



EASTERN WHEATBELT BIOSECURITY GROUP INC.

Annual Report

For

2017/18 FINANCIAL YEAR

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Proudly supported by

- ◆ SHIRE OF KONDININ ◆ SHIRE OF KULIN ◆ SHIRE OF LAKE GRACE ◆ SHIRE OF MERREDIN ◆
- ◆ SHIRE OF MT MARSHALL ◆ SHIRE OF MUKINBUDIN ◆ SHIRE OF NAREMBEEN ◆ SHIRE OF NUNGARIN ◆
- ◆ SHIRE OF TRAYNING ◆ SHIRE OF WESTONIA ◆ SHIRE OF YILGARN ◆



Australian Wool
Innovation Limited



Department of
Primary Industries and
Regional Development



Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions



ROYALTIES
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2.0 Chair Report – Mark Crees (Merredin Representative)

Well another year down and a job well done by the Eastern Wheatbelt Biosecurity Group.

List of achievements for the year, after lots of persistence we finally have the Koolyanobbing Grid back in place, we have held seven pest workshops throughout our area, over seventy Restricted Chemical Product (RCP) Permits approved and paid for by the EWBG and we have attended multiple field days and industry events. The group has had the wings extended on the Minjar Marvel Loch Gold Mine haul road and are working with DPIRD and the Minjar Gold Mine to have a grid in place soon, so dogs in the area should reduce significantly.

Over 2017/18 there have been 26 dogs destroyed (not including those that were baited). Jamie Taylor and Stuart McEwan have been re-contracted for a 200-day contract and Jeff Taylor has been contracted on a 40-day 6-month contract. I would like to thank the LPMT's for their hard work in keeping the wild dogs under control.

I take this opportunity to thank Jeff Taylor for filling in when Stu was on injury leave. I would like to thank the Shire Representatives and the Management Committee for all their help during the year and for those stakeholders that have funded the operations of the EWBG. Lastly, I would like to thank Lisa O'Neill for all her hard work in keeping the EWBG running smoothly and making my job as Chair much easier.

Thanks.

Mark Crees – EWBG Chairperson.

3.0 Overview

The EWBG is an incorporated organisation that commenced in 2001. It has eleven Shire representatives making up the EWBG membership. A management group is elected every two years who direct and manage the day to day operations via an Executive Officer.

EWBG is a Recognised Biosecurity Group which allows the implementation of a Declared Pest Rate (DPR). This was raised for the first time in October 2016. The Minister of Agriculture and Food, through the Department of Primary Industry and Regional Development (DPIRD) matches Rates collected for the management of WA's Declared Pests. The collection rate of the DPR over the past 2 years has been excellent and the group thanks landholders for their support to allow ongoing management of declared pests across the prescribed area.

The management group work on a voluntary basis, with an in-kind contribution of approximately \$15,000 a year across the eleven shires (volunteer's contribution of time and travel to meetings, plus attending workshops and bait making days). This does not include individual landholder and community contributions which are extensive.

The EWBG employ an Executive Officer part time and contract highly skilled and experienced Licenced Pest Management Technicians (LPMTs) - one part time (40 days) and two full time (200 days per year).

The group is supported financially by the mining company Western Areas LTD (WSA), the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD), Australian Wool Innovation (AWI), Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA), the State Governments' Royalties for Regions program and the eleven member Shires (Kondinin, Kulin, Lake Grace, Merredin, Mount Marshall, Mukinbudin, Nungarin, Narembreen, Trayning, Westonia and Yilgarn).

Achieving success in this role ensures Eastern Wheatbelt agricultural businesses to become more robust and remain viable through improved productivity and increased income associated with reduced stock losses due to increasingly effective and coordinated declared pest management practices.

3.1 Achievements

Through necessity, the focus to date of the EWBG has been on the management of wild dogs and in conjunction with this, European red foxes.

The EWBG has been very successful in reducing wild dog predation across the extensive area enabling farming businesses to enter back into livestock and providing additional opportunities for agistment of sheep in the area over the summer months thus diversifying the agricultural economic base.

In 2000-2001 **reported** sheep losses were more than 2000 head. EWBG coordinated activities halved this to 1000 in 2008, 50 head in 2016/17 and 135 in 2017/18. With over 70 new RCP Permits in place in the area due to assistance from the EWBG, this allows landholders to carry out their own pest control activities as well as provide immediate access and support if required by LPMTs in key target areas. The EWBG encourages all landholders to obtain an RCP Permit.

