

GOLDFIELDS NULLARBOR RANGELANDS BIOSECURITY ASSOCIATION INC.

ANNUAL REPORT

For 2016 – 2017 FINANCIAL YEAR

Prepared by

ROSS WOOD



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Recognised Biosecurity Groups Western Australia

Local Government Area

Regions:

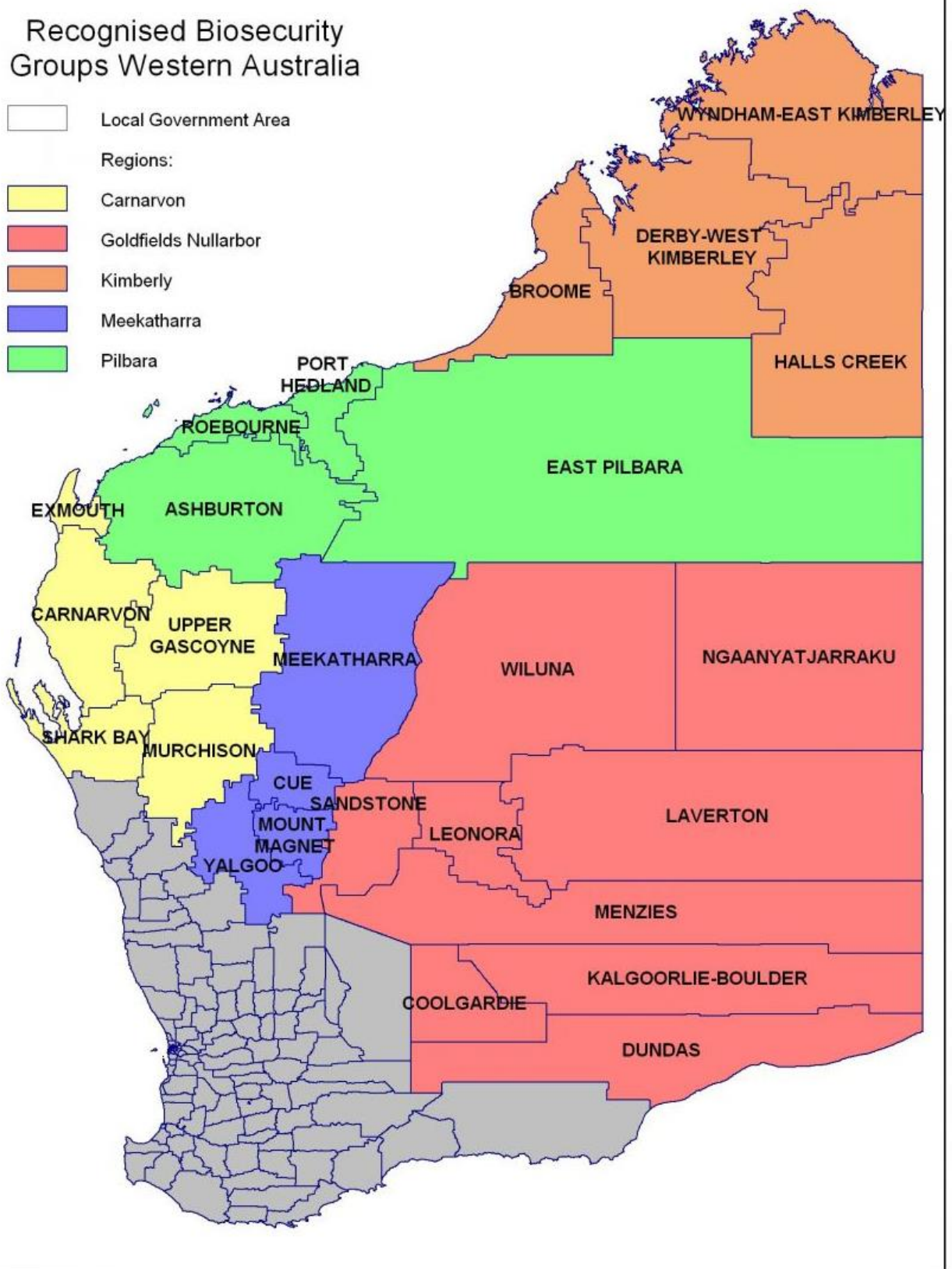
Carnarvon

Goldfields Nullarbor

Kimberly

Meekatharra

Pilbara



1. INTRODUCTION

The Goldfields Nullarbor Rangelands Biosecurity Association Inc. (GNRBA) is unique in rangeland management across Western Australia. It has a huge area to service and is working hard to provide a top class service to ratepayers. It is now well recognised as being a leader in the RBG's in WA. The GNRBA Inc formally became operational on 1st July 2011. At this time it took over the APB Zone 9 operations.

GNRBA Management Committee

The GNRBA is managed day to day by Ross M Wood as Chief Executive Officer. Committee of Management (CoM) Meetings are held face to face or phone hook- up as required.

The Management committee for 2016/17 was comprised thus:

Trevor Hodshon 1 year Term Chairman

John Oxley 1 year term

Nigel Wessels 1year Term Associate Member DPaW

Julian Jones 3 year Term

Justin Stevens 3 year Term Hon. Treasurer/Secretary

Brett Day 3 year Term

Ross Wood 2 year Term Chief Executive Officer

Brendan Jones 2year Term

Trevor Hodshon was elected as Chairman of GNRBA Inc by Committee of Management for 2016/17. The GNRBA Inc. is the formally recognised Biosecurity Group and as such is authorised to set Pest rate applicable to pastoral leases.

This rate is matched by State Government. This allows the GNRBA to effectively double pastoralist's rates to assist with pest control. Importantly the GNRBA partners with Shires and others like Rangelands NRM WA, to leverage funds and further increase its ability to provide services. The role of the GNRBA Inc. is to assist pastoralists to control pests and weeds. It is unable to eliminate pastoralists control efforts.

The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions DBCA (formally DPaW and DEC) is an Associated Member. It is the responsible state government department for managing wild dogs and pests on Unallocated Crown Land (UCL) and Department Of Parks And Wildlife estate. To achieve this DBCA undertakes wild dog control in the region and also assists in funding aerial baiting programs in the region.

