

CARNARVON RANGELANDS BIOSECURITY ASSOCIATION INC.



ANNUAL REPORT

2018 / 2019



Department of
Primary Industries and
Regional Development



ROYALTIES
FOR REGIONS



1. INTRODUCTION

About the Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Association

The CRBA is a not for profit association formed under the *Associations Incorporation Act 2015*, providing declared pest control services for land managers throughout Shark Bay, Carnarvon, Exmouth, Murchison and Upper Gascoyne Shires. The associations' primary purpose is the control of declared pests using funding from Declared Pest Rates paid by landholders on pastoral stations. These Declared Pest Rates funds are matched dollar for dollar by the WA Government to reflect the public benefit of controlling declared pest animals and weeds. The association is formally recognised by the Hon Minister for Agriculture and Food as a recognised biosecurity group (RBG).

Membership of the Association

Full membership of the Association is open only to ratepayers within the area subject to rule 19(3) of the groups constitution, and full membership is automatically bestowed upon the individual or entity in whose name the relevant Declared Pest Rate assessment is issued, provided also that the relevant assessment is paid in full within 12 months of its issue date.

The association is managed by a committee who act in a voluntary capacity.

Committee of management members (as at 30 June 2018)

Position	Name	Member Station/organisation
Chair	Justin Steadman	Wooramel Station
Vice-Chair	Tim Higham	Meedo Station
Secretary / Treasurer	Aggie Forrester	Winning Station
Member	Harry McKeogh	Carey Downs Station
Member	Jim Dorrell	Mia Mia Station
Member	Sandy McTaggart	Mt Narryer Station
Member	Leonie McLeod	Warroora Station
Member	Cameron Tubby	Wahroonga / Winderie Station
Member	Roger Davies	Eudamullah Station
Associate Member	Gavan Mullan	Dept Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA)
Associate Member	John McCleary	Shire of Upper Gascoyne

How the group is funded

The association's main source of funding is from pastoral lease rates that are matched equally by the State Government. Additional grant income has been received this financial year from Royalties for Regions (R4R) and Federal White Paper - Capacity Building. The CRBA distributes funds to the Shire of Upper Gascoyne for wild dog control, with the Shire adding approximately \$125,000 per annum for wild dog control within the Shire of Upper Gascoyne area.

The CRBA has specific obligations under the BAM Act regarding the transfer of funds from the Declared Pest Account, which are detailed in sections 170 of the BAM Act. When available the group also attracts funds from other sources such as Federal and State Government.

2. CRBA AIMS AND AREA OF OPERATIONS

Aims

The Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Association (CRBA) aligned its aims directly to its objects in the groups' constitution. These are:

- Foster the *control of declared pests* throughout the Area, via the formulation, implementation, and review of appropriate *management plans* and programs.
- Encourage *integration, coordination, and general collaboration* of all Area stakeholders in pest management matters.
- Promote the adoption of *sound biosecurity practices* throughout the Area.

High priority declared pests in the region

Wild dogs are a major problem in the region attacking sheep, goats and young cattle. Not only do wild dogs cause direct stock losses, they also cause losses through maiming and the costs associated with controlling them.

