INVASIVE PEST ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

JULY 2026

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY
OFFICE OF PROPERTY AND COMMERCIAL

INVASIVE PEST ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION

Invasive or pest animals cause a significant impact on both the Australian landscape and economy. As a result, the NSW Government re-evaluated the State's response in controlling all pest species, including weeds, animals, and diseases. The ***Biosecurity Act 2015*** and the *Local Land Services Act 2013*, now work in conjunction to deal with these matters. Both acts place a greater emphasis on landowners to take appropriate action to control/eliminate pest species from their property.

Western Sydney University (the University) has a clear obligation to take appropriate action to comply with these acts.

2. PEST ANIMAL SPECIES

Animal pests are those that have an adverse effect on the environment, the economy, or the community. As such Local Land Services (LLS) has identified the following non-indigenous animals as an existing or potential threat within the Greater Sydney area (refer to LLS Greater Sydney Regional Strategic Pest Animal Plan at https://www.nsw.gov.au/regional-and-primary-industries/biosecurity/pest-animals)

- European Rabbits
- Wild Dogs
- Feral Pigs
- Foxes
- Feral Cats
- Wild Deer
- Feral Goats
- Common Myna
- Common Carp
- Cane Toads

The University has and will continue to undertake all necessary actions to mitigate the threats posed by these and other pest animals (e.g., rodents) through the Office of Property and Commercial, Division of Operations. However, the most persistent threat comes from European rabbits, foxes, feral cats and pigs. These have been prioritised for control action.

2.1 European Rabbits

Rabbits have long been recognised as a pest animal in NSW. The spread of these animals has outstripped any other mammal in Australia. This is due to their ability to successfully invade and re-invade areas following hard times. As a result, it is estimated that rabbits cost the agriculture industry over $200 million per year and are a potential threat to over 300 indigenous animal species.

The University recognises that the total eradication of rabbits across the campuses is not practicable. Instead, the University employs control methods based on the best practice recommendations from local agencies and Biosecurity Officers. These methods may include poisoning/baiting, fumigating, warren destruction, harbour removal and the use biological controls including RHDV strains.

Rabbits threaten habitat of indigenous animal species

2.2 Foxes

Since being introduced to Australia in the 1850s, foxes have spread out and are now found in over 76% of the country adapting to the landscape and surviving in all environments except the tropical north. They have directly contributed to the decline of several native species, including the Greater Bilby and Green Turtle. They also impact on agricultural activities proving to be a major predator of lambs. It is estimated that foxes cost the economy over $227 million.

The University recognises that the total eradication of foxes across the campuses is not viable. Instead, the University employs control methods based on best practice recommendations from local agencies and Biosecurity Officers. These methods may include poisoning/baiting, trapping, and euthanizing.

Foxes directly contribute to the decline of native species

2.3 Feral Cats

It is likely that cats were introduced to Australia in the 17th Century either entering via European exploration ships or Indonesian trading vessels. While this is likely, the first records of cats coming to Australia were as part of the First Fleet. Today cats occupy virtually all terrestrial habitats across Australia, and most of the surrounding islands.

The NSW Scientific Committee divide cat populations into three categories:

- Domestic – those cats living with humans and having their needs intentionally met by humans.
- Stray – those cats relying only partly on humans for provision of their ecological requirements, and include animals in urban fringe situations, dumped animals, and cats kept on farms for rodent control.
- Feral – are free-living; they have minimal or no reliance on humans for their ecological requirements and survive and reproduce in self-perpetuating populations.

Cats are a threat to Australia's smaller fauna species

Individual cats can shift between categories in their lifetimes. It is because of this that controlling free roaming cats is problematic, as it is often difficult to determine in which category a cat may currently belong. However, cats no matter their category, can and do prey on native animals. It is for this reason that the Committee has determined that cats, particularly feral ones, are a threat to Australia's smaller fauna species.

