

# **CARNARVON RANGELANDS BIOSECURITY ASSOCIATION INC.**



## **ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### About the Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Association

The CRBA is a not for profit association formed under the *Associations Incorporation Act 1987*, providing declared pest control services for land managers throughout 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 12 full members who act in a voluntary capacity.

### Committee of management members (as at 30 June 2015)

Position	Name	Contact details
Chair	Justin Steadman	Wooramel Station, via Carnarvon 6701
Vice-Chair	Tim Higham	Meedo Station, via Carnarvon 6701
Secretary / Treasurer	Andrew Whitmarsh	Byro Station, c/- Post Office, Mullewa 6630
Member	Harry McKeogh	Carey Downs, Gascoyne Junction
Member	Sam Fenney	Carbla Station, Shark Bay
Member	Brian Wake	Hamelin Station, PMB 72, Via Geraldton 6530
Member	Jim Dorrell	Mia Mia Station
Member	Mark Halleen	Booldardy Station, Yalgoo WA 6635
Member	Sandy McTaggart	Mt Narryer Station, PMB 11, Mullewa WA 6630
Member	Leonie McLeod	Warroora Station, PO Box 130 Exmouth WA 6707

## 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. The second major income is from Royalties for Regions (R4R) funding. The CRBA has also received contributions from Carnarvon Shark Bay and Murchison shires for wild dog control. 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 and 171 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.

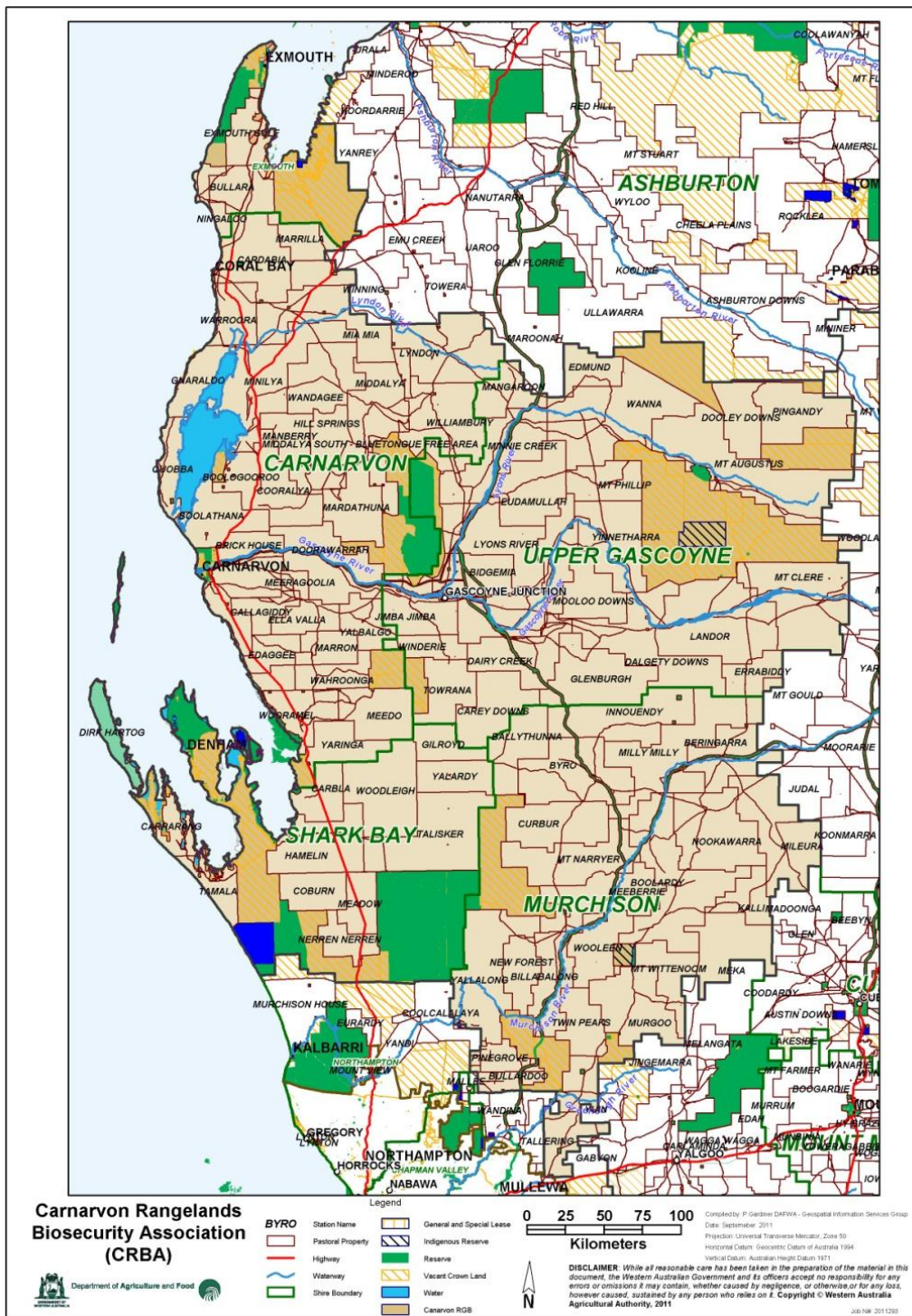
**Mesquite** There are currently twelve pastoral leases with Mesquite infestations from the Gascoyne Junction to the Gascoyne river mouth at Carnarvon. Mesquite infestations also occur on Billabalong Station in the Murchison shire.

**Parkinsonia** is present on three pastoral leases.

**Donkeys** are present on properties in the north of the region.

## Area of operation

The CRBA area of operation takes in the Shires of Carnarvon, Exmouth, Shark Bay 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. CRBA OPERATIONS 2014-15

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 has 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.

In 2014/2015, operational income (excluding GST) was:

- DAFWA - Declared Pest Rates .....\$301,884
- DAFWA – Royalties for Regions .....\$135,452
- DPaW – Wild Dog Control .....\$ 12,844
- Shire Contributions .....\$ 10,000
- Interest Received .....\$ 3,569

**Total Operating Income** **\$463,749**

Operation activities and expenditure covered:

- Two combined aerial/ground baiting programs (Autumn and Spring);
- Two other regional ground baiting operations;
- Contracting 7 local Licenced Pest Management Technicians (LPMTs) for local wild dog trapping, baiting and shooting functions;
- Contracting a declared pest plant controller;
- 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.

**Total Operating Expenses** **\$624,093**

The deficit of \$160,344 was covered in part by DPA funds held in the CRBA account, and the reimbursement payment process for the Royalties for Regions wild dog project also meant that expenses of \$71,774.43 incurred over January to June 2015 was not paid to the CRBA until August 2015. The CRBA did not submit an invoice to DAFWA for the second DPA payment for 2014/15 of \$301,884, meaning these funds remained in the DPA account managed by DAFWA for later use by the CRBA.

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 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.