To compliment Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions work the GNRBA Inc. allocates funds for two part time doggers (LPMT's) to carry out wild dog control alongside private properties. The majority of wild dog control work by GNRBA is required on UCL with the DBCA in coordinated effort. They also assist the GNRBA to undertake some wild dog control programs on the Nullarbor.

During the 2016/17 financial year, approx \$94,000 funding through the Royalties for Regions program was again available to the group. The GNRBA Inc needed to contract to supply before it could access these funds. This funding has been used to support aerial work hitherto not funded. This funding has now been renewed for another 3 years year subject to the WA Wild Dog Action Plan implementation program.

R4R funding is a very useful external funding source and is very much appreciated. It is for use in UCL alongside small stock properties and has been used well in aerial activities on the Nullarbor and increasingly in Kalgoorlie and Sandstone areas.

This document reports on the GNRBA Inc. activities and will not detail the extent of Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions wild dog control activities.

Currently Associate members of the GNRBA are Dundas Shire, Leonora Shire, Wiluna Shire, Menzies Shire and Laverton Shire. It is hoped that the other Shires in the area can be encouraged to participate more fully. Work to encourage such participation by engagement with the Goldfields Voluntary Organisation of Councils (GVROC) and individual shires by the Chief Executive Officer has been ongoing.

The Chief Executive Officer has been active in working with Menzies, Leonora, Coolgardie, Dundas, Laverton, City of Kalgoorlie/Boulder and Wiluna Shires particularly in relation to Invasive Cactus control.

Importantly the GNRBA continues to engage with Windidda, Pinjin and Adelong Stations to achieve more integrated pest programs. The GNRBA has also established a good working relationship with Aboriginal native title holders including Spinifex, Birriliburu and Ngadju.

