

MEEKATHARRA RANGELANDS BIOSECURITY ASSOCIATION INC

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2016/2017

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 has been established under the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007 with a charter to manage and control declared pests, both animal and plant.

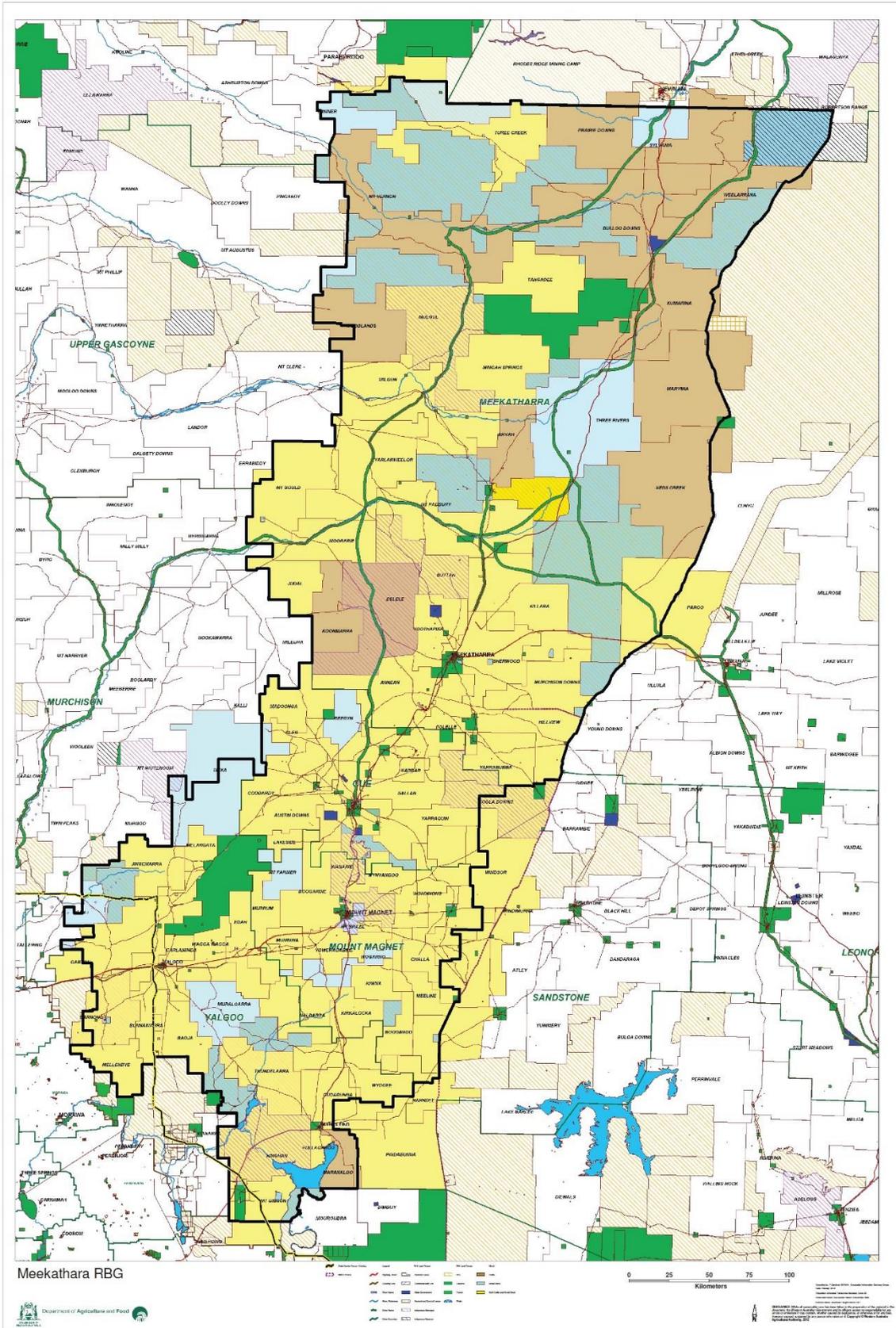
The MRBA Constitution provides for a Management Committee, of up to eleven members, with the responsibility of overseeing the operation of the Association. The Management Committee (with dates elected) as at 30 June 2017 was:

- Ashely Dowden (2015) – Chairman
- Greg Watters (2015) – Vice Chairman
- Kath Mahony (2015) – Secretary/Treasurer
- Jarrad Blair (2016)
- Darren Cousens (2014)
- Bob Grinham (2014)
- Jason Homewood (2016)
- Jorgen Jensen (2016)
- Liam Johns (2015)
- Morrie Seivwright (2014)
- John Wainwright (2014)

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 93 pastoral properties. Of these 93 pastoral properties, there is a mix of tenure ranging from pastoral lease, to mining leases, UCL, national reserve and indigenous managed pastoral leases.

The following map shows the extent of the MRBA area.



