

# Summary review of public submissions on the 2003 independent review of the *Western Shield* program

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The independent panel appointed to review CALM's *Western Shield* program provided its final draft to the Executive Director of CALM in September 2003. The Minister for the Environment made the report available to the public and invited public comment through a media statement on 10 October 2003 (Appendix 1). The closing date for submissions was 21 November 2003. Advice on making submissions (Appendix 2) was provided to enquirers at CALM offices and on CALM's website ([www.naturebase.net](http://www.naturebase.net)).

Sixteen submissions were received; five from private individuals, one from a non-government organization and 10 from government agencies or individuals within government agencies (Appendix 3). One private respondent has requested identity confidentiality. Three of the respondents provided general comments about the *Western Shield* program and the review process but did not offer specific comments on any of the 17 recommendations made in the review panel's report.

Not all respondents commented on each of the Review Panel's 17 recommendations. However, 118 comments referred to specific recommendations (Table 1). The number of comments made on any one recommendation ranged from 11 (Recommendations 1, the future of the Western Shield program and 2, scope of the program) to as few as three (Recommendation 14, Captive Breeding issues). Of the 118 assigned comments, 101 (86%) were supportive and a further 11 (9%) gave qualified support. Six (5%) were dissenting comments. In some cases, distinction between qualification and dissent was, necessarily, subjective. The editors take responsibility for assignments to those categories. However, the nature of all qualifications and dissensions are described in the following text.

The submissions, will be available to CALM officers who are responsible for considering the implementation of the Review Panel's recommendations.

## Recommendation 1. Future of *Western Shield*

Eleven responses were received. All supported the recommendation. Three more did not specifically address the recommendation but endorsed the continuation of the program.

## Recommendation 2. Scope of *Western Shield*

Eleven comments were received. Nine respondents supported the recommendation, three with qualifications, as follows:

- Two respondents felt that it was logical and appropriate to expand the scope of the program to include the control of a wider range of feral predators and that fauna recovery within a landscape restoration context, including habitat management, should be the focus of the work.
- One respondent cautioned that CALM needs to be careful about selection of projects for inclusion in *Western Shield* to ensure adequate funding for all aspects of the program.
- One respondent suggested that the program should include monitoring of introduced predators and that the program should not be restricted to any particular geographical area, but should encompass all introduced predator/native prey interaction.

Two respondents did not support the Panel's recommendation. One considered the scope of the program, with a heavy emphasis on mammals, is too narrow. The other considered it important to expand the scope to include reference to translocations involving both wild-caught and captive-bred animals.

### **Recommendation 3. Management structure and strategic direction**

Nine comments were received. Eight respondents supported the recommendation, one qualified as follows:

- The future strategic direction needs to incorporate animal health programs that include preventative medicine and effectively address and manage the impact of disease.

One respondent, who did not support the Panel's recommendation, suggested that the *Western Shield* program should have not one but two leaders; one to oversee business aspects and the other to oversee the science aspects of the program. The rationale was to ensure that scientific quality was not compromised by a single manager placing undue emphasis on business and management issues. This respondent agreed with the rest of the recommendation.

### **Recommendation 4. Community involvement**

Seven comments were received. All respondents were supportive.

### **Recommendation 5. Full-cost accounting**

Seven comments were received. All respondents were supportive.

### **Recommendation 6. Bait development, procurement and delivery**

Six comments were received. All respondents were supportive, two with the following qualification:

- They both strongly opposed the reduction of baiting frequency to off-set rising bait costs without first obtaining scientific justification for such an action.

### **Recommendation 7. Monitoring**

Seven comments were received. All respondents were supportive.

### **Recommendation 8. Research**

Eight comments were received. All respondents were supportive, one with the following qualification:

- The respondent was concerned that, as yet, there is insufficient evidence to justify research and development of a cat bait. This respondent did not have access to all the material presented to the Review Panel. Research undertaken by CALM scientists as part of *Western Shield* goes some way to mitigating the concern. Nevertheless, this comment reinforces the need for CALM to publish its research results in a timely manner and in a variety of fora.

### **Recommendation 9. Dingoes**

Six comments were received. Five respondents were supportive. One respondent considered that a single-species (i.e. fox) approach to predator control is not holistic and so successful control of foxes in isolation of other feral predators may induce new problems.

### **Recommendation 10. Feral cats**

Seven comments were received. All respondents were supportive, one with the same qualification raised under Recommendation 8 with regard to feral cats.

### **Recommendation 11. Moving outside the southwest forests and *Project Eden***

Four comments were received. Three respondents were supportive, one with the following qualification:

- The research and operational priorities for the *Western Shield* program need to be determined by the new manager (Recommendation 3) and his/her support team. If these decisions are not made within an overall framework, the implementation of specific actions become increasingly *ad hoc*.