EWBG requests from community and LPMTs any reports of wild dogs and records all management activities of wild dogs undertaken in the EWBG area. This supports the National Wild Dog Strategy and provides data via the nationally funded Feralscan database.

The EWBG has played a significant role in ensuring farmers can continue to stock sheep and other livestock in the South West of WA by leading a collaborative and coordinated approach to provide management of wild dogs inside and outside the WA State Barrier Fence, from Northampton to Esperance in 2018.

4.0 EWBG Aims and Objectives

4.1 Our Aim (Vision)

Community control of community pests.

4.2 Our Role (Mission)

Protect and support the future of the Eastern Wheatbelt by working with landholders to fulfil their responsibility of managing declared pests on their land.

The EWBG believes declared pests can be better managed by working together as a community in conjunction with industry and government. Through a coordinated approach utilising a variety of strategies and technologies, EWBG can better assist and support landholders.

4.3 Objectives

The objectives of the EWBG are to:

- Control current predation of livestock by declared pests.
- Develop and implement management strategies to minimise future declared pest impacts on livestock.
- Implement best practice declared pest management on private and public lands in the region.
- Increase landholder participation, both private and public.
- Monitor, evaluate and report on the progress towards minimising declared pest impact on livestock in member shires.
- Provide proactive and positive extension activity driven by the group that will facilitate broader community awareness of declared pest issues.

5.0 Direction

The Eastern Wheatbelt Biosecurity Group is playing a key role in assisting land managers to manage declared pests in the region. Data from a range of sources shows that the Eastern Wheatbelt region has significant populations of declared animal pests that pose substantial environmental and economic risks to privately held farmland, unallocated crown land and river systems.

Declared animal pests of most concern include wild dogs and foxes.

Wild dogs continue to cause livestock losses across the Eastern Wheatbelt. Whilst significant reductions in wild dog populations has occurred through the long-term activities of the EWBG, ongoing work is essential to keep populations at a level that will enable ongoing, profitable livestock operations across the region and state.

Management of wild dogs is in alignment with the *Western Australian Wild Dog Action Plan 2016-2021*. This is an 'industry led and driven plan that considers the economic, environmental and social impacts of wild dogs and identifies the key issues for managing them across Western Australia. The plan is designed to protect the livestock and tourism industries and public safety and recognises the ecological and cultural values of the dingo'. The EWBG is contributing to a key component of the WA Biosecurity Strategy 2016-2025 and DPIRD's Invasive Species Plan for Western Australia 2015-2019.

Fox control has also been identified as a priority management issue throughout our operational area, particularly for landholders with livestock. The group also recognises the negative impact that foxes have on biodiversity, particularly native fauna.

As the EWBG operational area incorporates many larger areas of remnant vegetation close to and beyond the clearing line, the control of foxes is important for the sustainability of livestock enterprises and for the benefit of nature conservation.

6.0 Wild Dog Activity

Wild dogs will continue to be the declared pest focused on by the Eastern Wheatbelt Biosecurity Group. The group will constantly work to ensure that wild dogs are controlled and kept to a minimum within agricultural land within the Eastern Wheatbelt Biosecurity Groups prescribed area.

This year saw some challenges for landholders with a number of persistent wild dog attacks in the Southern Yilgarn and northern Mt Marshall area. Great thanks go to the LPMT's as they were proactive in the area and kept wild dogs attacks within the agricultural area to a minimum.

The EWBG thank the community and especially LPMT's for the significant effort they put in to controlling wild dogs within the EWBG prescribed area.

7.0 Summary

This year has seen the EWBG develop even further as a Recognised Biosecurity Group. This is the second year of the Declared Pest Rate (DPR) within the Eastern Wheatbelt Biosecurity Group's prescribed area. This rate allows the Eastern Wheatbelt Biosecurity Group (EWBG) to support landholders in their ongoing obligation and responsibility to control declared pests on their land.

The group has received great support from landholders and industry.

Through the 2017/18 Fiscal year the EWBG updated their constitution to better reflect the operations of the group and meet obligations under the changed Association Laws Act. EWBG continued to engage with the local community to canvas declared pest priorities and develop relevant activities and partnerships to pursue continuous improvement of pest management.

