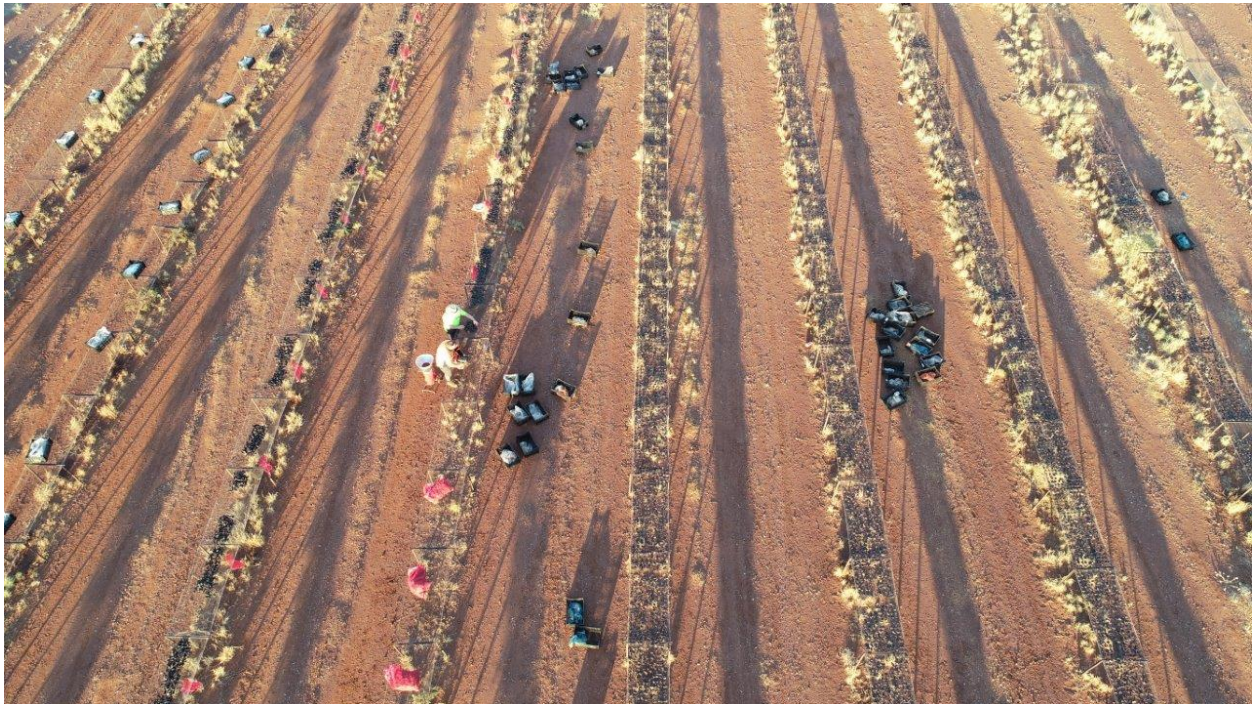


PILBARA REGIONAL BIOSECURITY GROUP INC.

ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18



Karratha Bait Racks – preparation of field prepared dried meat baits for regional aerial and ground baiting (Photo: Adam Robinson)



Department of
Primary Industries and
Regional Development



ROYALTIES
FOR REGIONS



Australian Government

1. INTRODUCTION

About the Pilbara Regional Biosecurity Group

The Pilbara RBG is a not for profit association formed under the *Associations Incorporation Act 2015*, providing declared pest control programs for land managers, particularly in the pastoral zone. 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 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.

Management Committee Membership as at 30 June 2018:

NAME	OFFICE HELD	ORGANISATION	DATE APPOINTED TO COMMITTEE	EXPIRY DATE OF TERM
Ian Hayes	Chairperson	Yandeyarra Station	2-Nov-16	2-Nov-19
Annabelle Coppin	Vice Chairperson	Yarrie Station	2-Nov-16	2-Nov-19
Kim Parsons	Treasure/Secretary	Coolawanyah Station	4-Nov-14	3-Nov-20
Jamie Richardson	1. Full Member	Mt Florence Station	7-Nov-13	2-Nov-19
Joe Armstrong	2. Full Member	To be confirmed – possibly Yanrey	2-Nov-16	2-Nov-19
Clint Thompson	3. Full Member	Wyloo Station	13-Jun-17	2-Nov-20
Mark Bettini	4. Full Member	De Grey Station	17-Nov-17	17-Nov-20
Sim Mathwin	5. Associate Member	Rio Tinto Pastoral	17-Nov-17	17-Nov-20
Vince George	6. Associate Member	Fortescue Metals Group	13-Jun-17	2-Nov-20
Alicia Whittington	7. Associate Member	Department of Parks and Wildlife	11-Mar-10	2-Nov-19
Jo Kuiper	8. Associate Member	Project Manager/delegate Pilbara Mesquite Management Committee	11-Mar-10	2-Nov-19

