

Unfortunately, soon after the pause was lifted, the NSW government announced a 30% increase in feral horse numbers during the past two years. Modelling now shows that in order to reduce the number of feral horses to the target of 3,000 by 2027, 6,000 feral horses need to be removed annually. Management methods like aerial culling are essential components to achieve the targets of the management plan.

The threat of feral horses to our national parks and native wildlife quickly became a critical election issue in NSW. Our team generated regular, high-profile media coverage and our engaged supporters took action. Thanks to the support of our dedicated funders and supporters we won significant commitments including Labor's promise to ensure extra resources to meet the current management plan's target of 3000 feral horses by 2027. The new NSW Environment Minister has an electoral mandate for action and has made reducing feral horse numbers a priority and has committed to greater resources.

From Kosci to the Alps


Our Reclaim Kosci campaign is evolving to protect Australia's alpine landscape where feral horse management is far from uniform. Namadgi National Park in the ACT is proudly feral horse free, with a zero tolerance policy for any incursions. NSW has the aforementioned plan to reduce horses in Kosciuszko National Park but is burdened by a law to protect them. Victoria has 5000 feral horses and a reduction plan that needs to be dramatically ramped up. The Victorian opposition wants to protect feral horses and stop effective control measures, highlighting the lack of effective safeguards against shifting political winds.

In March, the Federal Government announced a senate inquiry on feral horses in the Australian Alps. We worked with allies to ensure many quality submissions were made to the inquiry and mobilised supporters to take part by making individual submissions.



"Feral horses in the alps ... pose an imminent threat to the Threatened Species Action Plan's objective to prevent new extinctions of plants and animals."

Submission from the Threatened Species Scientific Committee to the Senate Inquiry.



A huge thank you to volunteer Linda Groom for her tireless commitment and ongoing support that has been vital to the success of our work on feral horses. Linda is the force coordinating our incredible Reclaim Kosci volunteers, the facebook page and was instrumental in ensuring dozens of organisations made detailed submissions to the Senate inquiry into feral horses.

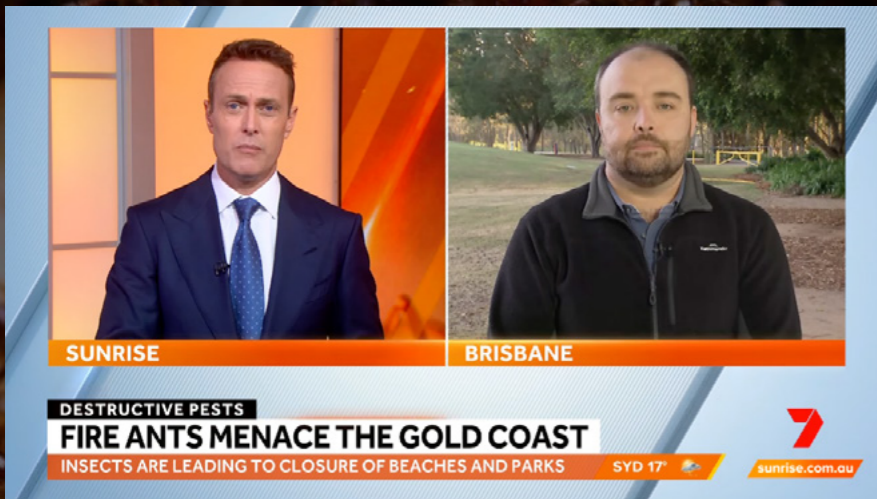
What's next?
We aim to repeal the ridiculous Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act that protects feral horses, get aerial control permitted as the most efficient method, and maintain public and political support as culling efforts are ramped up. We will keep up the pressure for strong recommendations from the senate inquiry.



We've been helping the Invasive Species Council with feral horses in Kosciuszko. The destruction up there is on a massive scale, there is a real need there. Other environmental groups are not focussing on this. That's one of the reasons why we are helping the Invasive Species Council, because they are clearly out front trying to do something about this issue. We are impressed with Andrew as a CEO and we are impressed with the organisation. Using science to advocate for better environmental outcomes is not a new trick to the trade, but one that Andrew uses very effectively. We are very supportive and we'd like other people who are interested in biodiversity to think about funding The Council.

Rob Purves AM,
Founder of Purves Environment Fund

THANK YOU
Our work to Reclaim Kosci wouldn't be where it is today without our dedicated funders, volunteers and supporters who make it possible. A very special thank you to **Purves Environmental Fund, CAGES Foundation (Family Funding Stream), Esther Gallant, Ross Knowles Foundation, Paddy Pallin Foundation, Madden Sainsbury Foundation, Phillip Cornwell and Natalie M.**



What's next?
 We will hold governments to account until the eradication program is effectively funded. We are seeking urgent funding to up the ante on this campaign.

Red fire ants. Photo: Joanie King



From left to right: Jacob Martin, Principle Ranger at Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation, Richard Swain, Invasive Species Council Indigenous Ambassador and Andrew Cox, Invasive Species Council CEO see first hand the red fire ant infestation of Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island).