The GNRBA also works with and supports Kalgoorlie Boulder Urban Landcare Group (KBULG) to encourage cactus eradication in City Kalgoorlie Boulder. These relationships are really assisting GNRBA achieve more credibility and recognition. A continuing partnership with Rangelands NRM WA to secure funding has been an important addition to the GNRBA influence in the region.

The GNRBA works closely with and alongside the DAFWA Invasive Species team and acknowledges the considerable help and advice provided by Mac Jensen and Jim Miller in all facets of our operation. This has been of great mutual benefit to both organisations.

Regrettably, Mac Jensen has departed from DBCA but will I hope assist in coordinating the GNRBA/Wiluna LFH shoot this coming year. This relationship will be managed and I am sure that the GNRBA will be able to work with him constructively in his new role. He has been a fantastic supporter of the GNRBA and I acknowledge his work.

2. GNRBA Inc AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- Initiate, promote and foster the control of declared animal and plant pests
- Encourage all persons to adopt sound biosecurity practices
- Prevent land and biodiversity degradation to protect our resources
- Foster sustainable development & production
- Act as the “Voice” for landholders (pastoralists and others) in the region

3. ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS 2016 – 2017

GNRBA Inc purchased about 68,000kg fresh meat baits from a number of suppliers at a cost of \$400,000. This was mostly injected with "1080" and delivered to our Kalgoorlie Freezer and/or direct to properties. The GNRBA organised four sponsored ground baitings and several aerial baitings including one for eastern Nullarbor on Unmanaged Crown Land using R4R funding.

Very importantly the GNRBA recognises the difficulties around making baits for pastoralists and has this last year had Teen Ryan, Andrew Parker and Brett Day produce readymade baits for distribution.

Good Financial accountability systems continue to be implemented. Mike Hutson is our accountant based in Kalgoorlie and is overseeing the Association finances which are now complicated with so many grant funding sources.

This year we have achieved a great deal of Independence from DAFWA now DPIRD by moving into our own Office with our group accountant Mike Hutson. The move to this great Office at 49 Brookman St. Kalgoorlie was unfortunately curtailed when the landlord sold the building so we have again moved successfully to 29 Charlotte St. Kalgoorlie where we have good facilities and office space. We share this Office with Mike Hutson and enjoy a cheaper rental.

This has been a good result for the GNRBA. Alongside the above move a grant has enabled the GNRBA to employ an Executive Assistant. This has been a great help to the CEO to have permanent operational ability in Kalgoorlie.

The Project Officer has achieved great results by dealing with the enormous S7 Permit workload which means that pastoralists have not been burdened with the renewal process and reduced Teen Ryan's workload so she can get back to doing what she loves best.

K Mader and Teen Ryan are the Association's LPMT's (doggers) operating in the Sandstone, Kalgoorlie, Laverton and Nullarbor areas primarily. Each year we continue to upgrade our S7 facilities. Teen Ryan is our S7 distributor. The GNRBA independence from DAFWA in this area is now complete.

Last year the GNRBA also undertook to train LPMT Teen Ryan in weed control. This better utilizes her abilities whilst travelling around properties. She can now spray weeds and cactus at remote sites along Transline such as Forrest and further East at Reid.

The GNRBA also been partnering with the Shires where possible to achieve cactus, Large Feral Herbivore and wild dog control.

The GNRBA CEO continues to engage and support other RBG's and also worked to better understand the complexities of Native title possession and engage at some level with Spinifex traditional owners on issues such as camel control, weeds and baiting. Previously we have engaged with Birriliburru and encouraged cactus control projects at Wiluna.

The GNRBA is an incorporated body. Rules of Incorporated Association are followed. The Goldfields Nullarbor Rangelands Biosecurity Association Inc (GNRBA) trading as the GNRBA operates using the pest rate, matching Government funds and allocated RfR funds.

It also attracts and acquits special purpose grants.

