

**MEEKATHARRA RANGELANDS BIOSECURITY ASSOCIATION INC**  
**CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2020/2021**

**INTRODUCTION**

The Meekatharra Rangelands Biosecurity Association Inc (MRBA) is an industry body with a membership of all pastoralists in the Shires of Yalgoo, Mount Magnet, Cue and Meekatharra. The Association is established under the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007 with a charter to manage and control declared pests, both animal and plant.

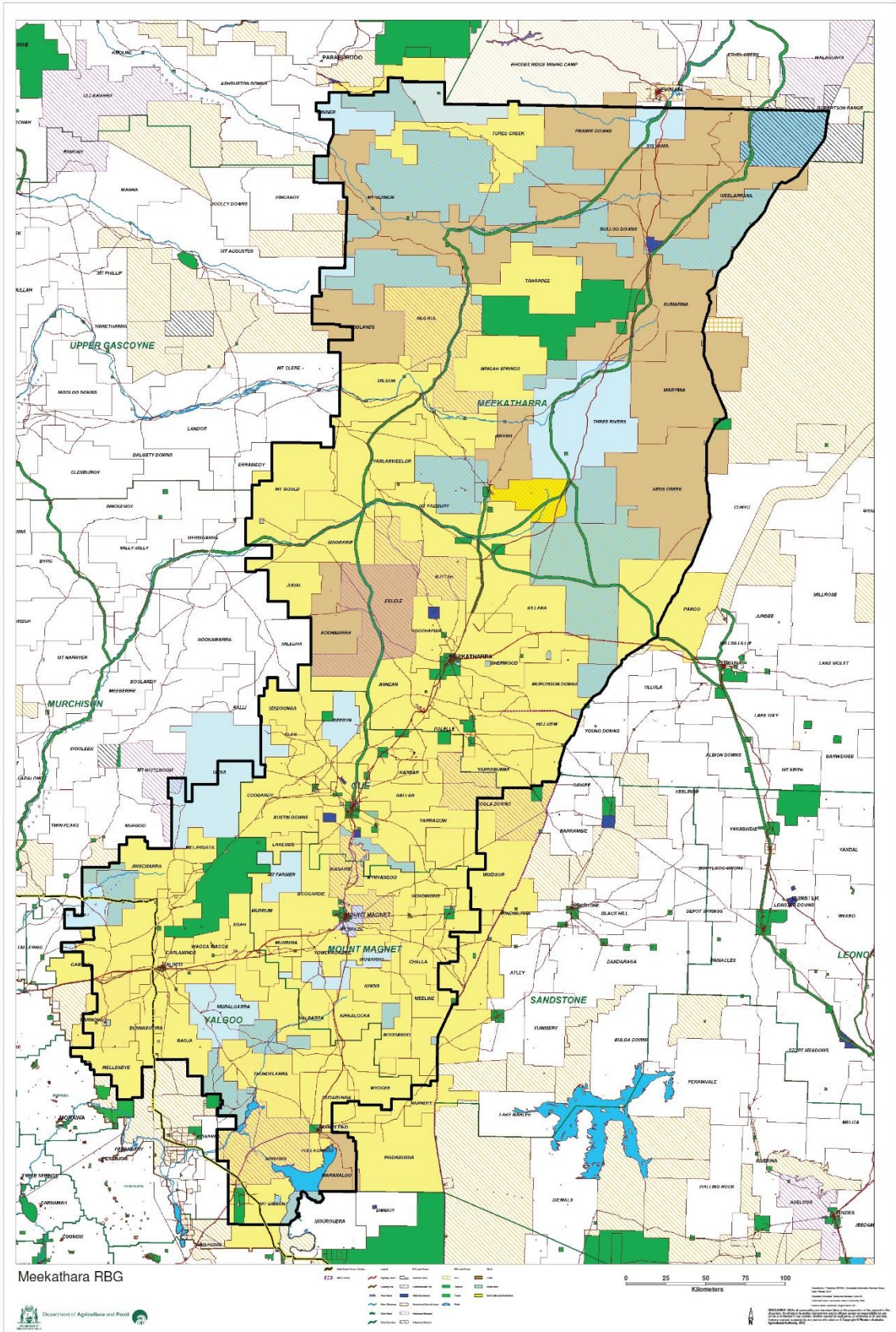
The MRBA Constitution provides for a Management Committee, of up to eleven members, with the responsibility of overseeing the operation of the Association. The Management Committee (with dates elected) as of 30 June 2021 was:

- Chairman – Ashley Dowden (2018)
- Vice Chairman – Liam Johns (2018)
- Secretary/Treasurer – Eric Moses (2020)
- Jarrad Blair (2019)
- John Mahony (2020)
- Jorgen Jensen (2019)
- Greg Watters (2018)
- Rob Lefroy (2019)
- Angus Nichols (2020)
- Greg Payne (2019)
- Murray Pens (2018)

MRBA operations are funded from annual declared pest rates paid by pastoralists, which are matched by the State Government and also one-off grants from State and Federal NRM programs, Royalties for Regions and other sources.

The MRBA area covers approximately 184,000 square kilometres and incorporates 72 pastoral properties. There are also other landholdings with a mix of tenure including mining leases, UCL, national reserves and indigenous managed pastoral leases.

The following map shows the extent of the MRBA area.