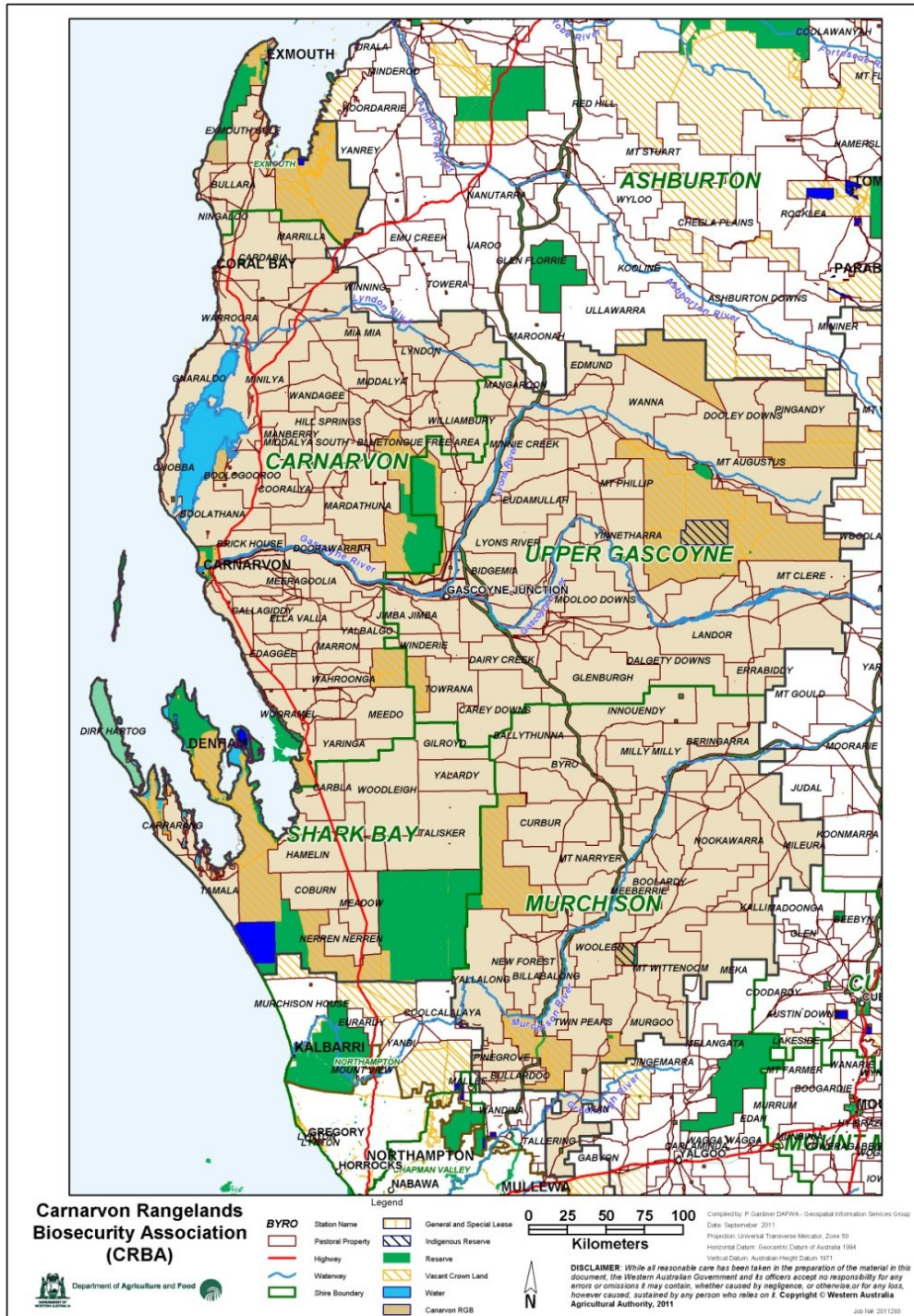
Mesquite There are currently twelve pastoral leases with Mesquite infestations from the Gascoyne Junction to the Gascoyne River Mouth at Carnarvon.

Parkinsonia is present on three pastoral leases.

Donkeys are present on properties in the north and east of the region.

Area of operation

The CRBA area of operation takes in the Shires of Carnarvon, Exmouth, Shark Bay, Murchison and Upper Gascoyne. Additional pastoral properties below the state barrier fence within the Shire of Northampton and City of Greater Geraldton (locality of Mullewa) are included in the CRBA area of operation. The population for the CRBA area is approximately total population of 9,500. Its largest town is Carnarvon, with a population of approximately 5,500 residents. Carnarvon is the regional service centre for the whole Gascoyne-Murchison area. There are over 90 pastoral leases, multiple Exclusive Native Title properties and a substantial amount of DBCA managed land within the area.



