



EASTERN WHEATBELT BIOSECURITY GROUP INC.

Annual Report

For

2016/17 FINANCIAL YEAR

Prepared by: Lisa O'Neill

Proudly supported by

- ◆ SHIRE OF KONDININ ◆ SHIRE OF KULIN ◆ SHIRE OF LAKE GRACE ◆ SHIRE OF MERREDIN ◆
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- ◆ SHIRE OF TRAYNING ◆ SHIRE OF WESTONIA ◆ SHIRE OF YILGARN ◆



Department of
Primary Industries and
Regional Development



Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions



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2.0 Chair Report – Mark Crees

Firstly, I would like to thank all concerned who have assisted me in my role as Chairman over the past twelve months. Thanks to our past chairman, Dean Sinclair, unfortunately due to family reasons he had to step down from the position, however his continued support and advice has made the transition an easy hurdle. Your experience and knowledge has been greatly appreciated. Thanks also to our Executive Officer, Lisa O'Neill, for all your time and effort in your role this year and to Helen Shemeld for taking on the Deputy Chair position. In addition, I must show great appreciations to Jim Sullivan for attending a number of events and meetings on behalf of the EWBG. The EWBG has an excellent Committee of Management which makes my role such an easier job.

Over 2016-17 we saw the Declared Pest Rate (DPR) system take place. This is important for the group as it will guarantee on-going financial support and security for the future of the group and the control of Wild Dogs.

I would also like to thank the staff at DPIRD for their continued support and assistance. In addition to this, I would like to show our appreciation to Adrian Chesson (DBCA) in his role as District Wildlife Officer. Your experience, knowledge and support are greatly appreciated by the committee and myself.

To our two Pest Management Technicians (Doggers), Jeff Taylor and Jamie Taylor, who continue to make a difference with the reduction in dog numbers. The number of dogs controlled is proof that this programme is effective and should continue. Thank you for your commitment and efficiency.

Thank you to AWI for your generous sponsorship this year. I would also like to thank Western Areas LTD for your continued sponsorship agreement with the EWBG. This support is invaluable to our group, as is the support from our eleven member Shires, who contribute not only financially but with expertise and time.

3.0 Overview

The EWBG is an incorporated organisation that commenced in 2001. It now has eleven Shire representatives making up the EWBG membership. A management group of seven is elected who direct and manage the day to day operations.

EWBG is a Recognised Biosecurity Group which allows the implementation of a Declared Pest Rate. This was raised for the first time in October 2016. Department of Primary Industry and Regional Development (DPIRD) matches Rates collected for the management of WA's Declared Pests. 98% was paid within the first 3 months.

The management group work on a voluntary basis, with an in-kind contribution of approximately \$15,000 a year from each Shire (volunteer's contribution of time and travel to meetings, plus attending bait making days). The EWBG employ an Executive Officer part time and two full time Licenced Pest Management Technicians, who are each contracted to the group for 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, Narembeen, Trayning, Westonia and Yilgarn).

Achieving success in this role will help Eastern Wheatbelt agricultural businesses to become robust and viable through improved productivity and increased income associated with reduced stock losses and effective declared pest management practices.

3.1 Achievements

Through necessity, the focus to date of the EWBG has been on the management of wild dogs.

The EWBG has been very successful in reducing dog predation in the area enabling farmers to enter back into livestock or adjusting sheep over the summer months in the area and thus diversifying the agricultural economic base. In 2000-2001 reported sheep losses were more than 2000 head. This was reduced to losses of 1000 head in 2008 and 50 head in 2016.

To date, the EWBG has played a significant role in ensuring farmers can continue to stock sheep and other livestock in the South West of WA. The South West of WA which includes the EWBG control area is one of the only areas in Australia that is marked free of dogs behind the State Barrier Fence.

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 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.

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 biodiversity impact that foxes have on native fauna.

As our 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 the EWBG's Licenced Pest Management Technicians (Doggers) due to the removal of the Koolyanobbing Grid (due to safety concerns and impromptu removal). This gave an access point to Wild Dogs so therefore increased the workload for the LPMT's. Great thanks go to the LPMT's as they kept Wild Dogs within the agricultural area to a minimum. The grid has been out for over 18 months however the EWBG has constantly placed pressure to have this replaced, funding has now been approved and should be completed by late 2017.