# MEEKATHARRA RBG

## MRBA OPERATIONS 2020/2021

### DECLARED PEST ACCOUNT FUNDING

The MRBA has established a Declared Pest Account (DPA) into which the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) deposits the declared pest rates paid by pastoralists and the government's matching contribution. In 2020/2021 DPA receipts were \$449,722 with an expenditure, excluding GST, of \$429,055. The principal activities and costs funded from the Declared Pest Account were:

#### 2020/2021 Community Wild Dog Baiting Program

In 2020/2021 the MRBA conducted one community bait rack program in September/October. The MRBA operates seven bait racks with the program for 2020/2021 detailed below:

Location	Spring Baiting Dates 2020	Spring Quantity/Type of Bait Kg
Pullagaroo	24 September Thursday	800 bulk 300 bulk DBCA
Challa	28 September Monday	2,000 bulk
Melangata	2 October Wednesday	1,800 bulk 300 bulk DBCA
Killara	7 October Wednesday	700 bulk 300 bulk DBCA
Yarraquin	30 September Wednesday	750 bulk
Yarlarweelor	17/18 October Sat/Sun	4,000 bulk
Ilgarrarie	17/18 Sept Thursday/Friday	1,600 bulk
		11,650 kg bulk DBCA 900 bulk Total 12,550 kg

Meat quantities are determined in consultation with Rack Co-ordinators and in 2020/2021 expenditure was \$42,453. In September 2020, a specially fitted out aircraft was hired from Exmouth to enable baits prepared at the Ilgarrarie bait rack to be laid in inaccessible country in the north of the MRBA area. The cost of this aerial baiting was \$6,838.

As can be seen from the table above the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) are involved and they have staff in attendance at the Pullagaroo, Melangata and Killara bait racks. In 2020/2021 DBCA purchased baits prepared on their behalf from the MRBA at a cost of \$5,580.

The MRBA community baiting program operates on the basis that a co-ordinated approach, where all pastoralists lay baits within the same time frame, is a

fundamental component of a successful wild dog reduction program. Further details of the community baiting program are contained in the MRBA Wild Dog Management Plan which is available on request.



*Delivery of Bait Meat - Illgararie*

### Employment of Doggers

In 2020/2021 the MRBA employed five Licenced Pest Management Technicians (LPMTs) or doggers utilising declared pest account funding. The role of the doggers is to support pastoralists in their efforts to control wild dogs by trapping and also laying baits.

The areas of operation of the doggers were Yagahorn, Meekatharra West, Cue, Mount Magnet and Mount Magnet East. The five doggers worked for a combined total of 527 days, on a part time and full-time basis, at a total cost of \$295,127. In all 314 dogs were trapped.

In addition to trapping and baiting doggers maintain close contact with pastoralists and provide technical advice on wild dog management when required.

During the year the MRBA purchased 84 Bridger #5 Offset Laminated Alaskan traps along with spare parts at a cost of \$6,348.

## Large Feral Herbivore (LFH) Aerial Cull – December 2020

A grant of \$25,000 was obtained from the DPIRD for the culling of LFHs (feral camels, horses and donkeys) in the northeast of the MRBA area. This funding was provided by the Minister to supplement MRBA Declared Pest Account pastoralist funding. In December 2020, a three-day aerial cull was conducted by DPIRD Biosecurity staff at a cost of \$42,552 with a total of 684 feral animals destroyed. Detailed results are as follows:

	<b>Donkeys</b>	<b>Horses</b>	<b>Camels</b>
Three Rivers Station	0	80	0
Marymia Station	36	16	0
Kumarina Station	13	7	0
Weelarrana Station	69	10	7
Sylvania Station	115	13	2
Turee Creek Station	125	43	9
UCL - DBCA	68	39	32
	426	208	50



*LFH Aerial Operations*

## **ROYALTIES FOR REGIONS DOGGER FUNDING**

### **Employment of Doggers – Wild Dog Control on Crown Lands and Adjoining Pastoral Leases**

In April 2014, the MRBA was successful in gaining funding under the Royalties for Regions Program for the employment of four doggers for the three-year period to 30 June 2017. This arrangement was extended for a further three years as part of the WA Wild Dog Action Plan 2016-2020 to 30 June 2020 with funding of \$703,000.

The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) is currently updating the Wild Dog Action Plan which will include future R4R funding allocations. With the Murchison Regional Vermin Cell now fully funded and due for completion in November 2021 it is essential that wild dog control on crown lands within the area of the cell is accelerated. Representations to this effect were made to the Minister and Department and very pleasingly a continuation of Royalties for Regions funding was approved by the Minister up until 30 June 2022. This gives time for the Government to consider ongoing funding requirements for the control of wild dogs on government managed pastoral lands.

In 2020/2021 the Royalties for Regions funded doggers worked a combined total of 414 days. The doggers operate on lands under the control of the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions and adjoining pastoral lease buffer zones. Areas of operation are Doolgunna northeast of Meekatharra, Paynes Find and Yalgoo.

Expenditure in 2020/2021 totalled \$234,667 with 204 wild dogs being destroyed.

## **STATE NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND AWI WILD DOG CONTROL TRAINING FUNDING**


The MRBA in 2019/2020 managed grants as follows:

1. A State NRM grant for \$12,000 for the mapping and spraying of an infestation of cactus on Paroo Station. This project was completed by 30 June 2021 in accordance with the requirements of the grant.



2. A Wild Dog Control Training Grant for \$38,571 obtained from AWI for the training of pastoralists. This training was carried out by TAFE Carnarvon in June 2021 at Marymia Station. There were seven participants all of whom obtained the necessary TAFE qualifications to apply for a Pest Management Technician licence.

It is a pleasure to submit this annual report and in so doing I acknowledge with thanks the contribution over the last twelve months of all Committee Members, the Secretary Treasurer Eric Moses and Executive Officer Geoff Brooks.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J.W. Brooks', written over a horizontal line.

Chairman

Meekatharra Rangelands Biosecurity Association

12 October 2021

For further enquires please contact Geoff Brooks

MRBA Executive Officer

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