Eradication: red fire ants

Worse than rabbits, cane toads, foxes and feral cats combined. That's how the government described the impact of fire ants should they spread across the country.

While \$411 million in funding for South East Queensland's ten-year eradication plan was granted in 2017, delays in action on the ground has meant the problem became much worse. In 2021 a review of the program was undertaken but not released. In response to this delay, we mobilised supporters to contact their state ministers, increased the public profile of the threat and the delay in government action through the media, and forced the secret report to be released two years later in June 2023.

The report shows while the current program is significantly slowing the spread of fire ants in South East Queensland, eradication or containment is not possible within the current scope and budget of the ten-year plan. These killer ants are on the move from Brisbane toward the Murray Darling Basin watershed and the NSW border. In January 2023 they were found on Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island). In February they were found in Melbourne.

An urgent, major boost of government funding is needed over the next decade to successfully eradicate fire ants from the South East Queensland outbreak and prevent their further spread throughout Australia.

In response to the urgent need for funding, we have formed an alliance of environment, agriculture, industry and land management groups who are calling for urgent action on Australia's fire ant outbreak. In the lead up to the federal Budget, we worked for increased fire ant funding and for the release of the report. From May to July 2023, we drove extensive fire ant media coverage across major media outlets including Sunrise, The Australian, Sydney Morning Herald and the ABC. We also launched our fire ant fighters campaign, engaging hundreds of community members and groups in local awareness-raising efforts about the march of the fire ants and the devastating impacts fire ants will have on wildlife, farming and communities.

There's still large areas of potential prime habitat for the fire ant to colonize which would be detrimental to the lifestyle and the cultural connections of the first nations people and also to the community in general.

Jacob Martin, Principle Ranger at Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation



Eradication: yellow crazy ants

Yellow crazy ants eat their way through ecosystems from the bottom-up, leaving forests silent in their wake. Recent infestations in Cairns and Townsville have the potential for these invasive ants to spread across much of northern Queensland threatening the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. After a successful campaign by the Invasive Species Council and our supporters, we won a \$24.8 million commitment for yellow crazy ant eradication in northern Queensland.

This year we ensured this federal funding was delivered and is being rolled out across Cairns and Townsville over four years. The funding will ensure the highly successful program led by the Wet Tropics Management Authority can continue and establish a new control program in Townsville run by the local council.

This is a huge win because the investment will help safeguard the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, one of the oldest rainforests in the world, along with an internationally significant wetland. A large number of threatened species will benefit from the funding, such as the critically endangered Mt Elliot nursery frog and endangered Kuranda tree frog, which occur nowhere else on Earth.

What's next? Introducing Bug Hunt

The establishment of the yellow crazy ant eradication task force in Townsville makes eradication a possibility, but only if every ant in the region is found. We are developing our citizen science program called Bug Hunt to help locals identify and locate yellow crazy ants for eradication. As the year progresses, we'll be launching Bug Hunts across the country so everyone can take part in identifying and learning about native insects as well as protecting their communities from invasive bugs.

The yellow crazy ant program has funding to continue and a new control program has been set up in Townsville with staff and boots on the ground. This funding couldn't be more timely. Infestations in Townsville are edging towards an endemic hotspot of threatened species at Mt Elliot, in Bowling Green Bay National Park.

