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## Incursion response for Foxes in Tasmania

### Site: Fox Eradication Program - Tasmania

#### Activity: Project Administration

#### Caring for Our Country 2 Target Area Grants - Expression of Interest 2013/14

**Description:** Maintenance and implementation of the Tasmanian Invasive Animals Incursion Response Strategy and Framework for fox incursions: - Maintenance of 24hr reporting hotline - Assess, prioritise and allocate incoming reports for investigation - Investigate incoming public reports for corroborative evidence - Commence and manage Incursion Responses for suspected detection of fox presence - Complete 'After Action Reviews' to review Incursion Responses Pre-border, border and post-border biosecurity arrangements are reviewed by June 2016 to identify further measures to reduce risk of future fox incursions  
**Activity 1:** Project brief prepared and endorsed by FEP Steering Committee and Technical Advisory Panel  
**Activity 2:** Internal resources or external contract identified to deliver the project

**Type:** Project Administration

**Starts:** 01-07-2014

**Ends:** 31-12-2014

**Project stage:** Stage 3

**Major theme:**

**Activity status:** finished

## Administration Activities

Please list the numbers of people involved in undertaking each relevant type of administration activity and the average time spent per person:

Type of administration activity:	No. of people:	Ave. time per person (Hrs):	Ave. total time spent (Hrs):
Meeting / meeting administration	15	6.5	97.5
Communications plan	2	10	20
Data analysis	5	3	15
Desktop information gathering	3	13	39

Develop monitoring protocols	6	15	90
Establish landholder agreements	3	13	39
GIS / spatial data	3	13	39
Meeting / meeting administration	8	12	96
Modelling	2	50	100
Record Keeping	1	20	20
Site selection	2	20	40
Steering group / working group established	3	13	39
		Total time spent undertaking project administration activities (Hrs)	634.5

#### Comments / Notes:

Activity 1: Project brief prepared and endorsed by FEP Steering Committee and Technical Advisory Panel The last TAP meeting was held on 30 October 2013. The Stage 3 Monitoring plan was tabled at the meeting. TAP members were to provide feedback, but none was received. The last SC meeting was held on 10 April 2014. The minutes state: The Stage 3 Monitoring Plan was tabled. The Monitoring Plan was developed in two parts, a discussion paper and the actual plan. The Stage 3 Monitoring Plan was endorsed by the Steering Committee, noting the ongoing review process involving the Technical Advisory Panel. A meeting was held between the Commonwealth Project Manager (TAS) and the A/Manager Invasive Species Branch in late 2014 at which the state flagged the need for some changes to the plan and timelines due to changing on ground circumstances and results emerging from the research program. Activity 2: Internal resources or external contract identified to deliver the project Stage 3 Monitoring Plan identified resources and personnel required to deliver the plan. Until recently this has comprised 2 dog teams, comprising 1 handler and 2 dogs; 1 dedicated planner, 1 FTE for detection probability, 0.5 FTE for GIS work and 0.2 FTE for project management. Changes to this have been under implementation to fit with revised invasive species program priorities and availability of staff.

## Participant Information

No. of participants (ie. not employed on project):

0

No. of Indigenous participants (ie. not employed on project):

0

No. of new people attending project activities:

0

No. of farming entities participating in project activities for the first time:

0

No. of community groups (non delivery partners) participating:

0

No. of Indigenous on-country visits:

0

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## Incursion response for Foxes in Tasmania

### Site: Fox Eradication Program - Tasmania

#### Activity: Community Participation and Engagement

#### Caring for Our Country 2 Target Area Grants - Expression of Interest 2013/14

**Description:** Engagement with the Tasmanian community to raise awareness of the risk of fox establishment with delivery of the FEP Stage 3: Activity 1: Continue maintenance and use of the departmental website, ISB Facebook site, and FEP factsheets Activity 2: 1 x 'Invasive Species Community Partnership' forum / workshop on invasive species and the FEP Activity 3: Publish and distribute 2 editions of the Eradicate newsletter Activity 4: Maintain contact with all properties with 'areas of operations' as per Monitoring Plans Activity 5: Maintain contact with stakeholders and local landholders through 'Incursion Alerts' during incursion responses

**Type:** Community Participation and Engagement

**Starts:** 01-07-2014

**Ends:** 31-12-2014

**Project stage:** Stage 3

**Major theme:**

**Activity status:** finished

## Event Details

Note that the target measure for 'No. of events' is calculated as the number of rows in this table. Please enter a separate row for each event.