**** NOTE: The official Constitution of the Pilbara RBA (Inc.) provides that the Management Committee comprise a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary/Treasurer and not less than 5 and not more than 8 other persons, all of whom must either be a full member, or an associate member, of the Association. The Constitution also limits the Management Committee to a maximum of 4 associate members at any one time.**

How the group is funded

The Pilbara RBG's main source of funding is from Declared Pest Rates paid by pastoral leases that are matched equally by the WA State Government. The Pilbara RBG also partners with the Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) [ex Parks and Wildlife], with operational support and agreements with the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD), to undertake donkey collaring control programs and opportunistic aerial culling of camels and feral horses. The DBCA also contribute to wild dog aerial baiting on wild dog leads (movement corridors) from pastoral stations into DBCA managed properties.

2. PILBARA RBG AIMS AND AREA OF OPERATIONS

The Pilbara RBG aims to:

- Foster the control of declared pests throughout the Pilbara, via the formulation, implementation, and review of appropriate management plans and programs;
- Encourage integration, coordination, and general collaboration of Pilbara stakeholders in pest management matters;
- Promote the adoption of best practice invasive species control throughout the area.

The Pilbara RBG annual operational plan for 2017/18 focused on minimising the impact of declared weeds and pests on industry, environment and the community. This is primarily delivered through funding for:

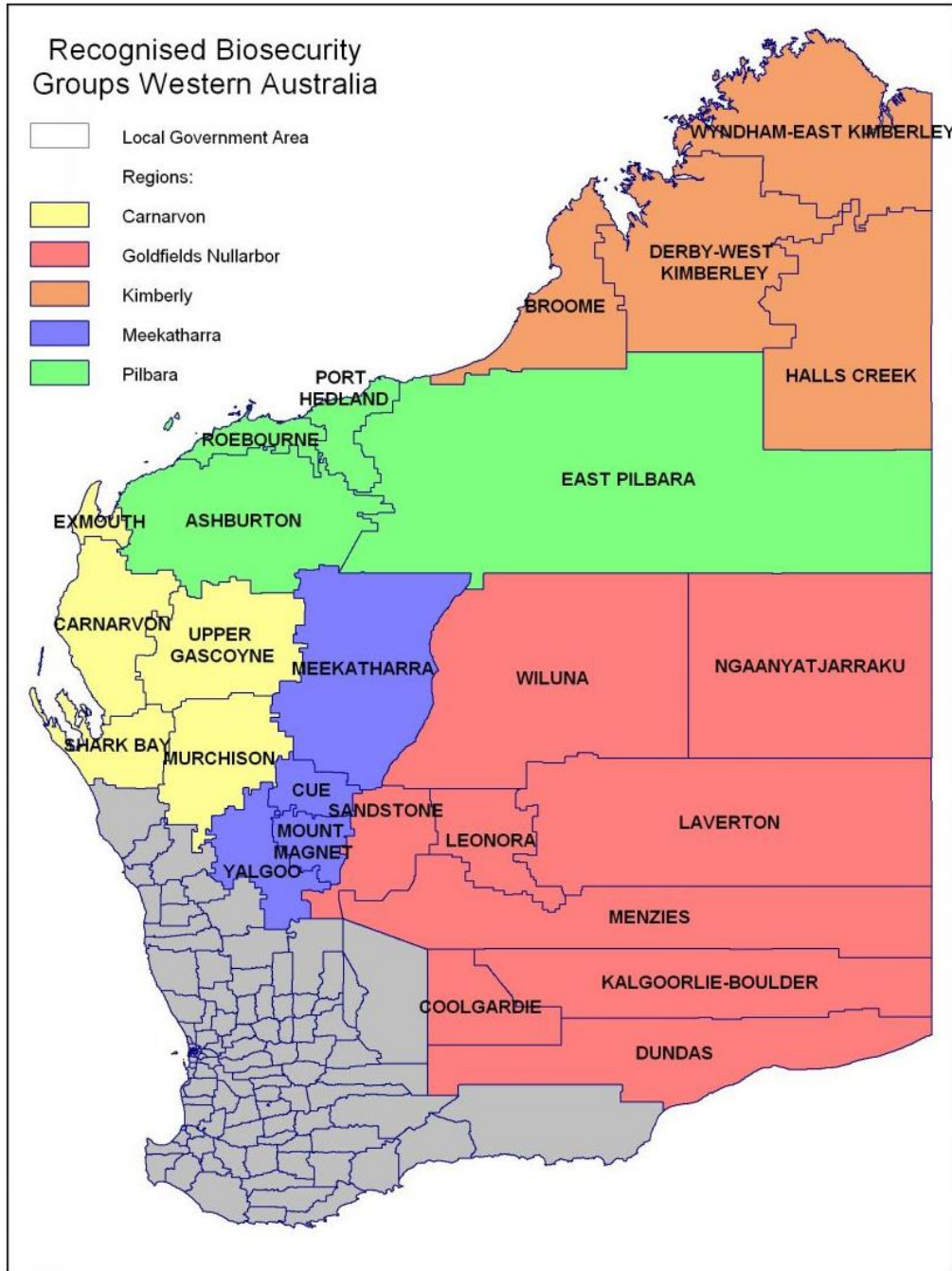
- An annual community aerial and ground coordinated baiting program for wild dogs. Landholders are also encouraged to undertake ground control throughout the year as a primary method of wild dog management;
- A Radio Telemetry program for feral donkey control in the east and central Pilbara, and an aerial Management Shoot for feral donkeys; and
- Working with Pilbara Mesquite Management Committee in the management of Mesquite and Parkinsonia; providing herbicide and sprayers for declared plant control programs.

