Email Submission: Richard Stallman

First, nature is full of surprises. I think any deployed gene drive should have multiple redundant systems to prevent it from overspreading (for instance, to the place of origin of a species that is invasive in Australia). If each of these systems ought to be adequate, by itself, to prevent overspreading, the chance that all of them will fail will be less.

Second, one possible system to prevent overspreading is to make the gene drive conditional on the presence of some trigger substance that would be present only in Australia. It could be a substance spread by a common Australian plant, or perhaps (in a mammal) antibodies to pollen from such a plant. It could also be a substance that people would place in the areas where the target species is to be eradicated. In that species' place of origin, the trigger substance would not be present so the gene drive would be inoperative.