2016/17 Grants and Projects

- **Menzies/ Mertondale**

A \$40,000 State NRM grant matched by Shires of Menzies and Leonora to map and spray Hudson Pear cactus at Menzies Tip and Coral cactus at Mertondale. This GNRBA managed project is complete, audited and signed off. The GNRBA has continued to work with Menzies Shire which remitted a further \$20,000 to GNRBA to continue work at Menzies Tip and Kookynie. The Leonora Shire continues to work with GNRBA to deal with cactus in the area. We are currently working with Leonora Shire to complete our work in Leonora Shire areas such as Gwalia.

- **R4R Wild Dog Project**

This is an ongoing RfR “dogger” program which funds the GNRBA to use funds primarily for bait purchase and aerial baiting in UCL alongside small stock properties. There is a significant inequity in overall program which the CEO attempted to correct whilst he was within the WA Wild Dog Alliance but was unsuccessful. The MRBA receives some 2.5 times per annum our allocation, and Carnarvon 2.0 times our allocation. It has been recently renewed for 3 years and funds of approx \$90K per annum are available. The GNRBA covered an over-spend in this grant last financial year to continue the aerial baiting program. New requirements of this grant are that the “Feral Scan” app will need to be used rather than traditional data loggers. We have applied for a further grant to cover the cost of this requirement. Each Quarter the CEO needs to report to DPIRD on grant.

- **Tarmoola**

The original Rangelands NRM WA grant has been acquitted and report submitted. More work on this site is yet to be done. Following last year’s AGM/Conference we released the cochineal bug at Tarmoola and whilst the initial results seemed disappointing I can confirm that the CoM Cacti tour to Menzies and Leonora was very pleased to see the cochineal was working so well that plans are now afoot to further distribute the cochineal to all known coral cactus sites in Leonora/Sandstone and Wiluna areas.

We have also sent some cochineal out to Aggie Forrester at Winning Station to assist the effort there.

This is a good news story that will we hope shows light at the end of the Tunnel. Work is now being done to introduce other bio controls for Cacti to the region. The next likely project will be at Mt. Ida Copperfield Prickly Pear and later to the Hudson Pear at Menzies and Kangaroo Hills Coolgardie.

- **Wild Dog Remote Sensing Trial**

This \$20,000 Rangelands NRM WA grant relating to mapping of probable wild dog habitats for each station based on landforms such as breakaways is complete and maps available to stations to plan baiting around natural formations such as breakaways. This project has been acquitted.

This project is assisting the work being done on aerial bait mapping and having a standard set of maps available for cacti and weed work within the GNRBA

- **R4R Research Cacti Grant**

This is a \$158,000 R4R Grant over 3 years is to establish potential to utilize drones to identify and map known cacti infestations to assist control. This work has mostly now been completed and Erin Gorter is preparing the final report. Early evidence suggests that during the period of grant technology has progressed rapidly and it will soon be very possible to use such technology to assist weed and predator control.

- **Railroading the Cactus**

This \$30,000 State NRM grant is to start to deal with Legacy Cactus from Transline settlements. This work commenced in Sept 2015. It is now completed and acquitted. Follow up work has been done with Paul and Teen Ryan working on Transline infestation clean-ups. Disappointingly we have seen regrowth at Rawlinna. This follow up work will best be done as plants gain height in maturity.

- **Balladonia Telegraph Station clean-up.** The GNRBA undertook to eradicate this infestation in a timely manner to prevent a greater problem. This follow up work has been done and will need to be revisited from time to time.

- **DAFWA Capability Grant.** A \$130,000 grant to amongst other things. This Grant has assisted the GNRBA with getting into our own office and employing an Executive Assistant to commence developing the succession capacity of the organisation.

Launch our GNRBA website and email capacity, upgrade our filing systems, purchase a bait trailer, organise an automated aerial flight plan, spray African boxthorn at Eucla and several field trips such as the Menzies/Leonora Cacti Tour for CoM

- **CELL FENCE Business Cases** The GNRBA received funding through DAFWA to employ "AgKnowledge" as a contractor to develop Cell Fence Business cases for Kalgoorlie Pastoral Alliance Cluster Fence Cell and one in Carnarvon near Meedo Station. These business cases can be adapted for other cells. This work has been completed. The State Govt. has also developed a Rangelands Cell Fencing Program.