One respondent did not support the Panel's recommendation, suggesting that *Western Shield* should concentrate on smaller areas of land where predator control or eradication can be managed economically and where wildlife translocations are more likely to succeed (compare the manageable size of Heirrisson Prong with the much larger area of Peron Peninsula).

### **Recommendation 12. The role of islands and marooning**

Five comments were received. All respondents were supportive, one with the following qualification:

- Noting that the reviewers identified the values of islands in terms of translocating threatened fauna, novel control methods etc, but made no recommendations about *Western Shield's* direction in this regard, it was suggested that several criteria need to be satisfied (e.g. impact on local wildlife) before any island is used as a testing ground. Moreover an objective cost-benefit assessment of island work would be useful.

### **Recommendation 13. Public relations**

Ten comments were received. All respondents were supportive.

### **Recommendation 14. Captive breeding**

Three comments were received. All respondents were supportive.

### Recommendation 15. Co-ordination between projects at Shark Bay

Five comments were received. Four respondents were supportive, one with the following qualification:

- Captive breeding facilities not capable of producing genetically, physiologically and behaviorally sound animals for translocation should close.

One respondent disagreed with the Panel's view that the existing captive breeding infrastructure is 'inadequate' and considered that the two potential replacements that were canvassed would not provide satisfactory alternatives. Arguments in support of those views were provided.

However, the respondent did agree that the current program needs to be reviewed, its priorities and objectives re-set and the potential of an increased role in public education investigated.

### Recommendation 16. Publication and communication

Five comments were received. All respondents were supportive.

### Recommendation 17. The wise use of 1080

Seven comments were received. All respondents were supportive.

TABLE 1  
Summary of comments that addressed the Review Panel's recommendations. (N = 16 submissions).

RECOMMENDATION #.	COMMENTS	SUPPORT	QUALIFIED SUPPORT	DISSENT
1. Future of <i>Western Shield</i>	11	11 (100%)	∅	∅
2. Scope of <i>Western Shield</i>	11	6 (55%)	3 (27%)	2 (18%)
3. Management structure and strategic direction	9	7 (78%)	1 (11%)	1 (11%)
4. Community involvement	7	7 (100%)	∅	∅
5. Full-cost accounting	7	7 (100%)	∅	∅
6. Bait development, procurement and delivery	6	4 (67%)	2 (33%)	∅
7. Fauna monitoring	7	7 (100%)	∅	∅
8. Research needs	8	7 (88%)	1 (12%)	∅
9. Dingoes	6	5 (83%)	∅	1 (17%)
10. Feral cats	7	6 (86%)	1 (14%)	∅
11. Moving outside the south-west forests and <i>Project Eden</i>	4	2 (50%)	1 (25%)	1 (25%)
12. The role of islands and marooning	5	4 (80%)	1 (20%)	∅
13. Public relations	10	10 (100%)	∅	∅
14. Captive breeding	3	3 (100%)	∅	∅
15. Co-ordination between projects at Shark Bay	5	3 (60%)	1 (20%)	1 (20%)
16. Publication and communication	5	5 (100%)	∅	∅
17. The wise use of 1080	7	7 (100%)	∅	∅
TOTAL	118	101 (86%)	11 (9%)	6 (5%)

## APPENDIX 1

Text of the Ministerial press release announcing the availability for public comment of the independent panel's review. Advice on how to submit comment is shown in Appendix 2.

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10-10-2003

### **Conservation program hailed a success**

Western Australia's native fauna recovery program—*Western Shield*—has been hailed by a review panel of independent scientific experts as a world-class and iconic predator control program that has delivered real conservation outcomes.

Environment Minister Judy Edwards today released for public comment the review panel's assessment of the Department of Conservation and Land Management's comprehensive fauna recovery initiative

"The report clearly recommends the continuation and expansion of *Western Shield*, which aims to conserve native animals at a landscape level by controlling introduced predators the European fox and feral cat," Dr Edwards said.

"The three-member review panel has found the program to be extremely successful in strategically targeting the recovery of a wide range of threatened native fauna in a short time frame.

"In particular, it commends the department on implementing scientific research and a management framework that exploits the advantage of the naturally occurring toxin, 1080."

Dr Edwards said the review was conducted by three independent scientists with relevant expertise in the field of fauna conservation and program management.

Panel members were Professor Hugh Possingham, from the Departments of Zoology and Mathematics at Queensland University; Emeritus Professor Peter Jarman, from the Department of Ecosystem Management at the University of New England, NSW; and Mr Allen Kearns, from the CSIRO's Sustainable Ecosystems Division.