3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT prepared by Justin Steadman

Activities:

- CRBA welcomed Krystie to take over the role of EO from David Blood.
- MOU with Upper Gascoyne Shire has now been finalised.
- Steve and Rosie Field, along with Steve Haines finished up at the end of this financial year. We thank them all for their contribution to the CRBA. Replacements for these two areas are being sort for the 2019/20 year.
- Concentrated efforts were made by the CRBA committee to encourage further engagement and contribution to ongoing management of biosecurity matters within the Shires of Carnarvon, Murchison and Shark Bay. This is critical with R4R funding being removed in 2020. The CRBA would again like to recognise the Shire of Upper Gascoyne for its continued commitment to working with us on biosecurity matters.
- Regional community wild dog ground baiting was coordinated in October 2018 and May 2019 in most areas. Aerial baiting occurred as part of this program within the Murchison in October 2018.
- All 8 CRBA LPMT contractors were provided with iPads as part of the Federal White Paper funding received. These devices allow our contractors to utilise Feral Scan, have up to date access to property maps, RCPs and take images relevant to CRBA activities.
- The Committee voted for the RCP application fees to be paid for by the CRBA, this has seen an increase in the number of valid permits now in place across the region.
- Shires that have shown and committed to supporting the RBG:
 - Shire of Upper Gascoyne – contributing a significant amount of additional money and resources towards biosecurity matters within their shire area.
 - Shire of Shark Bay – provided a \$5,000 contribution to the CRBA to assist our operations within the region.
 - Shire of Murchison – continues to support it pastoralists through their 'scalp' payment to individuals who control wild dogs within the shire and has also made a commitment to assist the CRBA financially in the 2019/20 year.

Achievements:

- The 3 CRBA bait meat freezers have now been installed and are fully operational in depots at the Shire of Carnarvon, Murchison and Upper Gascoyne. These have bait meats available for all landholders and LPMTs to access throughout the year for target baiting.
- CRBA received funding from Rangelands NRM for the control of LFH within the Ningaloo World Heritage area.
- The Federal White Paper funding finished up this financial year and this has allowed the CRBA to not only build on our capacity but engage with the local community:
 - Four Community Engagement Days were held across the region with valuable ideas and feedback received from the members who attended.
 - The Wild Dog Action Plan was printed and posted to all CRBA members, allowing everyone to have a current copy that is easy to update annually.
 - The CRBA has established a bi-annual newsletter to keep the community up to date with biosecurity matters.
 - Drones were purchased to trail their effectiveness as bait delivery options and recon for LPMT contractors working within difficult regions of the CRBA.
- Phase One of the Pest Drought Pig Project commenced within the Shire of Upper Gascoyne, with DPIRD providing additional funding for this phase.

What is working well:

- The implementation of the bait meat freezers has allowed quicker access to meat for landholders and LPMT contracts.
- CBRA communication to its constituents has greatly improved in the last year with the implementation of its bi-annual newsletter. This newsletter is sent in both electronic and paper format and provides members with current information on all biosecurity related matters.
- Since the finalisation of the MOU with the Shire of Upper Gascoyne, the flow of wild dog data has increased.

- The CRBA continues to meet all governance requirements.

Areas of concerns:

- The timeliness and accuracy of quarterly financial statements from DPIRD for our Declared Pest Rate income, continues to be challenging for the CRBA. The lack of promptness in forwarding them and communication of delays has caused undue stress to the CRBA committee as it tries to manage an up to date and current financial outlook for the group. The punctuality of invoice payments is also often challenging, making management of the many monthly payments out of our accounts at the end of a payment cycle difficult.
- Multiple grants applications have been submitted through this financial year, results on some are still pending but getting access to additional grant monies is getting harder as more groups/people become involved.
- Substitute funding to replace R4R is being addressed, this process will take some time. Discussions with the relevant government channels are opening, with DPIRD calling for submission from RBGs in August. The CRBA put together a submission to full funding for two LPMT contracts (which is what we currently received) for five years and also put forward the benefit to all key stakeholders on a third contractor also being put on.
There is no way of predicting the outcome at this point.
- LFH control by pastoralists with helicopters continues to be a concern and is a focus point of discussions with relevant key stakeholders moving forward.
- The CRBA continues to apply for additional support from local shires within the region.