These activities provide pastoral businesses with the bare minimum level of control required to prevent negative impacts of priority declared pests.

Area of operation

The Pilbara Regional Biosecurity Group Inc (Pilbara RBG) region includes four local government areas - the City of Karratha, Shires of Ashburton and East Pilbara and the Town of Port Hedland. The major towns of the region are Port Hedland and Karratha. Other towns are Roebourne, Dampier, Onslow, Pannawonica, Paraburdoo, Tom Price, Wickham, Newman, Marble Bar and Nullagine. The Pilbara RBG region extends east to the Northern Territory border and includes Jigalong and other Aboriginal communities in desert country. The Pilbara RBG has also provided aerial baiting services to some pastoral stations in the Shire of Broome along Eighty Mile Beach – Wallal Downs, Mandora and Anna Plains. There are about 60 pastoral leases in the Pilbara RBG area.

Map showing Pilbara RBG region in relation to other RBGs in Western Australia



3. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT – IAN HAYES

Thank you to the Management Committee for volunteering your time and personal expenses to participate in, and contribute to Committee meetings throughout the year. Thanks also to supporting organisations including DPIRD, DBCA, and the Pilbara Mesquite Management Committee, for your support and participation in the Pilbara RBG's meetings and programs.

Thank you to the participating stations in our wild dog and feral herbivore control programs, including making airstrips and accommodation available, and making that extra effort to help control declared pests and weeds on the ground.

The Management Committee benefited from corporate governance training delivered by the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD), covering Duties and Responsibilities of Not-For-Profit Directors, and Strategy and Risk for Not-For-Profit Directors.

The Pilbara RBG's Executive Officer, Bill Currans, coordinated the regional wild dog aerial and ground baiting program in September 2017 for the second year, taking over from DPIRD (now DPIRD) who had run the regional baiting program up to September 2015.

The Pilbara RBG had a Service Agreement for 2017/18 with DPIRD for DPIRD to deliver aerial control of large feral herbivores, including the long-running Judas donkey program and aerial management shoots.

The Pilbara RBG had budget to run four large feral herbivore exercises in 2017/18, mainly continuing the donkey "Judas" telemetry program and opportunistic aerial shooting of feral camels and horses. The RBG has a contract with DBCA that contributes funding towards aerial LFH control activities. DPIRD delivered four Donkey Telemetry Runs during the 2017/18 financial year, as well as a five-day West Pilbara Management Shoot.

