

Legislation & management of pest animals in Australia

In Australia, pest animals cause major economic, environmental and social impacts at local, regional and national scales. Management of pest animals may be complex and requires a strong policy and legislative framework to guide and govern how pest animals are managed at all levels, and to set out the roles and responsibilities of those involved.

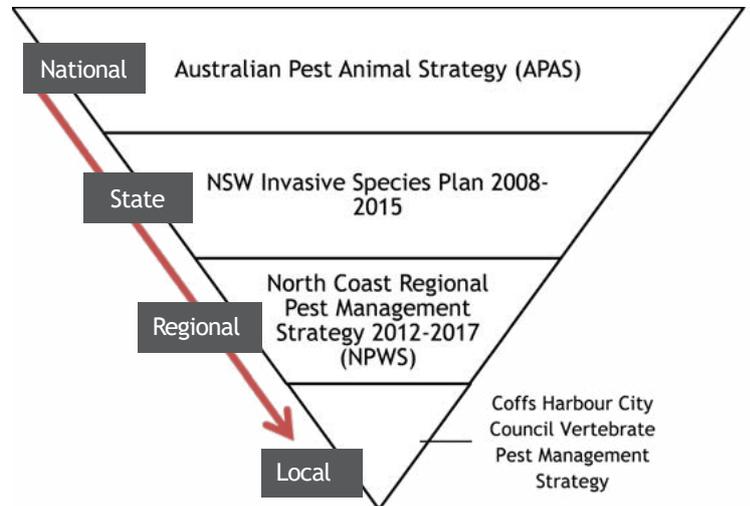
Under the Australian Constitution, pest management is the responsibility of the state and territory governments. The Australian Government plays a supportive role, investing strategically where it is in the national interest to do so.

State and territory governments may legislate specific responsibilities for land managers in the management of pest animals. Governments or industry may endorse codes of practice and standard operating procedures or guidelines to provide guidance to land managers on specific aspects of pest animal management.

National strategies

The [Australian Pest Animal Strategy \(APAS\)](#) providing guidance for the effective and humane control of vertebrate pest animals and mitigation of their impacts on Australia's biodiversity, agricultural assets and social values. It complements existing and new strategies for other biosecurity issues including weeds, marine pests and animal welfare.

The APAS is guided by the [Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity](#). The APAS is also guided by a range of national strategies and action plans, including both the [Australian Biodiversity Conservation Strategy](#) and threat abatement plans under the [Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999](#) (EPBC Act). The APAS focuses on two key areas: 1) mitigation of the damage caused by exotic vertebrate animals (mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and fish) that have become pests in Australia, and 2) prevention of the establishment of new exotic vertebrate



An example of how a local pest management strategy in NSW fits under the broader regional, state and national policy framework.

pests.

Under the Commonwealth [EPBC Act 1999](#), a number of pest animals are recognised as threats to native animals and plants. The impacts of some pest animals have been listed as Key Threatening Processes and plans to reduce the threats they pose (known as a [threat abatement plan](#)) have been developed for unmanaged goats, feral cats, rabbits, foxes, cane toads, feral pigs and exotic rodents. Feral camels are the subject of a [national action plan](#) for management as an Established Pest of National Significance under the APAS.

The humane control of pest animals in Australia is guided by a set of [Model Codes of Practice](#) which were developed under the former Vertebrate Pests Committee. The [Standard Operating Procedures](#) describe the best practice application of several recommended management techniques for a range of pest animal species. These documents are designed to help pest operators ensure they are using and applying control techniques safely and appropriately. Misuse of chemical tools and failure to follow the recommended procedures could result in harm to the user, animals and/or the environment, and could threaten the future availability and effectiveness of these techniques. Anyone engaged in pest animal management should make sure they follow standard operating procedures, and comply with the product manufacturer's label instructions and relevant state or territory legislation.

Table 1: Relevant state and territory legislation and strategies related to pest animal management.

State/Territory	Relevant legislation and strategies	
Commonwealth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</u> • <u>Quarantine Act 1908 (Biosecurity Act 2015)</u> • <u>Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Code Act 1994</u> • <u>Biological Control Act 1984</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Australian Pest Animal Strategy</u> • <u>Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity (IGAB)</u> • <u>AUSVETPLAN (Australian Veterinary Emergency Plan)</u>
Australian Capital Territory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Pest Plants and Animals Act 2005</u> • <u>Nature Conservation Act 2014</u> • <u>Animal Welfare Act 1992</u> • <u>Prohibited Weapons Act 1996</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Firearms Act 1996</u> • <u>Environment Protection Act 1997</u> • <u>ACT Pest Animal Management Strategy 2012-2022</u>
New South Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Local Land Services Act 2013</u> • <u>National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974</u> • <u>Wild Dog Destruction Act 1921</u> • <u>Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995</u> • <u>Pesticides Act 1999</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002</u> • <u>Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979</u> • <u>NSW Invasive Species Plan 2008-2015</u> • <u>NSW Biosecurity Strategy 2013-2021</u>
Victoria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994</u> • <u>Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988</u> • <u>Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986</u> • <u>Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Wildlife Act 1975</u> • <u>National Parks Act 1975</u> • <u>Biosecurity Strategy for Victoria</u> • <u>Invasive Plants and Animals Policy Framework (IPAPF)</u>
Queensland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management Act) 2002</u> • <u>Animal Care and Protection Act 2001</u> • <u>Nature Conservation Act 1992</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996</u> • <u>Queensland Pest Animal Strategy 2002 (under review)</u>
Tasmania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Vermin Control Act 2000</u> • <u>Cat Management Act 2009</u> • <u>Agricultural and Veterinary Chemical (Control of Use) Act 1995</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Poisons Act 1971</u> • <u>Animal Welfare Act 1993</u> • <u>Nature Conservation Act 2002</u>
Northern Territory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 2006</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Animal Welfare Act</u>

State and territory strategies

Each of Australia's states and territories has their own legislation and strategies for managing pest animals (Table 1).

Local and regional strategies

Ideally, local and regional management of pest animals is guided by formal pest management plans and strategies. These plans are usually administered by natural resource management (NRM) agencies, catchment management authorities, government pest agencies or local government, with assistance and input from key stakeholders and the local community.

Examples of local and regional pest strategies

- ACT Pest Animal Management Strategy 2012-2022 (ACT): www.environment.act.gov.au/cpr/conservation-strategies/pams2
- In NSW, the National Parks and Wildlife Service (part of Office of Environment and Heritage) have 14 regional pest strategies: see www.environment.nsw.gov.au/pestsweeds/regionPestManagement.htm
- South East Regional Pest Management Strategy (SA): www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au/southeast/plants-and-animals/pest-plants-and-animals/pest-management-strategy