Day to Day

- Striking a balance between LPMTs and clients to service in each specific area. The CRBA continues to work with its landholders to ensure an understanding of our aims and each individual's responsibility in the management of pests, particularly wild dogs within the region.
- With the loss of two LPMT contractors within the region at the end of this year, succession planning for all contractors is required.

Summary

The business of the CRBA has been running smoothly with systems in place to help keep it operating proficiently. I believe we have reached a point where we are operating as efficiently and effectively as possible with the massive job it is tasked with.

The CRBA has a strong committee and EO managing day to day operations in a timely and judicious manner.

As is the nature of the CRBA's role, there is always a balance in attempting to meet all stakeholder requirements and achieving the best possible outcomes given the budgetary boundaries, compliance and area being serviced.

We continue to support our LMPT's, Co-ordinators and their good work.

Justin Steadman
CHAIRPERSON
Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Association Inc.

4. CRBA OPERATIONS 2018/19

The CRBA has a Declared Pest Account into which the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) deposits the pastoralists Declared Pest Rates paid and the Government’s matching contribution. The CRBA also has a Royalties for Regions agreement until the end of 2019/2020 with DPIRD, for establishing enhanced wild dog control operations on government managed lands and neighbouring small stock pastoral properties in the Southern Rangelands.

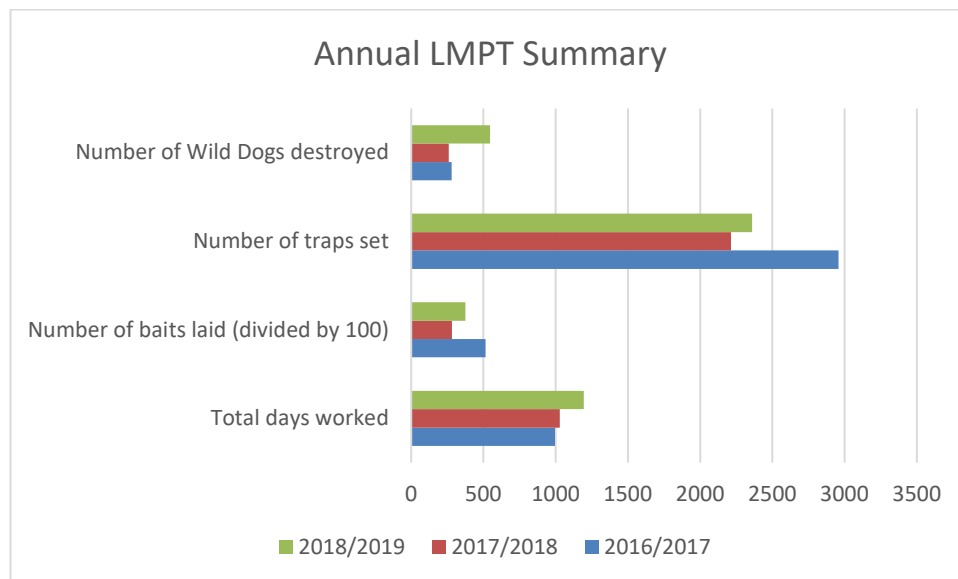
Wild Dog Declared Pest Account Program activities and expenditure included:

- Two combined baiting programs (Autumn and Spring);
- One aerial baiting program held in the Murchison during spring;
- Contracting Licenced Pest Management Technicians (LPMTs) for local wild dog trapping, baiting and shooting functions, costing around \$682,622;
- Payment of \$135,000 to the Shire of Upper Gascoyne for local wild dog management, with the Shire of Upper Gascoyne contributing approximately \$125,000 of Shire rates. The Shire of Upper Gascoyne using these funds for aerial and ground baiting, contracting two LPMTs for local wild dog trapping, baiting and shooting functions.
- Payment of \$7,150.90 to the Meekatharra RBG for wild dog control on Mt Clere station.