An aerial baiting program was put in place with two operations occurring, one in October 2016 and May 2017. This saw a great result with the number of pups on the ground reduced considerably and young dogs kept to a minimum. This gave the LPMT's time to focus on those older Wild Dogs that are renown for being smarter and more difficult to control.

The EWBG thank the 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. Late in 2016 a Declared Pest Rate (DPR) was put in place within the Eastern Wheatbelt Biosecurity Group's prescribed area. This rate allows the Eastern Wheatbelt Biosecurity Group (EWBG) to support landholders in their obligation to control declared pests on their land.

The group has had great support from landholders and industry. Several suggestions were made by landholders on the method in which the rate should be calculated. This feedback has been considered by the committee of management and to make it as fair as possible the group have considered further alternative options to calculate the DPR. As the Minister has now prescribed a flat rate (February 2017), in 2017/18, the declared pest rate will be calculated based on the size of the Value Entity Number with a flat rate based on different hectare ranges.

The EWBG has also been successful in securing Royalty for Regions funding through the WA Wild Dog Action Plan. This funding of \$93,750 per annum, for the next three years, will be used for wild dog control operations within the EWBG prescribed area. This funding will allow for a decrease in the Declared Pest Rate for landholders over this period. The group hope in future years there will be more funding opportunities to reduce the financial cost of controlling declared pests for landholders in the eastern wheatbelt and will continue to seek alternative sources of funding.

Through the 2016/17 Fiscal year the EWBG updated their constitution to better reflect the operations of the group and meet the Association Laws Act. The group continued to engage the local community to ensure we canvass declared pest priorities and developing relevant activities and partnerships to pursue pest management.

The group is very appreciative of the great co-operation they have had from the landholders, the member Shires, DPIRD, 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 put into the group.

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

Appendix 2: Financial Report

Report Period: 1/07/2016 - 30/06/2017

Account(s) in this report: Business Account

Money In	Tax Type	Code	Quantity	\$
ATO payments	Non GST			8691.00
DAFWA Funding	GST			500.00
Declared Pest Account	GST			440000.00
DPAW	GST			2500.00
Grant Funding	GST			17200.00
GST Output Tax		892		56078.86
R4R Funding	GST			89488.64
Shire Membership	GST	230		1100.00
T/fers from other Accounts	Non GST	969		16281.80
WSA Sponsorship Agreement	GST			10000.00
Total Money In				641840.30
Money Out	Tax Type	Code	Quantity	\$
Accounting Fees	GST	300		186.36
Advertising & Promotion	GST	302		5882.28
Aerial Baiting	GST	305		17099.50
Audit	GST			2273.97
Catering	GST			109.09
Community Engagement	GST			4506.30
Contract Work GST	GST			334446.55
GST Input Tax		891		37717.48
Insurance	GST	381		1196.38
Meeting Costs	GST			3367.12
Mobile Phone	GST			600.00
Office Supplies	GST			513.82
RCP Permits	GST			1655.50
Subscriptions & Licenses	GST	454		1033.59
T/fers to other Accounts	Non GST	969		105632.99
Tax Office Payments	Non GST	899		14863.00
Toxins Traps & tools	GST			4304.32
Total Money Out				535388.26
Net				106452.04

Appendix 3: Reported Wild Dog Activity in EWBG Operational Area

END OF YEAR STATICS

2016-17 Fiscal Year

	LPMT 1	LPMT 2	Total for EWBG
Number of days worked	155	215	370
Baits laid	100	13,700	14,700
Wild Dogs destroyed (not inc. baited)	4	10	14

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

		Baited	Shot	Total trapped	Total
Landholders	Private	unknown	2	0	2
LPMT 1	EWBG	0	0	4	4
LPMT 2	EWBG	0	0	10	30
Total		0	2	14	16

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 Loss	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 Loss	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 Loss	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 Loss	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 Loss	4	5	0	2	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	1	16

Appendix 4. EWBG Control Activities