The University discourages the feeding or other interactions with cats wandering or living on campus, as they can pose a risk to both animals and to humans (disease transfer). Cat sightings should be reported to either Campus Safety and Security or Environmental Sustainability team, in the Office of Property and Commercial.

A professional animal control contractor will be engaged to humanely collect and transport the animal/s to a local shelter where they will be assessed and scanned for a microchip, as per *Companion Animals Act 1998* and the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979*.

2.4 Feral Pigs

Pigs were introduced into Australia with the First Fleet. Settlers allowed these animals to wander as they were not restrained in any way. As a result, the escapees spread across NSW and by the 1880s had started to pose problems for the environment.

Feral pigs will often select moist areas where there is adequate food, water, and shelter. Their rooting will often foul water supplies and create areas of unusable land. In addition, they have been known to cause damage to fences through rubbing or simply pushing them over. Pigs are known to carry diseases which can impact on livestock and humans (e.g., leptospirosis and tuberculosis). Overall feral pigs cost the Australian economy $106.5 million per year.

Feral pigs carry disease which impact livestock and humans

In terms of the University's property, it is believed feral pigs are in the bushland on Hawkesbury campus. This has been evidenced by rooting found in the adjacent paddocks. However, despite

several attempts to locate them via camera surveillance and various foot patrols, no actual pigs have been sighted or filmed. Despite this a control program has been formulated in the event pigs are located on campus. This method involves trapping and euthanizing.

2.5 Other Invasive/Pest Animal Species – Watch and Act

Both Federal and State Governments recognise that there are several other invasive/pest animal species that create problems across Australia. While some of these may be encountered on the University's campuses (e.g., Common Myna and Carp) their impacts are minimal in comparison with those listed above. However, this may change in the future, and management of these other species will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

In February 2023, two adult cane toads were confirmed by Local Land Services within 600 metres of each other on a property in Kenthurst in the Hills district of Sydney, one of which was pregnant. Since then, further detections have occurred in northern NSW and a Cane Toad Biosecurity Zone has been declared. The University will take appropriate action, including immediate reporting to NSW DPI (1800 680 244), if a cane toad is detected within its boundaries.

APPENDIX A – LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

This plan has been prepared in accordance with the legislation below. References are to the current version in force at the date of publication (July 2026).

Legislation	Jurisdiction	Current Version	Relevance / Notes
Biosecurity Act 2015	NSW	As at 31 Oct 2025,	Establishes the General Biosecurity Duty for all land managers. Governs pest animal identification, reporting and control across all WSU campuses.
Local Land Services Act 2013	NSW	As at 13 Nov 2025,	Regional pest management framework and LLS coordination. Note: Supporting regulation (LLS Reg 2014) expires 1 Sep 2026 – to be replaced by LLS Regulation 2026.
Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979	NSW	As at 25 Mar 2026,	Humane treatment requirements for all pest and animal control activities. Supporting regulation updated: *POCTA Regulation 2025* commenced 1 Feb 2025. Note: Reform bill expected Parliament mid-2026.
Companion Animals Act 1998	NSW	As at 22 Oct 2025,	Management of stray, roaming and feral cats and dogs on campus. Relevant to biodiversity protection at Hawkesbury and Kingswood. Note: Act review underway; amendments anticipated 2026–27.
Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016	NSW	As at 27 Feb 2026,	Protects threatened species and ecological communities present on WSU campuses (including Cumberland Plain Woodland at Hawkesbury). Pest control must avoid harm to listed species.
Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999	Commonwealth	Amended by Environment Protection Reform Act 2025 (28 Nov 2025)	Protection of Matters of National Environmental Significance on WSU campuses. Pest management must not significantly impact listed threatened species or communities. Note: National Environmental Protection Agency commences 1 Jul 2026.

This appendix should be reviewed annually or when a significant legislative change occurs. Where legislation has been amended since the date of this plan, updated obligations take precedence.