

**Submission  
No 110**

**INQUIRY INTO MANAGEMENT OF CAT POPULATIONS  
IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

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## Felixer Grooming Trap



The diabolical Felixer grooming trap which is about to be rolled out all over Australia as part of the so called Threat Abatement plan for feral cats exploits the cleanliness of cats by spraying them with 1080 poison which they lick off their fur. The cats' prolonged and agonizing deaths involve vomiting and diarrhea, liquefaction and expulsion of internal organs through the nose and mouth, full bodied seizures and excruciating pain. Kittens of Mother cats killed will die slow, terrible deaths from starvation or being eaten alive by bull ants

What makes it more horrific is that this cruelty is being inflicted because of the unfounded claim that cats are a major factor in the demise of Australian native wildlife. There is no evidence anywhere on mainland Australia that this is true. They are being used as a scapegoat for human destruction of wildlife through habitat destruction and the overuse of pesticides and poisons.

Figures used to demonize cats are, at best, guesstimates, all originally based on a false claim made on Landline 12/11/14 by Greg Hunt that the Action Plan for Australian Mammals (2014) stated 20 million feral cats were killing over 20 billion native animals a year. Fact Check contacted the authors of the plan who said the plan contained no such statistic.

The species killed by cats quoted refer to a study of stomach contents of cats in the Kimberley. This figure is wrongly applied to the whole of Australia. Studies in other areas found rabbits to be the main diet of “feral” cats.

All subsequent propaganda to demonize cats is based on these two fallacies.

70% of native species are predators. Native species can cope with predation. They can't cope with habitat destruction.

Atrocities are no less atrocities because the perpetrators call them “conservation”.

You only have to look at these ridiculous claims rationally to see there would be no native animals left if they were true.

More realistic studies such as the REARK Research Report on hunting behaviour of domestic cats found that overall 56% of cats surveyed hunted and each one of those was estimated to have caught on average per year 1/50th of a native mammal, 1/5th of a native bird and 1 and 1/3rd native reptiles or amphibians. Half of all species caught were introduced animals (mice, rats and rabbits).

## **South Australian native duck massacre**

What makes the grooming trap atrocity even more disgusting is the fact that another legal native duck massacre, involving many filmed atrocities, has just

been committed by shooters for “sport” at Beachport, South Australia. Footage of some of these atrocities is included in the reference links below. The appalling footage shows a hunter leaving an injured duck flapping around in the water, rather than stop shooting to retrieve it. His dog mauls the suffering duck in the water for some considerable time before taking it, still alive, to the man who taunts and “bloods” the dog with it with obvious delight. He then “helicopters” it around by the legs which would cause multiple fractures of the neck and legs and unimaginable suffering before tossing the duck, obviously still alive, on to a pile of other ducks at his feet. He then continues blasting away at other ducks.

### **Witch Hunt**

The last time a witch hunt approaching this magnitude was conducted against cats was in the Middle Ages when they were falsely accused of being witches’ “familiar” and burned alive, along with the equally innocent women accused of being witches. The current witch-hunt is equally based in ignorance and even more cruel because millions of cats are being killed and more slowly than burning alive so suffering longer.



### **Government Propaganda Campaign to Demonize “feral” cats**

Over the last three decades the Australian Government has run a relentless propaganda campaign to demonize “feral” cats and persuade the public to regard them as “vermin”, totally unentitled to compassion or even the right to exist.



Pictures of cats on this propaganda are almost always snarling. This is almost certainly because they are terrified and/or in agony, often because they are in a cage or a trap. This one, from the Background document for threat abatement for predation by feral cats, could very well be in a steel-jawed leg-hold trap. Notice how the legs have been cropped from the picture. There are many pictures like this in the propaganda to demonize cats. Most have been cropped so that the cat's legs are not visible. Certainly cats were captured with leg hold traps (Duke # 1.5 and # 3, West Point, USA) to collar them in the Roxby Downs poison trials. The collars themselves had aerials almost as long as the cats' bodies. They would cause great distress to the cat, getting caught in undergrowth and interfering with their grooming. Cats tend to react with panic to any such impediment. Trials of various poisons were done using meat sausage baits from about 2015-18 to use in the so-called "Threat abatement plan" for feral cats.