- **DAFWA Grant** A \$30,000 grant for assisting EO upgrade aerial baiting and RCP processes. Michelle Donaldson has done a fantastic job of dealing with a backlog of "S7 Permits" and is right up to date with only a handful to do this next year.

- **Rangelands NRM WA and GEDC Grant** \$15,000 each to run this AGM/Innovation Conference on the strength of last year's event. Rangelands NRM WA has also assisted us financially to run this event this year. Waratah and Elders are also supporting our Annual Dinner.

- **WA Wild Dog Alliance** The CEO has been an active member within the now (in limbo) WA Wild Dog Alliance which was a recommendation of the WA Wild Dog Action Plan. Much valuable work was done in this forum and we await developments on this front.

- **RBG Finance Committee** The CEO as a member of this committee engages with other RBG's and PIRD to develop RBG's and their finances. Such complex issues such as Straddle stations, the DPA account and Budgets are discussed.

- **Williamstown Cactus** A joint project that was initiated by GNRBA and project managed by CEO of KBULG Kim Eckert to remove some 760 tons cactus material to Kalgoorlie Tip. This project was recognised by WA Governor.



Hon Mark Lewis MHR, Ross Wood CEO GNRBA, Hon Dean Nalder MLA Minister for Agriculture, Kim Eckert CEO KBULG, Mac Jensen DAFWA.

Grant projects in application phase for 2016/17

- **DPaW Tender for Wild Dog control Work in Goldfields and Nullarbor** This project was successfully tendered for, accepted and subsequently withdrawn on technicalities. It is currently being reviewed. It was an important tender for GNRBA as it will better allow for more coordinated dog control. The GNRBA is hopeful that a resolution is forthcoming. This is out of our control but necessary steps have been taken.
- **Bromus Burr Buster** Fencing for Noogoora burr at Bromus Dam near Norseman. Dundas Shire assisted Ngadju rangers put up fence. This is being monitored by rangers and GNRBA is supporting their inspection and control endeavours.
- **Signage to Save dogs** Signage for 1080 for all GNRBA Shires (work in progress)

- **1080 warnings are now in Hema maps** (This program will expand)
- Our **bait manufacturing** is now mostly done by Andrew Parker and Brett Day. This efficient process is producing good quality baits and reduced the logistical nightmare of bait racks to a workable operation that Michelle Donaldson is coordinating.

In addition to above the GNRBA has recently engaged with GWW and Ngadju Rangers based at Norseman. Initially we have worked together with Bromus Dam. More recently at Rawlinna "Railroading the Cactus" spraying cactus.

Wild Dog Baiting Operations:

Aerial baiting was conducted within the GNRBA area of operations this financial year and wide spread ground baiting was carried out by pastoralists, DPaW, and GNRBA Doggers.

Once procured, fresh meat and baits are stored in a large freezer. The GNRBA also uses a freezer based at Weebo Station to assist in baiting programs.

The GNRBA purchased two large chest freezer units which allow us to have baits on hand for pastoralists and our LPMT's.

The GNRBA has purchased some shelf ready 1080 baits to use this summer where bungarra activity seems to diminish the effectiveness of fresh meat baiting.

DAFWA is coordinating an on-line training program to allow all pastoralists to be able to lay "1080". This will allow more flexibility but Pastoralists should ensure good 1080 protocols are maintained.

The GNRBA is concerned that any failure to adhere to protocols may lead to the loss of "1080" as a management tool. As such the GNRBA is maintaining a public awareness campaign by media and public notices and encourages pastoralists to be vigilant toward advising neighbours of baiting activities and sticking to the rules of using "1080", including appropriate signage.

Aerial Baiting:

The GNRBA coordinated aerial baitings in December 2016 on Nullarbor, Kalgoorlie and Northern Goldfields and June 2017 on the Eastern Nullarbor, Laverton, Wiluna, Leonora and Sandstone areas.