Throughout 2017/18 the Eastern Wheatbelt Biosecurity Group has held seven pest workshops throughout our area in Southern Cross, Beacon, Nungarin, Merredin, Narembreen, Lake Grace and Kondinin. This has provided landholders the opportunity to obtain 1080 accreditation and apply for a Restricted Chemical Permit (RCP), which the EWBG are currently covering the associated costs to ensure maximum participation and widespread pest management. This allows landholders the opportunity to control declared pests on their property to the best of their ability. Representatives from the group have attended multiple field days/community events, including: Wagin, Woolorama, Dowerin and Newdegate Field Days, allowing landholders the opportunity to engage with the group. The group will continue to attend industry events in the future as it provides a voice for landholders within the area.

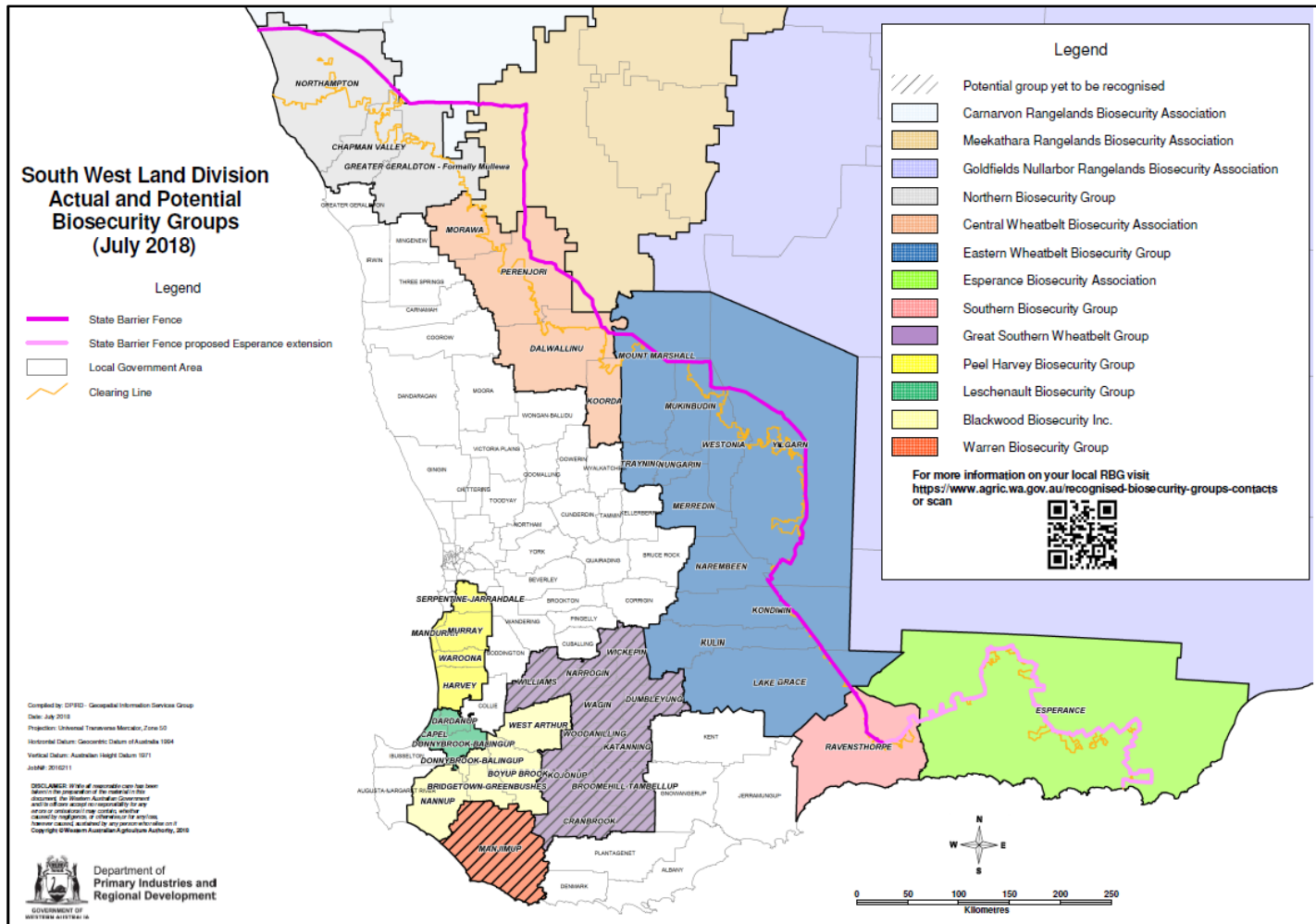
The group has also been in attendance at Lambex and the Biosecurity Round-table to provide a voice for EWBG landholders. Attendance and participation at the AWI/DPIRD workshop to maximise collaboration with South West RBGs managing wild dogs: NBG, CWBA, SBG, EBA. This also allows the EWBG executive officer to provide support and networking with other RBG Executive Officers.