Type of event:	Purpose of event:	Main industry type addressed:	Topics covered:	Event Duration (Hrs):
Meeting	Other (describe in notes)	Environmental management	invasive species	6
			Total event hours for this activity:	6

**Delivery partners:**

Local farmer or community group, Academic/research institution, Other (specify in notes)

No. of groups supported financially:

0

Comments / Notes:

Activity 1: Continue maintenance and use of the departmental website, ISB Facebook site, and FEP factsheets The ISB Facebook page is regularly updated. Resulting from the changes within the ISB and the creation of Biosecurity Tasmania the Tasmanian Invasive Species FB page is being shut down and ISB will now use the Biosecurity Tasmania FB page for posts to avoid duplication of effort and provide higher level of service to stakeholders. There will be a transition period of two months while posts are duplicated across both pages and to make clients aware of the change. This is regarded as a positive development in the integration of Invasive Species into the Biosecurity Tasmania Division. The webpages and factsheets are undergoing extensive renovation, in line with an ongoing review of the Division's internet pages. This should result in a more streamlined delivery of information. Activity 2: 1 x 'Invasive Species Community Partnership' forum / workshop on invasive species and the FEP The Invasive Species Community Partnership meets 3 times per year. The last meeting was on 07 November 2014 and the next meeting is scheduled for March 2015. From the ISCP ToR: The Invasive Species Community Partnership (ISCP) plays an important role in having input into the strategic direction of invasive species priorities and programs managed by the Tasmanian Government. It is a collaborative group that represents stakeholders with an interest in invasive species management issues in Tasmania. The ISCP represents a commitment from stakeholders to work together to achieve positive results and effective invasive species management in Tasmania. Activity 3: Publish and distribute 2 editions of the Eradicate newsletter Two editions of Eradicate were published in 2014 and a double issue is currently in preparation for distribution prior to and during Agfest and for distribution to stakeholders at the next ISCP meeting. Activity 4: Maintain contact with all properties with 'areas of operations' as per Monitoring Plans Letters requesting permission to access land to collect data for the CRC projects, were sent to target landowners on 01 October 2014. Responses have been received from landowners who grant access. Two meetings have been held between Invasive Species Branch and Biosecurity Operations Branch and planning for data collection in the northern midlands is underway. This data collection is being tailored to gathering information for detection and incursion modelling. Activity 5: Maintain contact with stakeholders and local landholders through 'Incursion Alerts' during incursion responses The Invasive Species emailing list no longer exists and has been absorbed into the Biosecurity Advisory network which is an email based alert system. There is a category within the list for invasive species and all those recipients will receive an 'Incursion Alert.' Incursion alerts will go 1000 – 1400 recipients. Direct contact is made with local landowners when we mount an incursion response.

## Participant Information

No. of participants (ie. not employed on project):

6

No. of Indigenous participants (ie. not employed on project):

0

No. of new people attending project activities:

2

No. of farming entities participating in project activities for the first time:

0

No. of community groups (non delivery partners) participating:

0

No. of Indigenous on-country visits:

0

## Materials Provided to Participants

No. of written Materials and brochures:

1

No. of Material Recipients:

0

No. of Displays at the event:

0

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## MERIT

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# **Incursion response for Foxes in Tasmania**

## **Site: Fox Eradication Program - Tasmania**

### **Activity: Progress, Outcomes and Learning - stage report**

#### **Caring for Our Country 2 Target Area Grants - Expression of Interest 2013/14**

**Description:** Stage 3 report

**Type:** Progress, Outcomes and Learning - stage report

**Starts:** 01-07-2014

**Ends:** 31-12-2014

**Project stage:** Stage 3

**Major theme:**

**Activity status:** finished

## **Overview of Project Progress**

This section should provide an overview of how your project has progressed over this stage against the information for the activities and deliverables identified in your plan. Information provided here is used in the Stage Report Summary. More detail is requested in other sections below.

