

CARNARVON RANGELANDS BIOSECURITY ASSOCIATION INC.



ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17



Refuelling for wild dog aerial baiting on the Kennedy Ranges in partnership with the Department of Parks and Wildlife

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 of up to 12 members who act in a voluntary capacity.

Committee of management members (as at 30 June 2017)

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	Jason Hastie	Pingandy 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 rates paid by pastoral leases that are matched equally by the state government. Grant income has been received from DAFWA: Drought Pest federal funding; Royalties for Regions (R4R) wild dog control funding; Prickle Bush funding, and Capacity Building funding. The CRBA provides funds to the Shire of Upper Gascoyne for wild dog control, with the Shire adding an additional \$100,000 per annum as a cash contribution 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. The group also attracts funds from other sources such as Federal, State and Local 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 control costs.

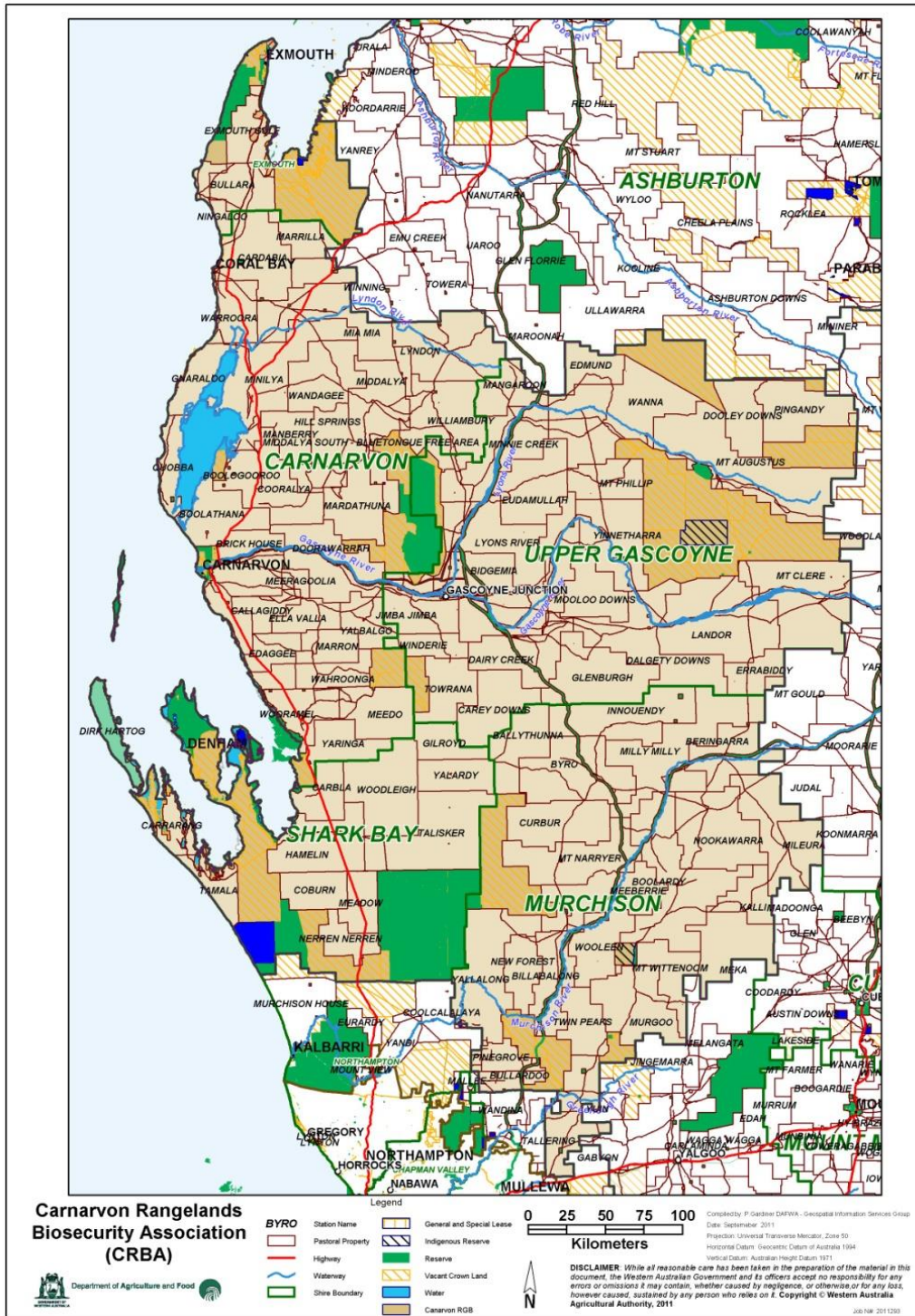
Mesquite There are currently twelve pastoral leases with Mesquite infestations from the Gascoyne Junction to the Gascoyne river mouth at Carnarvon.