Bev Job, Invasive Species Council's community coordinator





Feral deer. Photo: Darryn Mundt

THANK YOU

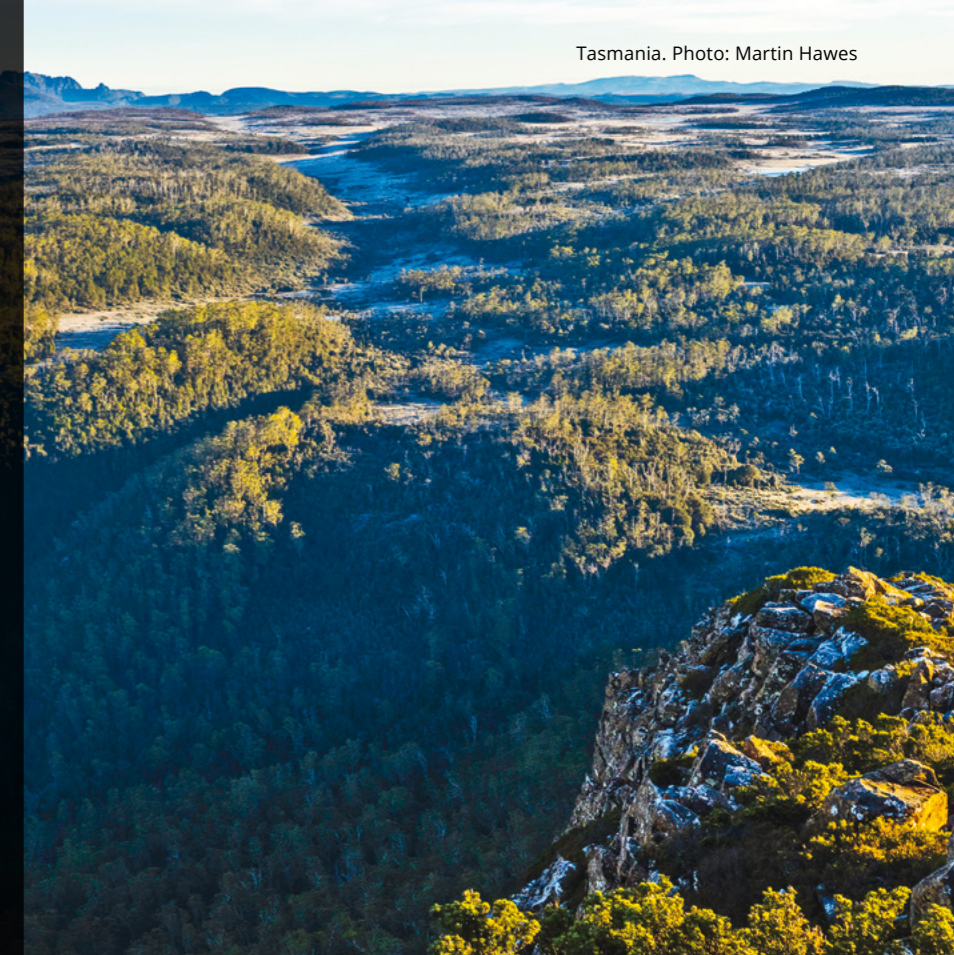
Thank you to **The Ross Trust** and the **Garry White Foundation** for funding the urgent work in Victoria. Protecting Tasmania's world heritage wilderness has been made possible thanks to the **Purryburry Trust** and **Vicki Olsson**.

In this space from an individual's point of view you feel really helpless and I can't tell you how important it is to have organisations like the Invasive Species Council working alongside us showing governments up in terms of the changes that need to take place.



It's really important that it is science based, that it's objective and that we address this issue rather than see it percolate on and on and lose the battle. We need some bigger actions than we've taken so far and having the input of the Invasive Species Council has been so comforting from a landowner's point of view.

Julian von Vibra, Midlands of Tasmania



Tasmania. Photo: Martin Hawes

Feral deer

Feral deer numbers are 2 million and growing. Our environment can't withstand their trampling hard hooves and appetite for native plants. We are driving the critical change in laws that still protect feral deer and increased funding to stop them becoming the next rabbit plague.

This year, thanks to our 1200 supporters who made submissions, we won a National Feral Deer Action Plan. It's the first national, coordinated and systematic approach to controlling feral deer, decades in the making that features a national deer containment zone to stop the spread of deer from their eastern Australia stronghold to the rest of the continent. This is a huge step toward protecting our native species and national parks from feral deer.

We also campaigned for reforms in Tasmania and Victoria to remove these laws which would allow park rangers to cull feral deer just as they would feral pigs, goats and other invasive species. We provided secretariat support to the Victorian Deer Community Control Network, raised the profile of feral deer in Victoria in the lead up to the state election, and lobbied politicians to improve feral deer policy.

Thanks to our advocacy, in the last year we also achieved \$444,000 worth of funding for aerial culling of feral deer in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA) including the Walls of Jerusalem National Park. The Tasmanian government began aerial culling in the walls of Jerusalem in May; this is a significant shift from the historic deer policy in Tasmania that relied on ineffective recreational hunting.

We were troubled but not shocked to learn that 700 feral deer were culled in an area that was estimated to have 300 feral deer. Feral deer remain protected in the adjoining regions east of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. This protected status must be overturned as it inhibits the effective protection of this global icon and undermines effective control across the state.

We wrote to UNESCO to alert the World Heritage Committee of the threat to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, urging them to ensure the Tasmanian government honours its promise to keep the World Heritage Area and other important areas deer free. We also achieved a new permit system for feral deer control on private property through building an alliance of environment, agriculture and forestry groups.

As a landholder living in a peri urban area implementing a deer monitoring and cull program, I have been impressed with the work of the Victorian Deer Control Community Network. Their new website is engaging and comprehensive; a must-see resource for everyone concerned with the increasing spread of this destructive pest.