LPMT Summary for 2018/19 – combined figures from 6 CRBA contracted LPMTs:

Total days worked	1,194.50
Number of baits laid	37,583
Number of traps set	2,360
Number of dogs destroyed - Shot	63
Number of dogs destroyed - Trapped	450
Number of dogs destroyed - Other	33
Number of reported small stock kills by wild dogs	38
Number of reported wild dog complaints by landowners	59

Note: figures do not include the results from the two Shire of Upper Gascoyne contracted LPMTs.



The CRBA continues to rely on pastoral lease holders playing active roles in the management of declared pests and plants on their own stations. The group continues to rely on its members and key stake holders to participate in preparing wild dog meat baits at Community Baiting Events, distribute dried prepared baits across their properties, trap/shoot wild dogs and also to show interest in and support the LPMTs that operate on their properties.

During the 2018/19 year the CRBA implemented a landholder reporting system to make sharing of landholder activities easier. It is hoped that this will assist the CRBA in collecting and collating more accurate region wide data.

Voluntary roles performed by CRBA members include:

- Participation on the Management Committee;
- Time and fuel commitments by members to attend training days, workshops, industry and government meetings and liaisons;
- Negotiating and developing partnerships with WALGA and DBCA;
- Local Rack Coordinators – who coordinate local pastoralists to attend bait preparations racks to inject, dry and bag meat baits ready for baiting programs;
- LPMT Coordinators – local pastoralists who are responsible for supervising and guiding local LPMTs who operate across a defined network of pastoral properties;
- Assistance with wild dog aerial baiting programs, including helping with loading baits and fuel into the contracted charter plane, as well as taking on the roles of navigator and/or bombardier during aerial baiting flights to ensure baits are dropped in areas of need on rough terrain that cannot be accessed for ground baiting; and
- Pastoral stations that make airstrips available for the aerial baiting plane to use, along with providing meals and overnight accommodation for the charter plane pilot during aerial baiting programs.

The CRBA has also had support and assistance from Parks and Wildlife (now DBCA), for LPMTs to access and work on some Parks and Wildlife properties via the CRBA – DBCA MOU. The CRBA has also had support from the Carnarvon RBG who provide secure storage of CRBA materials and equipment for LPMTs to access when needed.

The CRBA also appreciates the ongoing role of S7 Retailer by Shane Aylmore of Carnarvon Pest Control/Ella Valla Station. Shane via an S7 Retailer Licence stores and distributes wild dog control chemical as an unpaid, voluntary service to CRBA pastoral stations and LPMTs in accordance with RCP permits and LPMT Licence conditions.

Further appreciation from the CRBA needs to go to the Shires of Carnarvon, Murchison and Upper Gascoyne for the storage and ongoing running costs of the CRBA bait meat freezers within their depots.

2018/2019 Operational Income (excluding GST):

Declared Pest Rates Account *	\$785,800.00
Royalties for Regions**	\$187,500.00
Federal White Paper – Capacity Building	\$50,000.00
Rangelands NRM	\$30,000.00
Shire of Shark Bay	\$5,000.00
Other Income	\$1,545.45
Bank Interest Received	\$733.02
Total Operating Income	\$1,060,578.47

Operating Expenses (excluding GST):

Declared Pest Rates Account	\$562,411.46
Royalties for Regions	\$187,500.00
Drought Pest	\$36,734.34
Capacity Building	\$10,535.75
Federal White Paper - Capacity Building	\$99,931.72
Shire of Upper Gascoyne	\$135,000.00
Meekatharra RBG	\$7,150.90
Rangelands NRM	\$19,305.51
Total Operating Income	\$1,058,569.68