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 and has a total population of 10,300. Its largest town is Carnarvon, with a population of approximately 7,100 residents, is the regional service centre for the whole Gascoyne-Murchison. There are over 90 pastoral leases in the area.



3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – 2016/17 FINANCIAL YEAR

The key points from 2016/17 were:

- The seven LPMTs (doggers) contracted by the CRBA trapped 254 wild dogs, shot another 16 and destroyed at least 11 wild dogs from baiting, noting that most baited wild dogs are not usually found. The LPMTs collectively laid over 51,000 1080 baits and set traps nearly 3,000 times during 2016/17;
- Wild dog numbers are under control in some parts of the region, but are increasing in some areas. The CRBA is encouraging the LPMTS to work together in areas of high wild dog numbers to manage wild dog numbers;
- The CRBA Management Committee agreed to increase the day rate for LPMT contracts (commencing July 2017) from \$450/day to \$485/day, plus an additional \$10/day when small vehicles/bikes are also used, and \$5/day also paid if the LPMT uses their own dog to help located wild dog scent and markings to guide where to set traps and lay baits.
- The Executive Officer (EO) continued engagement with CRBA members and stakeholders with Wild Dog funding provided by DAFWA. Thanks to EO Bill Currans who has helped the group to function better, streamlining permits and having State agency discussions;
- The MOU on wild dogs signed with DPaW for the entire CRBA area to improve coordination and understanding continues to operate well;
- Licenced Pest Management Technician (LPMT) operating boundaries have been adjusted as required;
- Regional community wild dog aerial and ground baiting was coordinated in November 2016 and May 2017, including aerial baiting the Kennedy Ranges in partnership with DPaW. This is a significant volunteer effort by pastoral stations to attend local racks, assist with meat bait injecting and bagging, then lay the baits on their own station;
- A CRBA LPMT training workshop was held in March 2017 in Murchison on using motion sensor cameras, and there was also a dinner presentation in Murchison on 1080 baiting research that was carried out in the Meekatharra area.
- The CRBA is regularly approached by a range of organisations to disseminate info and participate in a range of processes and events, not all related to managing declared pests and weeds. The CRBA needs to be careful not to spend time and effort on issues outside the CRBA's main business.

JUSTIN STEADMAN

Chairman

Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Association

4. CRBA OPERATIONS 2016-17

The CRBA has a Declared Pest Account into which the Department of Agriculture and Food WA (DAFWA) deposits the declared pest rates paid by pastoralists and the government's matching contribution. The CRBA also had an ongoing Royalties for Regions agreement with DAFWA/Department of Regional Development (DRD) for establishing enhanced wild dog control operations on government managed lands and neighbouring pastoral regions in the southern rangelands to enable increased stocking of small farm stock in these areas.

Wild Dog Declared Pest Account Program activities and expenditure included:

- Two combined aerial/ground baiting programs (Autumn and Spring);
- Contracting 7 local Licenced Pest Management Technicians (LPMTs) for local wild dog trapping, baiting and shooting functions, costing around \$504,300;
- Payment of \$125,000 to the Shire of Upper Gascoyne for local wild dog management, with the Shire of Upper Gascoyne contributing an additional \$100,000 of Shire rates towards wild dog control – aerial and ground baiting, plus contracting two LPMTs for local wild dog trapping, baiting and shooting functions.