The effort made by DPIRD to build aerial shooting capacity, and to deliver the Pilbara RBG's "Judas" program and the West Pilbara Management shoot in November 2017 is greatly appreciated.

The Management Committee has been keen to have doggers (Licenced Pest Management Technicians or LPMTs) contracted by the Pilbara RBG to provide on-ground wild dog control on groups of stations – specifically trapping, shooting and targeted baiting. As at June 2018, around 15 pastoral stations were keen to contribute additional cash and fuel to participate in local dogger groups with a LPMT servicing their station(s). Expressions of Interest forms were being distributed to LPMTs to identify interest and willingness to deliver LPMT wild dog control work in the Pilbara. Contracts for LPMTs are expected to be finalised early in the 2018/19 financial year.

I look forward to seeing the Pilbara RBG continuing to move forward in the 2018/19 financial year.

Ian Hayes, Chair, Pilbara RBG

4. PILBARA RBG OPERATIONS 2017-18

The Pilbara RBG has a Declared Pest Account into the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) deposits the declared pest rates paid by pastoralists and the government's matching contribution. The Pilbara RBG also partners with the Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) [ex Parks and Wildlife], with operational support and agreements with the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD), to undertake donkey collaring control programs and opportunistic aerial culling of camels and feral horses. The DBCA also contribute to wild dog aerial baiting on wild dog leads (movement corridors) from pastoral stations into DBCA managed properties.

The Pilbara RBG also appreciated receiving the first annual grant payment of \$50,000 of a two-year/\$100,000 agreement to contribute to the capacity building and skills development activities identified in the WA Wild Dog Action Plan 2016-21, with the grant funding provided by the State Government of Western Australia, Australian Government and Royalties for Regions. The grant funding provides for Executive Officer employment and travel budget to coordinate Pilbara RBG meetings, operations, programs and activities, including arranging workshops on wild dog control. The second annual payment of \$50,000 is expected in the 2018/19 financial year.

In 2017/2018 operational income (excluding GST) was:

• Operational Funding*	\$161,031.46
• Grant Funding	\$664,989.00
• Interest Received	\$416.37
• Other Income	\$763.63
Total Operating Income	\$827,200.46

2017/18 operational activities and expenditure covered:

• Accounting adjustments	\$0
• Advertising and promotion	630.55
• Audit fees	\$1,400.00
• Baits, Collars and Traps	\$312,518.60
• Catering	\$1,054.79
• Bank Fees And Charges	\$0.00
• Contract payments	\$58,360.95
• Executive Support	\$71,155.38
• Fines (ATO)	\$0.00
• Fuel & oil	\$37,434.79
• Helicopter charter	\$132,386.13
• Subscriptions	\$0.00
• Telephone	\$179.96
• Travel, accommodation & conference	\$1,000.00
Total Operating Expenses	\$619,923.77
Profit from ordinary activities before income tax	\$207,276.69
Net profit attributable to the association	\$207,276.69
Total changes in equity of the association	\$207,276.69
Opening retained profits	\$355,603.10
Net profit attributable to the association	\$207,276.69
Closing retained profits	\$562,879.79

During the 2017/18 financial year the large feral herbivore control work, mainly through the donkey collaring program, was significantly increased due to DPIRD addressing capacity issues and conducting four donkey telemetry runs and a West Pilbara Donkey Management Shoot. Reflecting this increase in capacity, the helicopter charter costs increased from around \$111,063 in 16/17 to around \$132,36 in 2017/18.

The Pilbara RBG relies heavily on pastoral lease holders to play an active role in undertaking pest animal and plant control on their own stations as part of their individual responsibility to manage pests. The Pilbara RBG also relies on members from each pastoral station to distribute dried meat baits across their station(s), trap/shoot wild dogs where required, and to monitor and report on sightings of large feral herbivores, including donkeys, camels and feral horses on their properties.

Voluntary roles performed by Pilbara RBG members include:

- Participation on the Management Committee;
- Distributing dried meat baits across their station(s);
- Trapping and/or shooting wild dogs where required; 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.