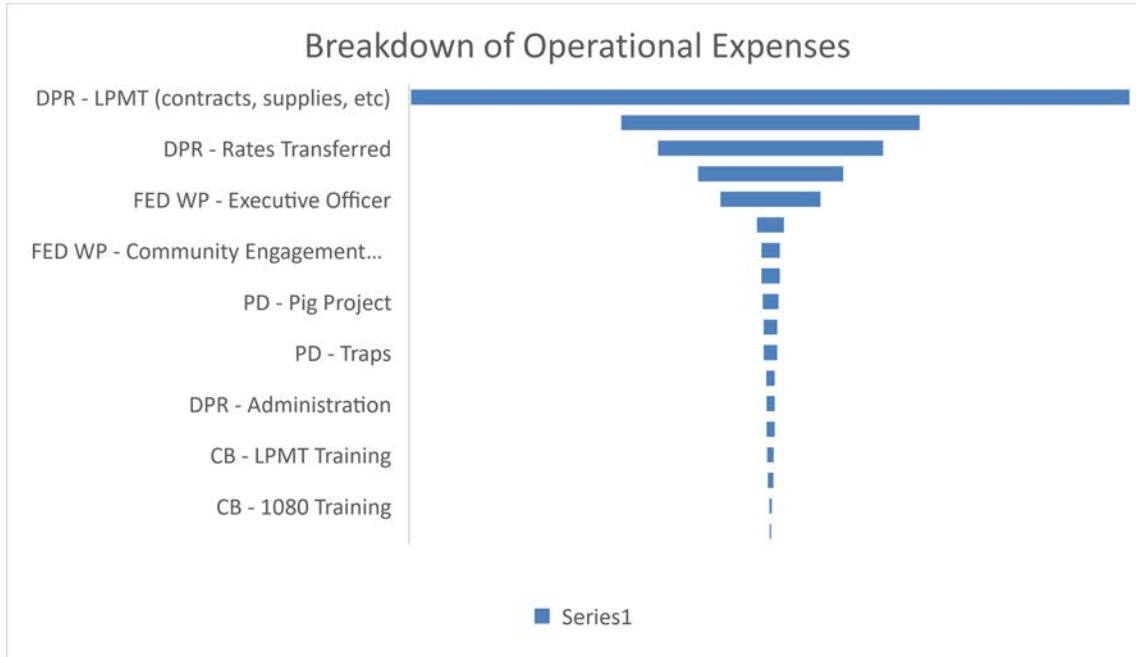
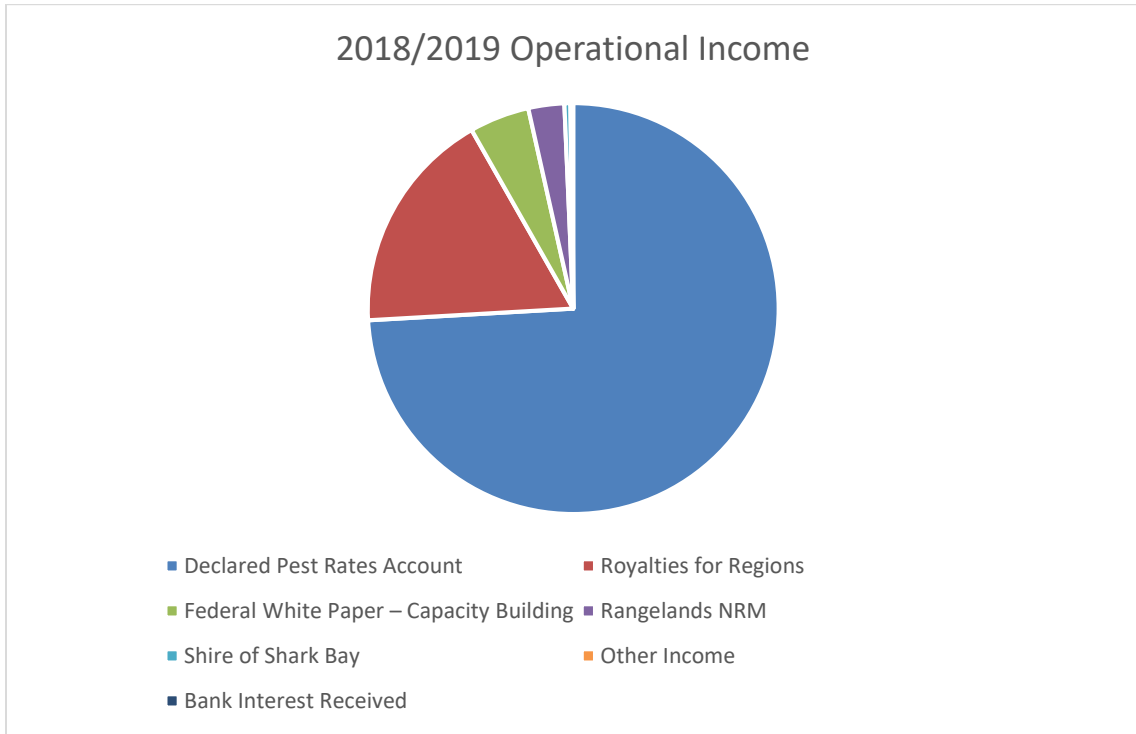
TOTAL Surplus for 2018/2019	\$2,008.79
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* DPA income breakdown is as follows:

\$325,367	DPIRD matching CF Appropriation
\$278,556	Declared Pest Rates paid by Pastoralists (85.61% payment rate for 18/19)
\$181,877	CRBA drawdown of reserved funds
\$785,800	TOTAL Funds from DPIRD Declared Pest Account

** Additional costs for R4R LPMTs have been funded from DPA

CRBA surpluses are committed to ongoing projects.



DPR –Declared Pest Rates Account, R4R –Royalties for Regions, FED WP –Federal White Paper Capacity Building, CB –Capacity Building, PD –Pest Drought

It should be noted that without R4R (or an equivalent replacement) form of funding, the CRBA will have to reduce its budget spending in a manner that will reverse the achievements and ground made over the last 5 years. 2019 is the first year the CRBA will be utilising previous years carryover funds held in its bank account, this has allowed us to prop up budgetary obligations and maintain our current level of service to members.

Pest Drought Project Key Achievements in 2018/19:

- Work started on Phase One of the Pig Project in May 2019; a delayed start due to rain in the region. Phase One took place over 35 days within the Shire of Upper Gascoyne, with the CRBA Pest Drought contributing to 16 days and the remaining paid for directly by DPIRD. Work was undertaken by an LPMT contractor who has a specific background knowledge in feral pigs.
 - 34 pigs found within 70-200m of bait locations, 23 sows and 11 boars;
 - There are likely many more pigs destroyed but not found as it's not an effective use of his time;
 - Sows destroyed were all found to be pregnant;
 - 2 pigs destroyed had old tags;
 - Data gathered in Phase 1 of the project will be used to better plan Phase 2, planned for July 2019.
- Landholder training continued to be provided to interested station managers and workers by CRBA LPMTs in setting traps, and making and laying 1080 oats baits, with dog traps provided to participants so they could start setting their own traps;
- Landholder training on 1080 usage was provided by Central TAFE at Winning Station and the Murchison Settlement. 13 pastoralists received training over these two events;
- LPMTs attended a local training day in March 2019, held at the DPIRD Offices in Carnarvon. This was an opportunity for LPMTs to get together to share ideas, a refresher on Feral Scan usage and increasing communication between LPMTs and landholders. These days ensure the CRBA continues to share the same focus across the region.

Federal White Paper – Capacity Building Achievements in 2018/19:

- Four Community Engagement Days were held in the region. These days allowed the CRBA committee to share with those that attended the committee's role in assisting landholders with biosecurity matters and provided landholders with a chance to ask questions and share ideas to assist in feral animal control.
- A biannual newsletter was established, with the first two being distributed via email and post. This will be an ongoing publication produced by the CRBA to further improve communication with its members.
- The CRBA utilised this funding to print and distribute copies of the Wild Dog Management Plan to all members and key stakeholders within the region. This working document will be updated annually.
- Drones were purchased to further assist with data collection, feral animal tracking and wild dog baiting within the region. These drones will be utilised by LPMTs but will also be available for future programs the CRBA hopes it can receive funding for.

Rangelands NRM – Large Feral Herbivore Control in 2018/19:

- The LFH program was undertaken on properties where river systems feed into the Ningaloo World Heritage. This program saw 153 donkey's, 2 dogs and 2 camels controlled with some of the donkey meat kept and utilised for the CRBA Community Baiting Racks.

Signed:  19th November 2019
Justin Steadman, Chairman, Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Association