The December aerial baiting was incorporated with December Ground baiting and the June baiting was paid for by GNRBA and R4R funding to distribute baits.

The GNRBA overextended itself financially with the December Northern Goldfields aerial baiting and advice is consistently received that Bungarra are the predominant feeder of Summer Baits.

I have advised the CoM that we should aim this year for a Nullarbor Aerial June/Dec Bait and a June Northern Goldfields aerial baiting to conserve resources. R4R has allowed us to do a second Nullarbor run and Bundarra's are not an issue on Nullarbor.

A GNRBA sponsored pastoral aerial baiting for June 2018 has been budgeted for and will be coordinated by GNRBA.

If suitable contractors can be sourced and baits can be delivered cost effectively then aerial baiting is an important tool that can be used to target areas that are inaccessible to ground based staff. In conjunction with DPaW the GNRBA will continue to plan and budget for aerial baiting operations throughout the effected landscape.

Feral Herbivore Control

The GNRBA again conducted successful and economical aerial Large Herbivore shoot jointly funded and in partnership with the Wiluna Shire and GNRBA using the DAFWA Shoot team.

1,246 LFH Oct 2014 31 LFH/hr @\$37/animal

1,858 LFH April 2015 37 LFH/hr @\$36/animal

1,162 LFH October 2015 25LFH/hr @\$54/animal

882 LFH October 2016 20.5 LFH @\$50/animal

In Nov 2012 The Australian Feral Camel Project also shot 1,591 LFH in this area

Total LFH culled in this area in 4 years has been 6,679.

Estimated 1,200 LFH ground shot by pastoralists in this period.

Planning is again well underway for the next aerial shoot in Nov /Dec 2017

Dependent upon results it may be sensible to suspend shooting for a year. It is more economical to shoot higher densities by air and low density by ground.

It is also true that it is becoming increasingly difficult to get appropriate shooting team.

An Ammunition Allowance of up to \$500/per property for those properties on UCL interface facing extreme hardship from Large Feral Herbivores is available by discussing with Chief Executive Officer.

Mining Company Support:

It is hoped that GNRBA Inc will garner support from Mining companies in the area. Their involvement will greatly assist the GNRBA provide a more comprehensive service. Wild dog, Weed control and quarantine issues for earthmoving plant are issues the GNRBA Inc. considers very important.

In 2014 the EO addressed the Laverton Mining Liaison meeting at Laverton Shire. This was a good forum to get our messages across. It is hoped that this can be repeated. The CEO was invited this year but was unable to attend.

4. WILD DOG ACTIVITY and REPORTED STOCK LOSSES

Wild dogs continued to impact on pastoral activities across the Goldfields Nullarbor region during 2016/2017. During this period reported stock deaths from Wild Dog attacks have continued to affect confidence in the GNRBA effort and pastoralist enterprises.

Reported wild dog activity in 2016/17 occurred across the entire GNRBA area.

Except for the Nullarbor, Kalgoorlie and Sandstone area small stock activity has ceased largely as a result of an inability to consistently control wild dogs and eagles.

5. NON TARGET DEATHS

Several Non-target deaths have been reported this year. These are investigated by DAFWA to ensure protocols have been adhered to. It is essential that "1080" is used carefully. These investigations are a waste of very limited resources and the GNRBA wishes to ensure that "1080" Signage is obvious. It is a requirement that all public entrances to properties must be adequately signed. The GNRBA have had stencils made up to assist in the process. Stickers are available from Teen Ryan/Michelle Donaldson to freshen up signage.

6. WEED CONTROL

As reported last year, the GNRBA has begun producing a weed management plan for GNRBA area. This is essential when applying for funding and assistance. We are continuing to find a way to get a good plan built for our area. We are of course working hard and kicking goals on the Cacti front.

To this end we have had Bathurst Burr meetings in Kalgoorlie and at Rawlinna. It is anticipated that when complete the management plan will give pastoralists guidance on how to deal with weeds issues and compliance.