Progress against planned activities and outcomes:

Delivery of the project is on track. The objective of the Investigation and Incursion Response Output is to “respond rapidly to suspected and confirmed detections of foxes and destroy all detected foxes or confirm

absence". Over three and a half years has elapsed since the last detection of physical evidence. The major Output of stage 3 is the completion of Landscape Monitoring using detector dog teams and other surveillance tools (including passive community surveillance linked to the investigations and incursion response output). During the reporting period the monitoring planning was paused whilst data was sourced for input into modelling and cost-benefit analyses for a long term strategy for fox incursion response. Planning has since resumed and the northern Midlands will be monitored with a multi-purpose aim. In just a few short months it will be 4 years since the last collected evidence of the invasive Red Fox in Tasmania. This is despite continued monitoring using scat detector dogs, and a large scale predator scat survey across eastern Tasmania. One third of the scats have been analysed and no fox scats detected. So we currently believe that there is a very low probability that foxes remain extant in Tasmania. This is supported by a spatio-temporal model of fox distribution in Tasmania recently developed by biometricians at the Arthur Rylah Institute (VIC) and CSIRO (ACT) (Ramsey and Caley, 2015). Ramsey and Caley's (2015) work, models probable invasion pathways; fox life history traits; physical evidence collected to date; and activities within the landscape which could feasibly have discovered additional evidence of foxes (travel along major roads, hunting, remote sensing cameras and strategic monitoring). The model then projects how the fox population grew and spread in Tasmania. Any scenario is rejected that does not allow for the physical evidence we have collected to date. Running millions of iterations of this model then gives us a good idea, with associated levels of probability, how likely it is that foxes are still extant in Tasmania. There is still additional work to be done on the model, but preliminary results look promising. As a result, there has been a significant shift in activities within the Invasive Species Branch. Broad landscape monitoring planning is being finalised, with current efforts targeted in the northern section of the Midlands (north of Campbell town) which the model shows to have the highest chance of remaining un-monitored areas to still contain foxes (albeit a very low chance!). The collection of data from this last area will both confirm that foxes are not present, and allow the model to narrow down the probability of foxes being extant in Tasmania. This sampling will also serve as a trigger point for an incursion response as part of the CFoC project in the unlikely chance that fox positive evidence were found. A targeted monitoring strategy is being investigated together with the potential for a landscape incursion alert monitoring system for vertebrate pests. Work on a concept for such a system has been written and progress towards developing a more detailed proposal as a basis for prototyping will be reported at the next stage report.

Successes, challenges and adaptations:

The success would have to be the absence of physical evidence since July 2011. Credible sighting reports are still received however and these are responded to. Details of these are found elsewhere in this report. Preliminary results of recent scientific work indicates a high likelihood that the red fox is no longer extant in the Tasmanian landscape. A key challenge is to ensure appropriate monitoring and surveillance is in place for fox incursions despite the strong negative attitude within sections of the community about the FEP. The program is therefore adapting to treat foxes like any other high risk species which threatens the State's environmental and agricultural industries. This will involve the improvement of detection and response capability to finalise the collection and assessment of data from monitoring and various other sources.

## **Environmental, Economic and Social Outcomes**

Environmental outcomes of the project for this stage:

Continued absence of physical evidence despite monitoring and surveillance activity is the major outcome.

Social outcomes of the project for this stage:

The project has benefitted from a decline in public media attention as the unproductive work and stress generated by this previously had adverse impacts on staff.

Economic outcomes of the project for this stage:



Continued absence of physical evidence despite monitoring and surveillance activity is the major outcome.

## Implementation Update

Activity implementation for this stage:

Activities have been progressed.

Details of adaptations and variations from the plan:

Whilst adaptations and variations have so far been minor, some larger changes will be flagged. These are intended to be dealt with subject to agreement, by a notice of variation to attach to the MERI plan.

Have you had any notifiable Workplace Health and Safety incidents during the reporting period?:

## Lessons Learned and Improvements

Lessons learned for this stage:

Lesson learning from a community engagement and communication perspective are covered in the publication: Blackman, D. A., Moon, K., Harris, S. and Sarre, S. (2014) Knowledge Mangement, context and public policy: developing an analysis framework. Pp208-233, In: Anders Ortenblad 2014 Handbook of Research on Knowledge Management. Adaptation and Context. Edward Elgar, Cheltenham.