2017/18 Large Feral Herbivore Operations

The Donkey “Judas” radio tracking telemetry program has been in operation since 1998, delivered by DPIRD under agreement with the Pilbara RBG, with the RBG funding the program. The Judas program currently includes over 16 Pastoral stations and 4 DPaW managed estate (2 reserves, 2 UCL), noting that donkeys move across areas and are not confined to where they are collared.

The Judas program started in the north-west area of the Pilbara and over time has moved east across the top of the pastoral land to the eastern edge of the pastoral zone, and has then started to cover more area to the south. The program has been very successful overall, with donkeys in the northern section of the Pilbara classified as ‘locally eradicated’, with the area around Marble Bar to Nullagine having low donkey numbers.

2017/18 Judas Summary Table:

Dates of Operation	No Donkeys culled from collars	No Feral Horses culled from collars	No Feral Horses culled - opportunistic	No Camels culled - opportunistic	No Camels culled - opportunistic
20 – 25 Aug 2017	152	49	13	193	59
30 Oct – 3 Nov 2017	106	85	23	279	37
16-19 April 2018	84	5	20	28	79
18-22 June 2018	140	14	8	14	89
2017-18 TOTALS	482	153	64	514	264

The program has around 51 current active collars. A number of existing collars were replaced due to reaching the end of the collar battery life, and some new collars introduced during 2017/18. Two satellite collars were introduced into the Judas program to see if getting daily location data was more useful data and was more efficient to locate compared to traditional radio collars.

West Pilbara Donkey Management Shoot

In response from some stations requesting an aerial cull due to high donkey numbers, an aerial Management Shoot was completed on 13th to 17th November 2017 with the following results achieved. The previous management shoot in the same area was done by the Dept of Agriculture in 2005.

Total of 1217 LFH were culled in 46 (approx.) helicopter hours.

Station	Donkeys	Horses	Camels	Totals
Cheela Plains	62	0	0	62
Glen Florrie	261	0	0	261
Mangaroon	0	0	0	0
Maroonah	441	0	0	441
Towera	290	7	0	297
Uaroo/Nanutarra	92	0	0	92
Ullawarra	64	0	0	64
Totals	1210	7	0	1217

On reflection, there was not enough time allowed to cover all the participating stations during the 5 days available, with a follow up management shoot being planned for August 2017 to re-visit the area with around 10 days allocated rather than the initial 5 days to allow for a thorough coverage across the participating stations. The participation and support from the stations involved was greatly appreciated, as was the services of DPIRD to deliver the Management Shoot.

2017/18 Wild Dog Aerial and Ground Baiting Operations

Up to September 2015, DPIRD had arranged and delivered regional wild dog baiting across the Pilbara region. DPIRD's role covered RCP permit completion, ordering and holding 1080 concentrate, ordering meat baits for delivery to Karratha, injecting 1080 into pre-cut meat baits to prepare 1080 dried meat baits at the Karratha Station racks, arranging the aeroplane and aerial baiting program, purchasing avgas, and providing ground support to the aeroplane during baiting by driving avgas and baits to station airstrips across the region.

September 2016 was the first time the Pilbara RBG arranged and delivered regional wild dog 1080 aerial and ground baiting. This was an agreed arrangement with DPIRD when the Pilbara RBG had an Executive Officer in place with the capacity to take over the regional wild dog baiting arrangements. September 2017 was the second time that the Pilbara RBG, via the Executive Officer, had planned and delivered the regional baiting operations.

From 1 July 2016, DPIRD 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 Pilbara RBG Executive Officer assisted Pilbara pastoralists with preparing five-year RCP permit applications and station maps, and the application process with DPIRD.

The DPIRD administration fee, along with stations being asked to complete/submit forms and maps, 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. One station objected to having to prepare a new property map as part of their application, when they had owned the station for many years and there were no changes to their operations including wild dog baiting programs. During 2017/18, four stations continued to object to having to pay a DPIRD administration fee, and spend time completing an application form and related map, to obtain a RCP baiting permit, which prevents these stations from participating in regional wild dog baiting operations.