Tracey Wood, President – Jumping Creek Catchment Landcare Group

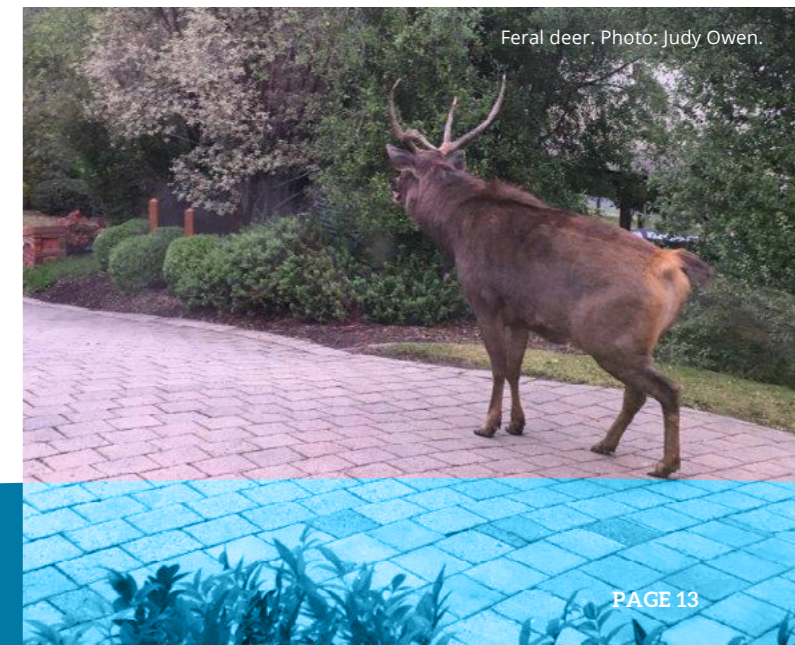
It's nice to have a national body that said 'hang on this is a real problem nationally and it's a really big problem here'. Governments need to understand that the Invasive Species Council is basing their position on fact and science. I think that this has helped the cause in the last 18 months, to prove that it's not just one group of farmers against a different group of shooters.



Roderic O'Conner, South of Cressy in Tasmania

What's next?

We will ensure the National Feral Deer Action Plan is adopted by eastern state and territory governments, resourced and implemented and ramp up advocacy to protect the Wet Tropics, Gondwana Rainforests and the Blue Mountains from feral deer. We'll aim for the Victorian and Tasmanian governments to declare feral deer a pest animal. We are seeking funding for work in Victoria to continue.



Feral deer. Photo: Judy Owen.



Management: Cats

Cats are an environmental disaster for Australian wildlife. Feral cats have been the primary cause of 25 of the 33 native mammal extinctions and number between 1.4-5.6 million. 4.9 million pet cats in Australia also kill 340 million native animals per year. There are cultural, legal and practical challenges around management of both feral and pet cats. This year we progressed our campaigns to stop feral cats and pet cat containment in the legal, political and public spheres.

Breaking responsible cat management law blockers

We engaged lawyers to investigate cat containment legislation in Australia. We strategically focussed on NSW and WA because laws prevent domestic cat containment, with NSW having the greatest number of legislative barriers.

In the lead up to the 2023 NSW state election we elevated the case for cat containment in the media, through key relationships and engaging people in key electorates to email their local member of parliament. This resulted in us securing a commitment from the incoming Labor government to investigate the Companion Animals Act to assess its suitability for 24/7 cat containment laws.

We released a shocking report on the rise of wildlife deaths due to skyrocketing pet cat ownership during the pandemic pet ownership boom with our allies at

The Biodiversity Council and BirdLife Australia. The report found that the number of native animals killed by pet cats has increased by 34% and made the front page of the Sydney Morning Herald, The Age and gained widespread coverage in over 100 articles.

Building a community of allies for cat containment

A groundswell of local councils calling for cat containment will persuade the NSW and WA governments to amend prohibitive state laws. In NSW, Hornsby Shire Council and Ryde City Council passed motions seeking state action on cat containment. Other councils will soon follow. In WA we engaged a forum of local government councillors at The Future of Domestic Cat Management Forum and mobilised supporters to take action urging the state government to contain pet cats.

Mobilising the community to protect wildlife from cats

We launched a pledge for Australians to 'put their paw up' to demonstrate support to local councils and state governments for better domestic and feral cat management – more than 3400 people have taken the pledge.



Invasive Species Council CEO Andrew Cox helping deploy a Felixer at Lungtalanana island, north east Tasmania.

Felixers delivered for feral cat control

Increasing the uptake of improved culling methods will also be vital in reducing feral cat numbers. This year we deployed Felixer cat traps that use artificial intelligence to target cats and foxes with a toxic gel bait, outside a fenced conservation reserve in high priority conservation areas to safeguard some of our most endangered species.

In partnership with Thylation Foundation, we deployed 10 Felixer grooming traps with two in each of the following five locations:

- Ngururrpa Indigenous Protected Area, with the largest known population of critically endangered night parrots
- Waychinicup National Park WA for conservation of the endangered western ground parrot, one of four ground parrots in the world
- Lungtalanana Island in Tasmania to protect species including the vulnerable long-nosed potoroo
- Nyangumarta (Great Sandy Desert) in WA to protect the endangered northern quoll and others
- the Arid Recovery Wildlife Reserve in SA to protect kowaris, a small marsupial predator, recommended to be listed as endangered.

Using advanced rangefinder sensors, Felixers are able to differentiate between target cats and foxes and non-target wildlife.