## **Trials of so called more humane poisons.**

In the Scientific Research Back paper that was released as public information when Threat Abatement began it was acknowledged that the toxin 1080, through its complex modes of action, typically manifested in the central nervous system in most animals, causes death from either depression of the respiratory centre or ventricular fibrillation.

A similar poison, Papp (called Curiosity when used for cats and has other names when used for foxes or other animals), which contains a toxin that halts the supply of oxygen in the blood is claimed to be more humane but cats poisoned by Curiosity in the trial in Roxby Downs, were found lying in their own vomit, having defecated and showing cyanosed soft tissue around the mouth, similarly to cats poisoned with 1080. Cats that did not die as a direct result of consuming a Curiosity bait were recovered between 27- 29 days after baiting using VHF-guided hunting. Collared cats were pursued using VHF tracking techniques until they could be approached and shot or had sought refuge in a rabbit warren. These warrens were fumigated with phosphine gas tablets and excavated the following day to recover the cat/collar. In other words, some cats were hounded and tortured for a month!





**Figure 14. Post-mortem examination of cat 8. Note the Rhodamine B dye stain and presence of multiple baits.**

The methodical demonization of cats, increasing in intensity over the last decade, by the government is a marketing strategy. It's not even a sophisticated strategy - convince them they have a problem; sell them the solution.

Animal Control Technologies (Australia) (ACTA) exist to make profits manufacturing poisons. Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) exists to make profits off sheep. Now they have a major financial investment in also spruiking animal poison. And the Australian government (Invasive Animals CRC) now also have a financial share in this new animal poison AND the ability and resources to expand legislation to further its use.

They don't really care who poisons kill - just as long as they get a return on their millions of dollars of R&D.

Because Papp claimed to be a safer poison because there was a readily available antidote restrictions on its use were less. (In fact the antidote is unlikely to be able to save any animal once poisoned. See RSPCA poisons information link below)

By announcing the slightly less cruel Curiosity poison around 2015 Government planned to relieve themselves of the restrictions on 1080 (sold almost exclusively to farmers) and started recruiting:



*"I'm writing to all 563 Australian local councils seeking their support to humanely address feral cat impacts" ~ Gregory Andrews*

In fact, the Felixer trap is not using the more "humane" Papp poison. The adverts (included in the links below) clearly state it is using the internationally condemned "1080" poison. It appears that the so called "humane" poison Papp (called Curiosity when used for cats) may only be used in meat baits and the Felixer does not use baits. It just squirts a toxic 1080 gel onto the cats. Papp (Curiosity) may not be able to be used in the Felixer because of difficulty in infusing it in the gel and other difficulties. Felixers cost \$15,000 each.

And those who SHOULD be advocating for the protection of cats? All major animal welfare and animal rights groups are either silent, or complicit by advocating for 24hr cat confinement legislation. That means mass poisoning of cats with no concern for accidentally culled pets. If your pet escapes and is poisoned, you are to blame for not being a 'responsible' pet owner.

### **The few struggling to expose this horrendous conspiracy**

Notably in South Australia Christine Pierson of C.A.T.S (Cats Assistance to Sterilise) has been fighting Council cat confinement by-laws and providing cheap desexing for domestic cats and desexing and returning unowned suburban cats for thirty years. Desexing wild cats has been proved to be an effective and humane way of reducing cat numbers in suburbia. The desexed wild cats, being territorial like most animals, keep undesexed cats from moving in and breeding.

What makes this atrocity even worse is that killing cats can actually increase numbers because it tends to be the more dominant and bold animals who get killed, leaving a vacuum which is quickly filled by less dominant and usually younger and more fertile animals. This vacuum effect applies to most species.

### **Acknowledgement**

Thank you to Lisa Roberts for help with research.



## **References**

Advertisements for Felixer

<https://thewest.com.au/politics/poison-spraying-sensor-technology-to-combat-feral-cats-c-11116828>

<https://thylation.com/felixer-faqs/>

Field efficacy trials of the Curiosity bait for management of a feral cat population at **Roxby Downs**, South Australia January 2014.