To comply with the 1080 Code of Practice, the Pilbara RBG:

- Placed baiting notices in regional newspapers, the Executive Officer spoke about the pending baiting program on regional ABC radio, and warning notices were emailed to tourist centres and roadhouses to warn local residents and tourists about the risk to domestic dogs from uncontrolled access to pastoral properties. Warning notices were also posted to Facebook pages across the region, which was a very effective way to advise members of the general public about the regional baiting program.
- Contracted a Licenced Pest Management Technician (LPMT/dogger) to inject 1080 concentrate into fresh meat baits at the regional bait racks situated on Karratha Station. To comply with the requirement to not leave 1080 meat baits unattended, the contracted LPMT camped at the racks overnight for nearly two weeks to ensure the baits drying on the racks were not left unattended. Employees of Medina Pet Meats who supplied the meat baits provided labour assistance at the racks with handling the baits (not injecting), with 1080 handling permits issued by DPIRD.
- Supported all participating stations to complete RCP permit amendment forms to change the S7 Retailer (wild dog chemical supplier) away from DPIRD to a private business, as well as getting generic "Pilbara RBG Approved LPMTs" wording on all permits as a more flexible option to listing LPMT/dogger names and having to do ongoing amendments as LPMTs/doggers changed.
- Used a contracted LPMT as the "bombardier" in the plane, dropping every bait from the plane and handing over baits for ground baiting to comply with RCP permits and 1080 Code of Practice requirements.
- Ensured all 1080/strychnine chemical issued to stations (and baits on DBCA lands too) complied with RCP permit quantity limits, with the contracted LPMT delivering unused chemical back to the S7 Retailer at the conclusion of the baiting program. LPMTs are required to securely store and hold chemical as part of the LPMT licence requirements, along with keep records of chemical use and provision.
- Contracted a truck driver with a 1080 handling certificate as a Courier under the 1080 Code of Practice requirements to drive the 1080 meat baits and chemicals around the region, under supervision from the LPMT, during the regional baiting program.

Summary of September 2017 regional wild dog baiting program

- 174,000 (or 580 bags of) field prepared dried meat baits were produced at the Karratha Station racks over a two-week period. Bags of baits included 1080 warning labels.
- Due to a change in the S7 retailer arrangements to finally move away from Dept of Primary Industries in the S7 retailer role, as well as some pastoral station ownership/management changes, there were 63 Restricted Chemical Product (RCP) permit applications (amendments and new) prepared and submitted for 53 pastoral properties and 10 DBCA properties to allow these properties to participate in the regional baiting in Sept 2017.

- Four stations did not obtain a RCP permit as they objected to having to pay a permit fee to DPIRD, or objected to having to prepare a map as part of their application when identical maps should be held on file by DPIRD from the previous annual permit.
- Four stations decided not to participate for other reasons, mainly proximity to major centres of Karratha and Port Hedland where there was a high risk that domestic dogs would be taken onto stations and would take baits.
- Some stations decided to take the baits allocated to them and place them out on the ground themselves in areas of wild dog activity.
- 580 bags of baits or 174,000 dried meat baits were laid through aerial and ground baiting in September 2017. No baits were left over to avoid wastage where excess baits have previously been stored and then disposed of when baits were old and ineffective.
- Two new stations participated compared to 2016. One property did not complete a RCP permit amendment in time to participate in the regional baiting.
- DBCA supported aerial baiting of dog leads in areas adjoining pastoral properties to assist with a regional, tenure-neutral declared pest control program.
- Stirrup Iron Contracting (Jamie Gratte) was contracted to provide a truck with a ventilated container and a skid-steer machine to transport the 1080 meat baits and avgas around the Pilbara region for around 11 days during the aerial baiting. The skid-steer machine eliminated manual handling of 200 litre drums of avgas, and made plane refuelling very efficient with avgas and baits moved to the plane with the skid-steer. Driver health issues meant the truck was based at Indee Station for the last five days of the program, meaning longer flying hours, additional time taken and more avgas used to fly out of Indee rather than having the truck moving around the area as baiting took place.
- Norwest Airworks (Eric Roulston) was contracted to provide the plane and pilot for the aerial baiting. Eric Roulston's experience with the Pilbara region, and knowledge of airstrip locations and conditions was invaluable.
- Adam Robinson, LPMT was contracted to both prepare the 1080 wild dog meat baits, and be the "bombardier" in the plane to drop the baits. Adam Robinson was listed on every RCP permit as a Nominated Person – LPMT to be able to drop/lay baits on participating stations.

Signed: Date:

Ian Hayes, Chairperson, Pilbara Regional Biosecurity Group