The Minister said the review panel's report sets out a number of recommendations for future management of the program including:

- expanding the program to provide for more effort into feral cat research and management
- appointing a *Western Shield* manager to provide a clearer management structure that can be both strategic science and business orientated; enhancing community involvement to build on the goodwill already generated by *Western Shield*
- reviewing the purposes of monitoring and the extent to which the present techniques, distribution, and staff input effectively and efficiently fulfill these purposes
- a co-operative approach between CALM and the Department of Agriculture in the production of 1080 meat baits; and enhancing the experimental aspects of *Western Shield* to provide greater scope for research needs.

"The report also strongly recommends the continued wise use of 1080, stating that it played a fundamental role in the conservation of the biodiversity and natural heritage of WA," Dr Edwards said.

The report is available for public comment for six weeks and copies are available at CALM's State Operations Headquarters, 17 Dick Perry Avenue, Technology Park, Kensington or from the department's website - <http://www.naturebase.net>

The closing date for comments is Friday, 21 November, 2003.

Minister's office: 9220 5050

## APPENDIX 2

Text of the background information on the Independent Review Panel's Report on the *Western Shield* program and Advice on how to submit comment on it. This text was provided to people requesting copies of the report and it was available from CALM's NatureBase website [www.naturebase.net](http://www.naturebase.net).

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### WHAT DOES THE DRAFT INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF *WESTERN SHIELD* INCLUDE?

The draft *Independent Review of Western Shield* is a report compiled by three independent scientists commissioned by the Executive Director of the Department of Conservation and Land Management to undertake a review of the Department's Western Shield fauna recovery program. The review panel was asked to report on all aspects of the project's management, implementation and outcomes and make recommendations for improvements.

The terms of reference of the review panel are included as an appendix to the panel's draft report.

To assist the panel in undertaking the review, the Department of Conservation and Land Management commissioned the writing of twelve review papers on a range of topics associated with the *Western Shield* program. The authors of those papers were given specific instructions on the scope and detail that their papers were to include. The terms of reference for the authors of the review papers are also set out in an appendix to the review panel's report.

To further assist the review panel the Department also organised a one-day public workshop at which a summary of each of the twelve papers were presented orally. The Department also organised a one-day closed workshop attended by the authors of the review papers and invited senior Department staff, representatives from sister conservation agencies in other parts of the country.

Field trips were arranged to the captive breeding facilities at the Perth Zoo, to the Department's experimental bait production facility at Harvey, the captive breeding facilities (Return to Dryandra) and the public fauna viewing facilities (Barna Mia) located as Dryandra Forest, and to the captive breeding facilities at Francois Peron National Park. At each of these venues the review panel members were able to meet and question Perth Zoo and local Department staff involved in those aspects of the *Western Shield* program.

#### What do you think?

We want to know what you think of draft *Independent Review of Western Shield*.

#### Why write a submission?

It is an opportunity to provide information, express your opinion, suggest alternatives and have your say on how you think the *Western Shield* program has performed and what changes, if any, should be made to the program. If you prefer not to write your own submission you could make a joint submission with others.

#### What makes an effective submission?

To ensure your submission is as effective as possible:

- Make it concise and clear.
- List your points according to the subject sections (and page numbers) in the draft *Independent Review*.
- Describe briefly each subject or issue you wish to discuss.
- Say whether you agree or disagree with any or all of the objectives or parts within each of the draft *Independent Review* or just those of specific interest to you; clearly state your reasons (particularly if you disagree) and give sources of information where possible.
- Suggest alternatives to deal with any issue with which you may disagree.

It is important to indicate those parts of the draft *Independent Review* you agree with as well as those with which you disagree.

Each submission is important in its own right but those that give reasons for concerns, give support where appropriate and offer information and constructive suggestions are most useful.

#### What happens to your submission?

All submissions will be summarized according to the topics discussed. The draft *Independent Review* will then be considered in the light of submissions, according to established criteria (see below). A summary of the

submissions will be published (together with the final version of the Independent Review and the 12 review papers). Your submissions will not necessarily result in changes to the Independent Review since that is the product of the review panel, however it may well influence how the Department responds to the issues raised in the Independent Review. If a submission is marked 'CONFIDENTIAL' the author will remain anonymous in the summary submissions.

### **Deadline**

Submissions are welcome for six weeks. The closing date for submissions is 5:00 p.m. Friday 21 November 2003. For enquiries please telephone (08) 9334 0333.

### **Where do you send your submission?**

Written submissions should be sent to:

Executive Director  
Department of Conservation and Land Management  
Locked Bag 104  
BENTLEY DELIVERY CENTRE, WA, 6983  
Attention: Senior Zoologist, Wildlife Branch

APPENDIX 3

Summary of public submissions and an indication of the respondents' support for or opposition to each of the Review Panel's 17 recommendations. Y = support; Y\* = qualified support; N = dissent. In some cases, distinction between qualification and dissent was, necessarily, subjective. The editors take responsibility for assignments to those categories. However, the nature of all qualifications and dissents are described in text.