Our deployment of Felixer traps, supported by other control measures, gives native species the chance to recover populations in sanctuaries and the wild.

What's next?

As the alliance of local councils grows into a powerful force, we'll work to change problematic state laws and boost state funding for responsible pet ownership initiatives that include education campaigns, desexing and incentives for cat containment.

We will ensure states and territories have well funded statewide feral cat management plans, access to the full suite of control tools, support for island eradication work and ensure a strong, properly funded federal feral cat threat abatement plan.



As a smaller family fund we're interested in getting maximum return for our contributions. We look for very strategic projects, big issues with a systems kind of impact. The massive scale of invasive species is right up our alley. As far as bang for buck goes as a funder it's hard to get much better than Invasive Species Council (ISC). It remains the only organisation solely focused on the invasive species threat, the number 1 threat to our threatened species. As the support for ISC has grown, the impact and achievements have been mounting up even faster. But still not fast enough to catch up with the brumbies, the deer, the cats, the fire ants, the gamba grass and all the rest. So we need ISC to keep going and keep growing. Join us in funding them.

Sue Mathews, Director of the Mullum Trust

THANK YOU

A very special thank you to **Rob Michael** and **The Coalition (Solutions)** for providing seed funding that initiated this urgent work to protect Australia's wildlife. Thank you to those who responded to the urgent call led by **David Rickards (Carrara Foundation)** and **Horizon Foundation**.



Management: Weeds

At the NSW election this year, we won 100 extra frontline National Parks staff to focus on the escalating issue of invasive pests and environmental weeds. This increase in staff across frontline agencies will help ensure regional biosecurity plans are properly implemented in order to protect national parks and other important areas. These staff will also help ensure new pest, weed and disease outbreaks can be prevented before they become costly and damaging ongoing problems.

We also won a commitment to a 'permitted list' approach to prevent the sale of weedy plants in NSW nurseries. Weeds imperil more than 40% of all threatened species and almost 90% of endangered ecological communities in NSW. The vast majority (about two thirds) are escaped garden plant varieties and a large proportion of these were still available for sale in nurseries. Preventing the ongoing sale of weedy plants through wholesale and retail nurseries will go a long way towards stopping new weed outbreaks and avoiding significant environmental, industry and management costs.

In many states and territories, agencies responsible for frontline weed management are understaffed and underfunded. They have been under enormous pressure during recent years as they responded to fire, drought, floods and COVID-19. More direct investment is urgently needed to increase the number of weed management staff in frontline agencies across Australia.

What's next?

In the 2024 Queensland election we will be seeking commitments for investment in frontline biosecurity officers and governments adopting a permitted list approach to plant sales to stop the sale of environmental weeds.

Weed winners across the country

This year's winners of our annual Froggatt's Awards highlighted the outstanding work done to tackle weeds by community groups across the country. The Friends of the Fitzroy 'keyboard weeder's' found an innovative way to exploit rubber vine's big beautiful flowers, ultimately leading to its near eradication from the Fitzroy River in WA. They deployed AI and age-old determination to put the invasive rubber vine on the ropes.

Steve Taylor from the ACT Parks & Conservation Service developed a highly effective mapping system to eradicate weeds in the ACT. After realising that poor mapping was one of the main reasons plant control projects failed, Steve set about fixing this mess by developing a mobile invasive plant map.

Islands

Islands are biodiversity treasures. Yet our 8,411 offshore islands are crawling with feral pigs, cats, rats, snakes and invasive ants that are snuffing species into extinction.

In some places it's getting worse. Myrtle Rust, an invasive fungus that is devastating our eucalyptus trees and driving the extinction of 18 rainforest species, made it to Lord Howe Island again.

Red fire ants, one of the world's worst invasive species, have landed in Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island) in Queensland. We are working with the Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation (QYAC) to ensure their cultural and environmental values are protected from fire ants.

We've raised awareness of the National Parks and Wildlife Service systematically eradicating cats on Kangaroo Island to protect native species including the kangaroo island dunnart and the kangaroo island echidna. To do this they are using a sophisticated set of cameras and cat traps. These traps use cutting edge technology and are monitored using the ranger's phones.

Invasive rats on Norfolk Island are considered the greatest threat to Norfolk Island's threatened species. They and also have huge impacts on agriculture, human health and tourism. On Norfolk Island we funded rat eradication in Anson bay and in the 100 acres reserve which hosts endangered snail and

bird colonies. We briefed politicians to seek stronger biosecurity to prevent invasive plants and animals arriving on the island. In addition we provided advice for the Argentine Ant steering committee to assist with their eradication program.

Despite this, rat control on private land is currently limited, patchy and uncoordinated.

Lastly, on Lungtallanana Island we funded two of their four sophisticated felixer traps to help eradicate feral cats.

Our islands being on the forefront of invasive species eradication programs sets a precedent for larger and more ambitious programs on the mainland.

What's next?