<https://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/65e6f9c0-7dac-4312-8006-866f495632e0/files/curiosity-roxby-downs.pdf>

Background paper for threat abatement plan for predation by feral cats 2015

<https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/tap-predation-feral-cats-2015-background.pdf>

South Australian Duck Shooting Video 2023

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-03-23/rspca-beachport-duck-hunting-video-ahead-of-inquiry/102130602>

*A survey of the population characteristics and hunting behaviour of the domestic cat in Australia.*

Jim Millwood and Tim Heaton

[https://aiam.org.au/resources/Documents/1994%20UAM/PUB\\_Pro94\\_JimMillwood\\_TimHeaton.pdf](https://aiam.org.au/resources/Documents/1994%20UAM/PUB_Pro94_JimMillwood_TimHeaton.pdf)

What is Curiosity cat bait & why should you care? 2016

[http://savingpets.com.au/blog/curiosity\\_cat\\_bait](http://savingpets.com.au/blog/curiosity_cat_bait)

Lazenby field study showing killing cats can actually increase numbers

[https://figshare.utas.edu.au/articles/journal\\_contribution/Effects\\_of\\_low-level\\_culling\\_of\\_feral\\_cats\\_in\\_open\\_populations\\_a\\_case\\_study\\_from\\_the\\_forests\\_of\\_southern\\_Tasmania/22952972](https://figshare.utas.edu.au/articles/journal_contribution/Effects_of_low-level_culling_of_feral_cats_in_open_populations_a_case_study_from_the_forests_of_southern_Tasmania/22952972)

*A survey of the population characteristics and hunting behaviour of the domestic cat in Australia.* Jim Millwood and Tim Heaton

[https://aiam.org.au/resources/Documents/1994%20UAM/PUB\\_Pro94\\_JimMillwood\\_TimHeaton.pdf](https://aiam.org.au/resources/Documents/1994%20UAM/PUB_Pro94_JimMillwood_TimHeaton.pdf)

RSPCA Knowledge base information on poisons

<https://kb.rspca.org.au/knowledge-base/is-papp-a-more-humane-toxin-than-1080-for-pest-animal-control/>

Factors affecting the use of feral cat control tools

[https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0024/629520/Factors-affecting-the-use-of-feral-cat-control-tools-A.-Robley,-L.P.-Woodford,-T.-Schneider,-D.-Purdey,-L.-White,-J.-Cally,-P.-Moloney-and-J.-Thomson.pdf](https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0024/629520/Factors-affecting-the-use-of-feral-cat-control-tools-A.-Robley,-L.P.-Woodford,-T.-Schneider,-D.-Purdey,-L.-White,-J.-Cally,-P.-Moloney-and-J.-Thomson.pdf)

**Note to editor: Dear Gerald. This is for your information on Roxby Downs poison trials. If you think I should, I will include this direct quote from the Roxby Downs link.**

2.2.2 Trapping and radio-telemetry of feral cats Trapping was based on the procedures described in Sharp and Saunders (2004). The traps used were rubber-padded leghold traps (Duke #1.5 and #3, West Point, USA) that had been modified with a stronger base plate and additional swivels, and were waxed and dyed by Outfoxed Pest Control (Victoria). Seventy-six trap sets (consisting of two traps set as pairs in a 'walk-through' Field efficacy of the Curiosity® bait for management of a feral cat population at Roxby Downs. Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research Technical Report Series No. 253 7 configuration) were located along vehicle tracks with a 100–500 m separation (Figure 4). Ten additional trap sets were installed in off-track locations. Traps were not placed within 2 km of the edge of the study area in an attempt to minimise the capture of cats which were likely to spend time outside the baited area. Cat faeces and urine sourced from domestic cats were used as the scent lure at all trap sets except in one case. For this exceptional case, a cat was observed feeding on a trapped European rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) during the morning trap check on 26 June. This trap site was re-established leaving the rabbit secured in one trap as a food lure. The cat was recovered from the other trap approximately four hours later. Audio lures, known as the Feline Audio Phonic (FAP – Westcare, Nedlands, Western Australia), were operated on alternate nights

While we have improved our understanding of Felixer traps, Curiosity feral cat baiting, and monitoring techniques, several issues still require resolution. Felixers will not be registered for use in Victoria with 1080 as the poison. Instead, Victoria is waiting on the registration of PAPP as the toxin to be used in these traps. If the current technical issues of infusing PAPP into the gel can be overcome and the device is registered, there are still likely to be residual issues requiring further information. This information gap may include analysis of the risk to Dingo pups. Dingoes are susceptible to PAPP, and young Dingoes may be at risk from baiting. What the actual risk is remains to be quantified. It also remains uncertain whether Spot-tailed Quolls can trigger Felixers and whether they can ingest sufficient PAPP to be poisoned from grooming.