RESPONDENT	STATUS	REVIEW PANEL RECOMMENDATION #																
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Kim Anderson	Private	Y	Y*	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Confidential	Private	Y	N		Y	Y	Y	Y*	-	Y*		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Dr Jack Kinnear	Private	Y	Y	Y*	Y	Y												
Kanyana Rehabilitation Centre Inc.	Private	Y	Y	N		Y				N		Y	Y			Y		Y
Dr Dorian Moro, Edith Cowan University	Private	Y	Y	Y														
Conservation Council of WA	NGO	Y	Y	Y														
Conservation Commission of WA	Govt	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
WA Dept. of Agriculture	Govt	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
WA Dept. of Health	Govt																	
SA Dept. of Environment & Heritage	Govt																	
Dr Jeff Short, CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems	Govt	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Project Eden Mgmt. Committee (CALM)	Govt	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
Exmouth District (CALM)	Govt	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Dr Tony Friend (CALM)	Govt	N																
Kelly Gillen, Regional Mgr. Midwest (CALM)	Govt	Y	Y*						Y	Y								
Fauna Conservation and Recovery Program staff (CALM Science Division)	Govt	Y	Y*	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y*	Y*	Y	Y	Y	Y*	Y	Y
TOTAL	Y	11	6	7	7	7	4	7	7	5	6	2	4	10	3	3	5	7
	Y*	0	3	1	0	0	2	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0
	N	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
	Sum	11	11	9	7	7	6	7	8	6	7	4	5	10	3	5	5	7

## Introduction to the papers

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The reasons for reviewing *Western Shield* and the process that was adopted for the review are described in the Foreword and the Review Panel's report, elsewhere in this special volume of *Conservation Science Western Australia*. Nevertheless, understanding the nature of the papers published here requires some understanding of the circumstances under which they have been written.

To provide the Review Panel with comprehensive background information and expose its members to airing of that information in both public and in-house environments, the Executive Director commissioned twelve papers that were chosen to embrace all aspects of *Western Shield*. Each author was provided with specific terms of reference for his/her paper to ensure adequate coverage of topics, relevance to the review process and to avoid replication (Appendix 2 In Possingham *et al.* this issue). Authors were also required to comment on strengths, shortcomings and opportunities for improvements to aspects of the program that they implemented. This volume contains the papers that were originally presented to the Review Workshops and Review Panel members (but subject to minor revisions in the light of the workshop discussions and referee comments).

Collective publication of the papers is important because the set provides a snap-shot of *Western Shield* in 2003 that will become the historical benchmark against which progress is measured in future<sup>1</sup>. A special volume of *Conservation Science Western Australia* is an appropriate publication vehicle because its content format allows all the papers, despite their wide array of subject matter, to be published in a stand-alone volume of a journal that requires all manuscripts to be subject to the rigour of external (to CALM) refereeing. Moreover, in order to ensure important material that is pertinent to conservation and natural area management is publicly available, the journal accommodates papers that are too parochial or unacceptably long for mainstream journals. However, publication here has presented several challenges to scientist and non-scientist authors alike.

Scientist authors writing papers for publication in refereed scientific journals are usually able to choose their subject parameters and follow more or less conventional formats. However, addressing an imposed set of tightly-defined terms of reference while, nevertheless, presenting scientifically rigorous information that will be subject to external refereeing, requires departure from the comfort zone of normal scientific writing.

Similarly, non-scientist authors are exposed, often for the first time, to the concept of refereeing and to being required to revise their papers to accommodate the (sometimes anonymous) referees' comments. In many cases, formatting papers to the journal's editorial prescriptions is also a new experience. Thus, they too have departed from the comfort zone of more familiar creative or administrative writing styles.

Finally, but (under the circumstances) understandably, many referees were faced with new or unfamiliar requests. For example, some scientists who were invited to referee papers with scientific content were critical of unconventional formats that were sometimes dictated by the terms of reference given to author(s). Similarly, it was necessary to invite people who were familiar with a paper's subject matter, but not necessarily with the process of refereeing, to referee papers dealing with non-scientific subjects such as public relations and administration.

The labours of referees and authors, alike, in coming to grips with the processes has been commendable and has resulted in substantial improvements to the papers without compromise to the underlying information that was presented at the workshops and to the Review Panel. In the light of the unusual circumstances outlined above, as editors of this special volume, we accept full responsibility for interpretation of some referee comments and author responses and we take this opportunity to acknowledge the hard work, tolerance and willingness to work through issues that both referees and authors have afforded us.

TONY START AND PETER MAWSON  
8 OCTOBER 2004

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<sup>1</sup> To preserve the integrity of the papers as a benchmark, they have not been updated to reflect developments between February 2003 and publication, except to provide full references to papers that were 'in press' at that time.