Inspire action by showcasing Norfolk Island rodent eradication, past successes and the opportunity and benefits of island biodiversity. More broadly, we're building public popularity of ambitious island eradications to drive government investment. **We are seeking interested funders for a much more ambitious islands program.**

THANK YOU

Thank you to the **Eldon and Anne Foote Trust**, administered by the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation, for funding our work on Norfolk Island.



Project partners at the National Biosecurity Forum.

From left to right: Andreas Glanznig, CEO of the Centre for Invasive Species Solutions (CISS), Justin Bellanger, Executive Management Services, NRM WA, Kathleen Plowman, CEO Animal Health Australia, Emily Mellor, Coordinator Decade of Biosecurity, Malcolm Letts, former Deputy Director-General and Chief Biosecurity Officer, Biosecurity Queensland, Nathan Rhodes, Executive Director, Biosecurity SA, Peta Lane, First Assistant Secretary for the Enterprise Strategy and Governance Division, Andrew Cox, CEO Invasive Species Council, Sal Milici, General Manager, Trade Policy and Operations at Freight & Trade Alliance (FTA), and Bertie Hennecke, Australian Chief Environmental Biosecurity Officer.

The Decade of Biosecurity – in action

The Decade of Biosecurity (DoB) is a partnership between industry, business, community and government, hosted by the Invasive Species Council. It shines the spotlight on the importance of biosecurity and actively engages stakeholders to play their part in building a stronger, more resilient national biosecurity system in the 2020s.

Exciting progress has been made since its launch at the Australian Biosecurity Symposium in May 2022. Three60 Consulting led extensive consultation to gather input from stakeholders on what they feel needs to be improved and implemented to realise a financially sustainable, resilient biosecurity system. The Decade of Biosecurity Implementation Plan 2023-2026 was developed next and finalised in May 2023.

Emily Mellor was appointed as the National Coordinator to take the Decade of Biosecurity to the next exciting stage – delivering the key initiatives

of the implementation plan. Many of these have progressed, including:

- An ambassador and supporter program (to be called the Decade of Biosecurity Ambassadors' Network).
- A concept paper to progress National Biosecurity Week.
- Progressing the formation of a Parliamentary Friends of Biosecurity Group.
- Additional communications collateral including a bi-monthly bulletin, Facebook presence and website updates.
- Inclusion of the Decade of Biosecurity within the National Biosecurity Communications and Engagement Network (NBCEN).
- Continued progress in building support and project partners, and to champion the initiative through the National Biosecurity Strategy Implementation Committee.
- \$116,000 of funding secured through project partners for coordination.

Current DoB partners:

- Federal, state and territory biosecurity agencies
- Invasive Species Council
- Animal Health Australia
- Centre for Invasive Species Solutions
- Plant Health Australia
- Landcare Australia
- National Farmers Federation
- Freight and Trade Alliance
- NRM Regions Australia
- National Landcare Network

Additional steering committee members:

- Indigenous and community representation

Scan the QR codes to sign up to receive regular updates on the Decade of Biosecurity or to download the DoB Implementation Plan

What's next?

The Decade of Biosecurity Ambassadors' Network will be launched and corporate sponsorship pursued for both this and the National Biosecurity Week proposal. We'll form a Parliamentary Friends of Biosecurity group to help drive transformative change in the biosecurity system.

THANK YOU

Thank you to **The Ross Trust** for funding the State of Environmental Biosecurity Report which will be out later this year.

Thank you to DoB funding partners at various levels over the last 18 months, including:

- SA gov
- Qld gov
- NSW gov
- Tas gov
- Vic gov
- WA gov
- Animal Health Australia
- Plant Health Australia
- Centre for Invasive Species Solutions
- ISC + host coordinator.



Costa Georgiadis, Ambassador Decade of Biosecurity and Emily Mellor, Decade of Biosecurity Coordinator run into each other at Alice Springs Airport!

Imagine not being able to enjoy bbqs or having your sports fields closed because of fire ants, witnessing the destruction of our native environment because of invasive weeds and feral animals or watching the devastation of our rural communities because of the arrival of foot and mouth disease. These threats are real! We want you to play your part to ensure our communities, environment and economy remain safe, healthy and resilient.

Emily Mellor, Decade of Biosecurity Coordinator



In the face of ever-increasing biosecurity risks, with our borders reopening post COVID and trade increasing, it has never been more important to harness the efforts of all Australians. It's an all-inclusive community obligation and a privilege to be involved and be part of the solution. Let's shine the spotlight on the importance of biosecurity and ensure it is at the forefront of everyone's minds during this Decade of Biosecurity.

Costa Georgiadis, Decade of Biosecurity Ambassador.





Echidna.



Feral horse damage.



Richard at his home with a rescued wombat.



This year, Richard raised funds to launch his new program. Nearly 60% of Australia's threatened species occur on land managed by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders.

A Voice for Country seeks to inspire and empower future Indigenous rangers and communities to build knowledge and a commitment to managing invasive species, in order to restore the land and care for Country into the future.