The GNRBA has continued to manage many cactus projects in the region and brought on board many partners in the process. This has assisted us to gain credibility in the community.

This year we continued to collaborate with GWW and Ngadju Rangers at Norseman to assist in eliminating a Noogoora Burr outbreak at Bromus Dam. GNRBA has assisted with quality signage and we contract the rangers to keep control. We have previously engaged them to assist in "Railroading the Cactus" project on Transline. This was a great success at Rawlinna .

The GNRBA manages a weed chemical subsidy process that reimburses pastoralists up to \$500/property for dealing with declared weeds such as Bathurst Burr.

To apply for this assistance please contact Chief Executive Officer.

7. FINANCES

The GNRBA has managed funding and expenditure of \$997,438 this financial year using its traditional rate base and matched funding to leverage R4R funding, grants and Shire contributions.

These arrangements are managed day to day by the Chief Executive Officer, overseen by the Treasurer. The GNRBA uses accountant Mike Hutson to manage accounting, cross check banking and Pat Leighton FCA for Audits.

The 2016/2017 Financial statements have been Audited and found to be correct and in order.

The GNRBA continues to press for a Biosecurity Levy on all Shire rates to better fund its work into the future. This way Pastoralists are not the only ones paying for everyone's usage of the rangelands.

Grants have been a tool for assisting the GNRBA to achieve credibility and runs on the board.

This is a far better business plan than working with grants.

8. CONCLUSION

The 2016 -2017 year has seen the group continue to complete its financial and operational independence process and has positioned itself to secure some extra funding through the R4R project, Rangelands NRM WA and other Federal Government Grants.

The Association contracts a private consultant Erin Gorter to assist in funding, development and acquittal of projects. Erin is well connected and a great help to CEO in management of projects. Her help here today is evidence of the quality of her work.

Disappointingly we have missed out on a few larger grants this year, not because of poor applications but a unprofessional approach by State Government Departments that have changed the rules and goalposts after applications were received. This costs us as an Association money and time for which we have yet to see reparation.

We have our Office in Charlotte St Kalgoorlie and employed Michelle Donaldson to take up the Operational role and Office administration. This will gradually allow the Board and CEO to better plan for CEO succession planned for Dec. 2018

The GNRBA Committee of Management adopts a proactive approach to securing funding to assist pastoralists and land managers in the region.

There are still processes regarding provision of Operational Plans that the GNRBA has to comply with to access the matched government funding.

Wild Dog activity over the area continues to have a serious impact and more resources need to be made available to help in bring the impacts of wild dogs to a manageable level in the Associations' area of operations.

The Association's Committee of Management is mindful that it does not become complacent and that the level of involvement from all parties is maintained across the whole landscape.

Resource levels need to be increased; relationships built on and clear management and business plans developed.

The GNRBA continues to deliver quality results to the livestock industry within the Goldfields Nullarbor. These include;

- Continual development of a 3 year management plan.
- Encouragement of members to participate on Management committee and to use their abilities to build the GNRBA Inc. effectiveness.

The GNRBA takes this opportunity to welcome publicly Nigel Wessels DBCA Regional manager on the CoM. It is essential to have him play an active role in this partnership.

The GNRBA Inc. has had a positive effect upon wild dog predation during the 2016-2017 financial year. The GNRBA Inc has worked hard to reduce the impact of wild dogs, camels and weeds on pastoral enterprises; it has secured substantial funding until 2018.

Increasingly the GNRBA needs to find ways to address the issue of large herbivores (camels and horses).It has been endeavouring to affect control programs in the interface between UCL and pastoral properties by working together with the Wiluna Shire and pastoralists.

Native Title determinations may have a impact on our abilities to operate in UCL

The GNRBA continues to expand its operations into the control of Invasive cactus in GNRBA area and has applied for several grants to assist in this work.

DAFWA continues to be in a time of change and our reliance on the department has diminished. We are probably better placed than some areas as our RBG development has been more advanced.

Ross Wood

CEO GNRBA Inc.

10th Oct 2017