The group is very appreciative of the great co-operation they have had from the landholders, the member Shires, Department of Primary Industry and Regional Development, AWI, Western Area's Ltd and Department of Biosecurity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA).

The EWBG would also like to thank the volunteering committee for all the time and effort they continue to put into the group in 2017/18.

- Mark Crees (Chair)
- Helen Shemeld (Vice Chair)
- Ron Burro
- Dean Sinclair
- Andrew Woodfield
- Jim Sullivan
- Steve Palm

Appendix 1: RBG Area of Operation



Appendix 2: Financial Report

EWBG 2017/18 Financial Details					
INCOMING/EXPENSES 2017/18 Financial Year					
	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter	
	Jul, Aug, Sept	Oct, Nov, Dec	Jan, Feb, March	April, May, June	TOTAL
<u>EXPENSES</u>					
Contract Work	\$57,191.38	\$85,900.83	\$88,318.48	\$105,307.68	\$336,718.37
Capital	\$650.00	\$8,178.90	\$0.00	\$759.00	\$9,587.90
Advertising	\$335.80	\$25.00	\$1,311.04	\$2,479.78	\$4,151.62
Administration	\$7,881.05	\$22.00	\$4,106.20	\$8,101.83	\$20,111.08
Other- Baits, aerial baiting	\$12,050.67	\$506.49	\$25,282.85	\$3,431.05	\$41,271.06
Total Quarterly Expenses	\$78,108.90	\$94,633.22	\$119,018.57	\$120,079.34	\$411,840.03
<u>INCOMING</u>					
Shires	\$0.00	\$1,100.00	\$110.00	\$0.00	\$1,210.00
Mining	\$11,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$11,000.00
DPR/R4R/Whitepaper	\$0.00	\$249,562.50	\$44,198.00	\$249,562.50	\$543,323.00
Other	\$0.00	\$3,932.00	\$0.00	\$3,668.50	\$7,600.50
Total Quarterly Incomings	\$11,000.00	\$254,594.50	\$44,308.00	\$253,231.00	\$563,133.50

Appendix 3: Reported Wild Dog Activity in EWBG Operational Area

END OF YEAR STATICS

2017-18 Fiscal Year

	LPMT 1	LPMT 2	Total for EWBG
Number of days worked	206	212	418
Baits laid	5600	3450	9050
wild dogs destroyed (not inc. baited)	13	11	24

Total wild dogs Destroyed (including destroyed by landholders) and number of wild dogs with a very high probability of having taken a 1080 dog bait.

		Baited	Shot	Total trapped	Total
Landholders	Private	unknown	3	0	3
LPMT 1	EWBG	2	0	11	13
LPMT 2	EWBG	2	1	8	11
Total		4	4	19	27

Reported wild dog attacks and stock death:

Year	Month	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	TOTAL
2012/13	Attacks	3	3	1	3	3	2	2	1	4	5	4	4	35
	Stock Losses	16	3	2	5	8	6	5	2	23	31	10	13	124
2013/14	Attacks	2	3	5	8	2	1	4	3	2	3	1	3	37
	Stock Losses	14	9	64	34	10	4	6	8	6	9	1	30	195
2014/15	Attacks	1	1	1	2	0	0	2	5	1	2	1	0	16
	Stock Losses	2	40	4	8	0	0	8	9	2	5	2	0	80
2015/16	Attacks	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	7
	Stock Losses	8	0	6	0	2	7	0	1	0	30	5	0	59
2016/17	Attacks	1	2	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	8
	Stock Losses	4	5	0	2	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	1	16
2017/18	Attacks	1	2	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	12
	Stock Losses	5	2	8	0	3	60	3	8	2	27	12	5	135