This program aims to bring all Australians together to create a culture where Australians unite around a living country that allows for our native species to thrive, and reclaim our shared role as custodians of this land. Central to this is improved invasive species management. We believe now is the time to do this.

THANK YOU

A very special thank you to **David Rickards** (Carrawa Foundation) who raised funds to launch this program from: **The Madden Sainsbury Foundation, Phillip Cornwell, Equity Trustees, Danny Mathews, Curlew Foundation, Running Waters Fund and Origma.**

Social research paves the way to stop invasive species-led extinctions

We embarked on a significant social research project in 2022 with Essential Media Communications. We wanted to know how many Australians are aware of the significant threat invasive species pose, how they feel about the methods used to protect the environment and how we could persuade them to support those methods if they didn't at first.

We knew that these answers would ensure the success of our work to give decision makers the confidence to take bold action to protect our environment from invasive species.

The project revealed 5 critical findings: 1) knowledge of invasive species as a leading driver of extinction isn't well known; 2) Australians love our native species and will choose them over invasive species once they know what's at stake; 3) significant support exists for invasive species management; 4) support for invasive species management was lower amongst younger people, especially females; 5) when the reason for culling is explained, support for management increases dramatically.

It was exciting to learn that there's more support than we anticipated in the community for our vision. The research demonstrates that we can win the hearts and minds of Australians and move them to approve the most effective control methods. We just need to get the message out there.



I was fortunate enough to have plenty to do with the Invasive Species Council who further opened my mind. It's possible to be a fan, advocate and lover of our Australian High Country and other landscapes without quite understanding the damage so you and we must never stop explaining to people.

Anthony Sharwood, Author of *The brumby wars*

What's next?
Build the capacity to reach Australians through a public education and engagement campaign that supports the development of policy and increased funding to protect our native species from invasive species. Developing an education program for primary and secondary students to increase awareness and social licence amongst the younger generation. **We are seeking funding partners for both projects.**



THANK YOU

The Invasive Species Council's volunteer Board brings a wide range of experience and expertise to our governance. We thank them for their passion and commitment: **Graeme Hamilton** (former president), **Bernadette Schmidt** (secretary), **David Rickards** (president, former treasurer), **Sara Phillips**, **Eliza Ginnivan**, **Chris Grubb**, **Sandy Lolicato**, **Ian Coleman** and **Fiona Sutton** (vice president).

A message from our ambassador

People don't realise in this sixth wave of extinction in an age of global boiling that alien invasive species are one of the major drivers of extinction. It is critical as climate zones change and movement of people accelerates, that Australia funds serious biosecurity capacity to protect people and the natural environment. It's important to get the message out that in rewriting our new environment laws, we must take invasive species threats seriously. To protect the bush, we have to invest public funds in the eradication and, if it is too late, the containment of invasive species from feral horses, feral deer, and cats, to red fire ants. In this Decade of Biosecurity, our environment needs all the help it can get and the government needs to have the issues put before it with a practical action plan. That's why I proudly support the work of the Invasive Species Council because it is front and centre in doing just that.

Christine Milne AO



Karen Brown Photography

Our Board of Directors

The Invasive Species Council's volunteer board brings a wide range of experience and expertise to our governance. We thank them for their passion and commitment this past year.

For more information on our board visit our website invasives.org.au/about-us/our-people/board

Our Conservation and Science Committee

Our Conservation and Science Committee help to ensure our advocacy work is led by the best science and Australia's leading thinkers. Membership is voluntary and we thank each committee member for their expert advice and commitment.

We are honoured that such eminent scientists volunteer their time to tackle the invasive species threat alongside us. We greatly appreciate the time, effort and expertise of our Conservation and Science Committee and are excited to see their contribution furthering our scientific foundation and capabilities in the coming year.

The committee allows us quick and efficient access to the best scientific advice, informing our campaigns, policy platform and understanding of complex and evolving issues in biosecurity, biodiversity, social science, and innovation.

For more information visit our website invasives.org.au/about-us/our-people/conservation-and-science-committee