LPMT Summary for 2016/17 – combined figures from 7 CRBA contracted LPMTs:

Total days worked	995
Number of baits laid	51,376
Number of traps set	2,958
Number of trap nights	103,936
Number of dogs destroyed - Shot	16
Number of dogs destroyed - Trapped	254
Number of dogs destroyed - Other	11
Number of reported small stock kills by wild dogs	90
Number of reported wild dog complaints by landowners	76

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

From 1 July 2016, DAFWA introduced an administration fee for the processing and issuing of Restricted Chemical Product (RCP) permits. A current RCP permit is required for a property to receive and use 1080 chemicals and products including field prepared dried meat baits. Strychnine for use on wild dog traps is also allocated and supplied where required via the RCP permit system. The CRBA Executive Officer assisted CRBA pastoralists with preparing five-year RCP permit applications and station maps, or amendments to existing permits, and the application process with DAFWA.

The DAFWA administration fee was a significant change to previous years and some stations decided against obtaining RCP permits (and therefore participating in regional wild dog control) based on the reasoning that there should not be a State charge involved where pastoralists have a legal obligation under State agricultural legislation to control wild dogs as declared pests, and that stations were also paying Declared Pest Rates and objected to having to pay an administration fee on top of their Declared Pest Rates.

The CRBA relies heavily on pastoral lease holders to play an active role in undertaking pest animal and plant control on their own stations are part of their individual responsibility to manage pests. The CRBA also relies on CRBA members from each pastoral station to participate in preparing wild dog meat baits at “Rack Days”, distribute dried meat baits across their property, trap/shoot wild dogs where required, and to also interact and support local LPMTs operating on their properties.

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 DPaW;
- 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 great support and assistance from Parks and Wildlife (now DBCA), for LPMTs to access and work on most Parks and Wildlife properties via the CRBA – DPaW MOU. The Carnarvon office has been particularly helpful in providing secure storage of CRBA materials and equipment for the LPMTs to access when needed.

The CRBA also appreciates the role of S7 Retailer by Shane Aylmore of Carnarvon Pest Control/Ella Valla Station. Shane via his 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.

In 2016/2017, operational income (excluding GST) was:

- DAFWA - Declared Pest Rates\$386,905
- DAFWA – Royalties for Regions\$187,500
- DAFWA – Prickle Bush.....\$300,000
- Interest Received\$ 1,920

Total Operating Income **\$876,325**

Total Operating Expenses **\$920,177**

Deficit for the year \$43,850

Bank Account Surplus committed to ongoing programs and projects \$501,857.

Capacity Building Project Key Achievements in 2016/17:

- Murchison Settlement in March 2017 - dinner presentation on 1080 baiting research from Dr Tracey Kreplins from Murdoch University, and discussion on ground baiting baiting techniques;
- Murchison Settlement in March 2017 - Workshop for LPMTs – Dr Tracey Kreplins from Murdoch University providing training on setting up and using field motion sensor cameras to capture images of wild dogs to better understand behaviour around traps and to identify individual wild dogs;
- Landholder 1080 training by TAFE – training held in Carnarvon, Murchison and Gascoyne Junction in May and June, with a total of 25 participants which increased regional capacity for pastoralists to prepare 1080 meat baits as “approved pastoralists”;
- Computer capacity was upgraded for improved data storage and mapping.



Photo: CRBA LPMTs and pastoral members received training from Dr Tracey Kreplins on setting and using field motion sensor cameras, and are being shown images of wild dogs captured by cameras in the Meekatharra RBA area. (Photo: Bill Currans)

Pest Drought Project Key Achievements in 2016/17:

- Landholder training was 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.
- Investigation and quotes obtained into purchasing three freezers for Carnarvon, Murchison and Gascoyne Junction to store meat baits in advance of regional baiting programs to be more flexible to seasons and wild dog breeding timing.

Prickle Bush Project Key Achievements in 2016/17:

- Cert III weed spraying training was provided in Gascoyne Junction for local pastoralists and Local Government staff so they could be contracted as local contractors to spray mesquite and parkinsonia during this project;
- A local weed contractor who is a pastoralist in the Shire of Upper Gascoyne was contracted to commence spraying of mesquite in the upper reaches of the Gascoyne River catchment in the Shire of Upper Gascoyne area.

Signed:

Justin Steadman, Chairman, Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Association