



8 February 2022

Media Statement

Protection of WA's vulnerable native species receives a major boost

- Western Shield wildlife recovery program boosted with approximately \$1 million from the Alcoa Foundation
- Project to support protection of native animals threatened by feral predators in the northern jarrah forest
- Trainee Aboriginal rangers to develop new wildlife monitoring skills

Protection of vulnerable native species in the northern jarrah forest has received a major boost through approximately \$1 million in funding for the Western Shield wildlife recovery program.

The new funding from Alcoa's global charity, the Alcoa Foundation, will bolster and improve protection of 14 threatened species occurring in the northern jarrah forest – including the numbat, woylie, chuditch and quokka – from foxes and feral cats.

The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA), which runs Western Shield, will use the funding over the next three years to increase fox management, as well as integrate feral cat management, across more than 500,000 hectares of forest habitat from Avon Valley National Park in the north to State forest south of Collie.

This will see an increase in the frequency of aerial fox baiting, which has been demonstrated to be beneficial to threatened species occurring in the forest, such as the critically endangered woylie. A trial of the Eradicat[®] feral cat bait will also be introduced to tackle feral cats as part of an integrated approach to management of both feral predators, which impact heavily on native wildlife.

DBCA will also extend the Western Shield network of remote field cameras to enhance threatened wildlife monitoring and increase the on-ground knowledge of introduced predators to adapt and improve management over time.

Training opportunities will be made available to Aboriginal rangers for wildlife monitoring through the deployment and servicing of remote cameras and data collection in the field.

The Alcoa Foundation grant is independent of and in addition to long-running support Alcoa of Australia has provided to Western Shield since the program's inception 25 years ago.

Alcoa Global Biodiversity Manager Dr Andrew Grigg said the Alcoa Foundation believed it was the appropriate time to make this investment given the growing biodiversity threat posed by feral predators in the northern jarrah forest.

"Many of Western Australia's native animal species are on the brink of catastrophic decline due to the danger they face from feral predators like the fox and feral cat," Dr Grigg said.

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“The Alcoa Foundation has a strong focus on protecting biodiversity, so we are proud to bolster the important work done through Western Shield and understand how it can be improved.”

DBCA’s Western Shield Zoologist, Dr Michelle Drew said the funding would support ongoing efforts to protect native wildlife from introduced predators while also supporting a healthier jarrah forest.

“The project will provide increased protection for native species such as the woylie and quenda, also known as ‘ecosystem engineers’, whose digging behaviour enhances nutrient cycling, increases soil aeration and water penetration as well as promoting the growth of native seedlings,” Dr Drew said.

“This will ultimately enhance the regeneration of the northern jarrah forest and promote greater native species diversity.”

The management of introduced predators takes place across around 3.8 million hectares of DBCA’s Parks and Wildlife Service-managed land and associated partner areas, from Karratha in the north, through forests of the south-west to east of Esperance. Western Shield’s work to protect WA’s native wildlife is supported with funding from partners including Alcoa Foundation, Tronox, South 32, Newmont and Western Areas Ltd.

Image:



Photo caption: (from left) Alcoa’s Dr Justine Barker and Dr Andrew Grigg with DBCA’s Dr Michelle Drew holding a cage trap used to monitor native wildlife in the northern jarrah forest.



Department of **Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions**

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Western Australia.*

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Link to video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WroZq13L8ak>

Link to webpage: <https://www.dbca.wa.gov.au/western-shield-alcoa-foundation>

A media pack is available via the webpage.

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