

27 August 2022

Preparing specific and measurable pest animal management plans

Plans should be written to clearly communicate their intent.

Being clear about who the plan is for will help guide the scope of what should be included.

It is best to use a hierarchy of terminology that not only guides the 'on-ground' actions but also facilitates the ability to measure and evaluate the success of achieving the desired outcomes of the plan.

Planning terminology

Planning terminology can vary, and this can sometimes be a source of confusion. For example, the words 'strategy', 'goal' and 'objective' are sometimes used to state the overall purpose of a plan, whilst in other instances they are used to describe specific activities that should be undertaken to implement the plan.

Regardless of what words are used, the structure should follow a consistent hierarchy. The hierarchical structure is used to communicate the overarching intent of the plan and then the steps that are needed to implement the plan.

The plan should be written so that it facilitates the ability to measure the success of its implementation.

Preferred terminology and hierarchy overview

Title and timeframe

Name the overall document and the timeframe.

Goal – What is the big picture?

There can be more than one goal; however, each goal should be a broad statement of what is the desired end state for all stakeholders.

Objectives – Breaking down your plan into smaller sections

Objectives are shorter overarching statements that collectively are designed to achieve the Goal/s. There can be multiple objectives for each Goal in a plan.

Objectives should be written so they are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant/Realistic and Timebound; often referred to as 'SMART' objectives. Always review your objective statement to see if it is SMART.

Actions – What must happen to achieve the objective

Actions are the specific activities that need to be completed to achieve the objective. There may be multiple actions for each objective. Timelines can be added to actions, especially when they are actions that should be completed prior to the end of the plan's timeframe.

Ensure you clarify 'who' is to complete the action, making it clear to all stakeholders who is responsible for that action.

Measuring performance

Well written objectives and actions will help identify what can be measured to determine the success of achieving your objective.

When reporting on the progress of the plan, not all objectives or activities may need to be reported on. Specific/key performance measures/indicators can be selected to report on the implementation of the plan.

Examples of titles, goals, objectives and actions

Title and timeframes -examples

- NSW Biosecurity Strategy 2013-2021
- Riverina Regional Strategic Pest Animal Management Plan 2018-2023
- Sandy Road Feral Pig Management Plan 2022-2023

Goal - examples

- Prevent the establishment of new invasive species.
- Protect the environment, community and economy from the negative impacts of pest animals.
- Protect the brush-tailed rock wallaby population from the impacts of wild dogs and foxes in the Mountain Valley area.

Objectives - examples

- Increase the number of land managers involved in wild dog management by 10% annually.
S – increase the number of land managers involved
M – by 10% annually (should have a baseline number of land managers currently involved in wild dog management)
A – ensure the % is achievable
R – wild dog control options and coordination is available
T – annually
– The performance measure is: increased baseline numbers of landholders involved in wild dog management by 10% each year.
 - No reduction in the brush-tailed rock wallaby population in the Mountain Creek area over the life of the plan.
S –the number of wallabies is not reduced
M –no reduction in wallabies over the life of the plan (baseline population estimates should be known)
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A – must understand what factors are affecting or might be affecting the wallaby population

R – are options available to address the factors that are affecting the wallaby population (natural disasters like fire are external to the plan)

T – over the life of the plan

– The performance measure is: no reduction in the number of brush-tailed rock wallabies in the Mountain Creek area.

- Maintain or increase the number of land managers accredited to use vertebrate pesticides over the life of the plan

S – maintain or increase the number of land managers involved

M – baseline number of accredited land managers is recorded

A – ensure training is readily available

R – enables land managers to use primary pest animal control techniques

T – over the life of the plan

– The performance measure is: the number of accredited land managers compared to the initial number of accredited land managers.

Actions - examples

- NPWS conduct an annual population monitoring program on the brush-tailed rock wallaby in June.
- Local Land Services run a minimum of three face-to-face *Vertebrate pesticide induction training* courses annually.
- Local Land Services convenes two meetings of the Regional Pest Animal Committee annually.

Things to avoid

- Writing objectives that are not SMART.
 - For example: ‘Community monitoring for any new incursion’
 - S** – not specific and is ambiguous
 - M** – no way to measuring as this could mean many things and not related to any specific target
 - A** – what is the ‘community’ – this is very broad
 - R** – not linked to any factor to access if it is realistic
 - T** – not time bound.
- Writing activities that are more of an intent or principle of what could occur without detail, or that are not likely to be achievable
 - For example: ‘Maintain open communication with all stakeholders’
 - ‘open communication’ is vague
 - ‘stakeholders’ are not defined
 - it is rarely possible to engage ‘all’ stakeholders

Examples of structure

A consistent table format to detail agreed objectives, actions (and associated timeframes where relevant) and performance measures should be constructed in a way that enhances the comprehension of how to implement and measure the plan. There may be some overarching objectives that cover all pest animal species – e.g. overarching governance processes such as Regional Pest Animal Committees. Other objectives will be specific to a particular pest animal species.

Objective: All livestock production areas at risk of wild dog impacts east of the Hume Highway have current local wild dog management plans in place.	
Actions	Timeframe
Conduct a review of the area at risk from the impact of wild dogs to determine how many local wild dog management plans need to be in place to guide engagement and control programs.	Annually over the life of the plan
Develop new or review existing local wild dog management plans with relevant stakeholders.	Annually over the life of the plan
Key performance measures The area of land east of the Hume Highway at risk of wild dog attacks on livestock production. The area of land east of the Hume Highway with current local wild dog management plans in place. The percentage of the area of livestock production areas at risk of wild dog attack with current local wild dog management plans in place.	

Objective: Training, information and advice is available for the community and land managers to support the implementation of best practice pest animal management.	
Actions	Timeframe
On-line <i>Vertebrate pesticide induction training</i> for end users is available to access at any time	Ongoing
Local Land Services has a pest animal management display at Henty Machinery Field days with Biosecurity staff available to provide advice and information about pest animal management.	Annually over the life of the plan
Key performance measures No land manager is restricted from access to baits due to not being accredited. Number of people that visit the pest animal management display at Henty Machinery Field Days.	

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