Improvement actions to be implemented:

In the current stage, completion of various scientific studies underpinning our confidence in monitoring and other aspects is important.

Comments / Notes:

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# MERIT STAGE SUMMARY

## Stage 3 : 30 Jun 2014 - 31 Dec 2014

Project Name	Tasmanian Fox Eradication Program (Stage 3) – Fox Incursion Response
Recipient	Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment
Service Provider	
Funded by	Caring for Our Country 2
Funding	
Project Start	17 Jul 2013
Project finish	29 Jun 2017
Grant ID	X0000004452G
External ID	TAGEOI14P2 – 00279

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## Summary

### Number of activities:

Planned	0
Started	0
Finished	3
Deferred	0
Cancelled	0

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## Supporting Documents Attached During This Stage

Document name

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## Outputs: Targets Vs Achieved

Output type	Output Target Measure	Output Achieved (project to date)	Output Target (whole project)
Pest Management Details	Area covered (Ha) by pest treatment actions	0.0	6,840,100 Ha

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## Project Outcomes

Outcomes

Project Goals

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## Summary of Project Progress and Issues

### **Environmental, Economic and Social Outcomes:**

Environmental outcomes of the project for this stage:- Continued absence of physical evidence despite monitoring and surveillance activity is the major outcome.

Economic outcomes of the project for this stage:- Continued absence of physical evidence despite monitoring and surveillance activity is the major outcome.

Social outcomes of the project for this stage:- The project has benefitted from a decline in public media attention as the unproductive work and stress generated by this previously had adverse impacts on staff.

### **Implementation Update:**

Details of adaptations and variations from the plan:- Whilst adaptations and variations have so far been minor, some larger changes will be flagged. These are intended to be dealt with subject to agreement, by a notice of variation to attach to the MERI plan.

Activity implementation for this stage:- Activities have been progressed.

### **Overview of Project Progress:**

Progress against planned activities and outcomes:- Delivery of the project is on track. The objective of the Investigation and Incursion Response Output is to “respond rapidly to suspected and confirmed detections of foxes and destroy all detected foxes or confirm absence”. Over three and a half years has elapsed since the last detection of physical evidence. The major Output of stage 3 is the completion of Landscape Monitoring using detector dog teams and other surveillance tools (including passive community surveillance linked to the investigations and incursion response output). During the reporting period the monitoring planning was paused whilst data was sourced for input into modelling and cost-benefit analyses for a long term strategy for fox incursion response. Planning has since resumed and the northern Midlands will be monitored with a multi-purpose aim. In just a few short months it will be 4 years since the last collected evidence of the invasive Red Fox in Tasmania. This is despite continued monitoring using scat detector dogs, and a large scale predator scat survey across eastern Tasmania. One third of the scats have been analysed and no fox scats detected. So we currently believe that there is a very low probability that foxes remain extant in Tasmania. This is supported by a spatio-temporal model of fox distribution in Tasmania recently developed by biometricians at the Arthur Rylah Institute (VIC) and CSIRO (ACT) (Ramsey and Caley, 2015). Ramsey and Caley’s (2015) work, models probable invasion pathways; fox life history traits; physical evidence collected to date; and activities within the landscape which could feasibly have discovered additional evidence of foxes (travel along major roads, hunting, remote sensing cameras and strategic monitoring). The model then projects how the fox population grew and spread in Tasmania. Any scenario is rejected that does not allow for the physical evidence we have collected to date. Running millions of iterations of this model then gives us a good idea, with associated levels of probability, how likely it is that foxes are still extant in Tasmania. There is still additional work to be done on the model, but preliminary results look promising. As a result, there has been a significant shift in activities within the Invasive Species Branch. Broad landscape monitoring planning is being finalised, with current efforts targeted in the northern section of the Midlands (north of Campbell town) which the model shows to have the highest chance of remaining un-monitored areas to still contain foxes (albeit a very low chance!). The collection of data from this last area will both confirm that foxes are not present, and allow the model to narrow down the probability of foxes being extant in Tasmania. This sampling will also serve as a trigger point for an incursion response as part of the CFoC project in the unlikely chance that fox positive evidence were found. A targeted monitoring strategy is being investigated together with the potential for a landscape incursion alert monitoring system

for vertebrate pests. Work on a concept for such a system has been written and progress towards developing a more detailed proposal as a basis for prototyping will be reported at the next stage report.