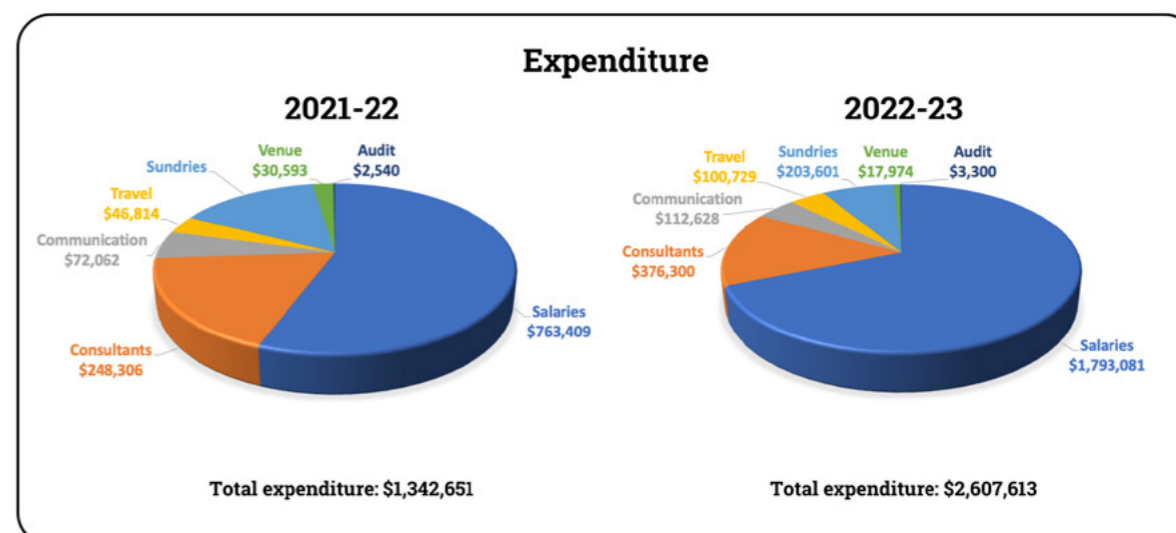
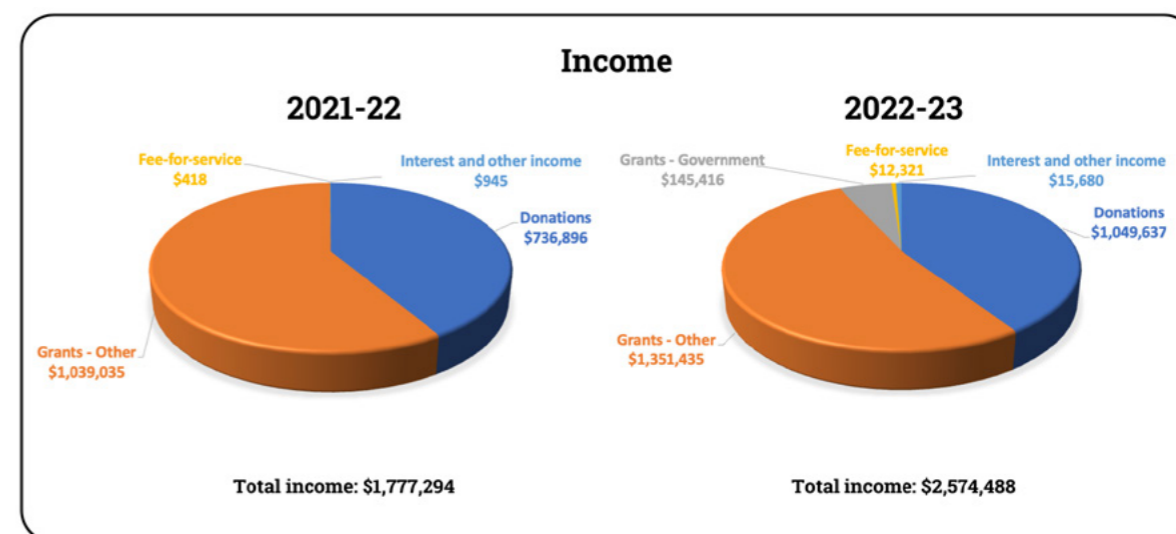
This year the committee has:

- Provided academic input into our 2030 strategy
- Helped shape our policy and position on topics from dingoes to law reform to climate change
- Reviewed and contributed to the State of Environment Biosecurity Report
- Influenced our Research Development and Extension priorities
- Provided academic input and peer review for the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza virus that threatens Australian native birds.

THANK YOU

We thank each committee member for their expert advice and commitment. **Ian Thompson** as Chair, and **Drs April Reside**, **Chris Dickman**, **Sarah Legge**, **Mark Lonsdale**, **Samantha Setterfield**, and **Lynette Mcleod**.

Yearly income and expenditure



Our 2050 vision is for an Australia where wildlife and ecosystems are safe from invasive species which are no longer a major driver of extinction or environmental degradation.

We catalyse strong, collaborative biosecurity to protect and restore what makes Australia extraordinary — our unique animals, plants and landscapes.

As the only national advocacy organisation dedicated to the growing threat of invasive species, we must leap into the future with a bold plan that is powerful enough to alter the dire trajectory for nature and save our species. This is only possible with the funding from you. Investments today will scale our impact to keep nature safe from invasive species.

Please donate what you can today.
invasives.org.au/donate

Thank you.



It's been great to see the work of the Invasive Species Council under Andrew Cox's leadership.

I've really seen it over the last couple of years, pick up in tempo. The focus is an extremely important one. And we're now starting to see some great wins. There's so much more that can be done. For people who care about conservation and the environment generally, supporting the Invasive Species Council is really important.

Peter Garret AM

Northern Quoll. Photo: Wade Hughes-Lochman