Successes, challenges and adaptations:- The success would have to be the absence of physical evidence since July 2011. Credible sighting reports are still received however and these are responded to. Details of these are found elsewhere in this report. Preliminary results of recent scientific work indicates a high likelihood that the red fox is no longer extant in the Tasmanian landscape. A key challenge is to ensure appropriate monitoring and surveillance is in place for fox incursions despite the strong negative attitude within sections of the community about the FEP. The program is therefore adapting to treat foxes like any other high risk species which threatens the State's environmental and agricultural industries. This will involve the improvement of detection and response capability to finalise the collection and assessment of data from monitoring and various other sources.

### **Lessons Learned and Improvements:**

Improvement actions to be implemented:- In the current stage, completion of various scientific studies underpinning our confidence in monitoring and other aspects is important.

Lessons learned for this stage:- Lesson learning from a community engagement and communication perspective are covered in the publication: Blackman, D. A., Moon, K., Harris, S. and Sarre, S. (2014) Knowledge Mangement, context and public policy: developing an analysis framework. Pp208-233, In: Anders Ortenblad 2014 Handbook of Research on Knowledge Management. Adaptation and Context. Edward Elgar, Cheltenham.

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## **Project Risk**

To help anticipate and determine management and mitigation strategies for the risks associated with delivering and reporting the outcomes of this Regional Delivery project, complete the table below. Risks identified should be those that the project team consider to be within the reasonable influence of the project team to anticipate and manage.

Risk/Threat Description	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Current Controls/Contingenc y	Residual Risk
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## Project Against Each Activity

### 1. Activity Type

Status

Activity Description

Major Theme

Site

Start Date

End Date

### 2. Activity Type

Status

### Project Administration

finished

Maintenance and implementation of the Tasmanian Invasive Animals Incursion Response Strategy and Framework for fox incursions:- Maintenance of 24hr reporting hotline- Assess, prioritise and allocate incoming reports for investigation- Investigate incoming public reports for corroborative evidence- Commence and manage Incursion Responses for suspected detection of fox presence- Complete 'After Action Reviews' to review Incursion ResponsesPre-border, border and post-border biosecurity arrangement are reviewed by June 2016 to identify further measures to reduce risk of future fox incursionsActivity 1: Project brief prepared and endorsed by FEP Steering Committee and Technical Advisory PanelActivity 2: Internal resources or external contract identified to deliver the project

Fox Eradication Program - Tasmania

30 Jun 2014

30 Dec 2014

### Community Participation and Engagement

finished

Activity Description	Engagement with the Tasmanian community to raise awareness of the risk of fox establishment with delivery of the FEP Stage 3:Activity 1: Continue maintenance and use of the departmental website, ISB Facebook site, and FEP factsheetsActivity 2: 1 x 'Invasive Species Community Partnership' forum / workshop on invasive species and the FEPActivity 3: Publish and distribute 2 editions of the Eradicate newsletterActivity 4: Maintain contact with all properties with 'areas of operations' as per Monitoring PlansActivity 5: Maintain contact with stakeholders and local landholders through 'Incursion Alerts' during incursion responses
Major Theme	
Site	Fox Eradication Program - Tasmania
Start Date	30 Jun 2014
End Date	30 Dec 2014
<b>3. Activity Type</b>	<b>Progress, Outcomes and Learning - stage report</b>
Status	finished
Activity Description	Stage 3 report
Major Theme	
Site	Fox Eradication Program - Tasmania
Start Date	30 Jun 2014
End Date	30 Dec 2014

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**Summary generated by:**

Position/Role

Date

Report status

**Wendy Draper(wendy.draper@dpipwe.tas.gov.au)**

MERIT Project Administrator and authorised representative of  
Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment

2015-04-30 12:16:18

Report submitted