MEEKATHARRA RBG

MRBA OPERATIONS 2016/2017

Declared Pest Account Funding

The MRBA has established a Declared Pest Account into which the Department of Agriculture and Food WA (DAFWA) deposits the declared pest rates paid by pastoralists and the government's matching contribution. In 2016/2017 receipts were \$384,496 with an expenditure, excluding GST, of \$390,930. The principal activities and costs (excluding GST) funded from the declared pest account were:

2016/2017 Community Wild Dog Baiting Program

The MRBA coordinates the laying of baits on a community wide basis two time per year. The MRBA operates seven bait racks with the program for 2017 detailed below:

Location	Autumn Baiting Dates 2017	Autumn Quantity/Type of Bait Kg	Spring Baiting Dates 2017	Spring Quantity/Type of Bait Kg
Pullagaroo	31 March Friday	800 bulk 300 bulk DPaW	8 Sept Friday	800 bulk 300 bulk DPaW
Challa	2 April Sunday	2,000 bulk	10 Sept Sunday	2,000 bulk
Melangata	11 April Tuesday	2,000 bulk 300 bulk DPaW	12 Sept Tuesday	2,000 bulk 300 bulk DPaW
Killara	5 April Wednesday	1,200 bulk 300 bulk DPaW	21 Sept Thursday	1,200 bulk 300 bulk DPaW
Glen	10 April Monday	750 bulk	20 Sept Wednesday	750 bulk
Yarlarweelor	7 April Friday	2,200 bulk 300 pre-cut	12/13 Oct Friday	2,200 bulk 300 pre-cut
Ilgarrie	N/A	N/A	16/17 Sept Sat/Sun	1,500 bulk
		8,950 kg bulk 300 pre-cut DPaW 900 bulk Total 10,150 kg		10,450 kg bulk 300 pre-cut DPaW 900 Total 11,650 kg

Meat quantities are determined in consultation with Rack Co-ordinators and in 2016/2017 expenditure was \$69,236. In September 2016 a specially fitted out aircraft was hired from Exmouth to enable baits prepared at the Ilgarrie bait rack to

be laid in inaccessible country in the north of the MRBA area. The cost of this aerial baiting was \$9,733.

As can be seen from the table above the Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW) are involved and they have staff in attendance at the Pullagaroo, Melangata and Killara bait racks. In 2016/2017 DPaW purchased baits prepared on their behalf from the MRBA at a cost of \$9,150.

During the year some \$1,071 was expended on extending the Melangata baits racks.

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.



Illgararie Bait Racks

Employment of Doggers

In 2016/2017 the MRBA employed four Licenced Pest Management Technicians (LPMT) or doggers utilising declared pest account funding. The role of the doggers is to support pastoralists in their effort to control wild dogs by trapping and also laying baits.

The areas of operation of the doggers was Yagahorn, Meekatharra West, Cue, and Mount Magnet/Paynes Find. The four doggers worked for a combined total of 410

days, on a part time and full time basis, at a total cost of \$210,973. In all 260 dogs were trapped and over 24,000 baits were laid.

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

In May 2017 the MRBA purchased 152 wild dog traps at a total cost of \$6,808. These traps are utilised by MRBA doggers and also are available for purchase by MRBA members at a cost of \$45.00 plus GST each.

Royalties for Dogger Regions Funding

Employment of Doggers

In April 2014 the MRBA was successful in gaining funding under the Royalties for Regions Program for the employment of four doggers for the period to 30 June 2017. This arrangement has now been extended for a further three years to 30 June 2020.

In 2016/2017 the doggers worked a combined total of 455 days.

The doggers operate on lands under the control of DPaW and adjoining pastoral lease buffer zones. Areas of operation are Doolgunna near Meekatharra, Paynes Find and Yalgoo. Expenditure in 2016/2017 totalled some \$250,025 with 185 dogs being trapped.

State and Federal Natural Resource Management (NRM) Grant Funding

Jingemarra Station – Cactus Control Grant

In October 2016 a grant of \$19,850 for the control of an infestation of cactus on Jingemarra Station at the site of the old Woogalong homestead was obtained. These funds were provided for Stage 1 of the project which involves the deep burial of the core of the infestation and also a trial program to determine the most effective herbicide.

This grant is administered by DAFWA utilising federal funds made available under the Agricultural White Paper Initiative for management of pest animals and weeds of national significance.

In July this year an application for \$25,925 for Stage 2 of the Jingemarra project was lodged under the State NRM program for the spraying of outlying infestations. The goal of Stage 2 is eradication. The success or otherwise of this application is not expected to be known until December 2017.



Opuntia engelmannii – Old Woogalong Homestead

MRBA Large Feral Herbivore Control Program (LFH)

In February 2017 the MRBA was successful in obtaining a State NRM grant totalling \$43,565 for the eradication of some 1,500 feral donkeys on Meka, Kalli, Coodardy

and Austin Downs Stations. In addition, Royalties for Regions funding of \$55,000 was obtained to support this project and also contribute to a separate LFH control program in the north of the MRBA area

Both these project are scheduled to be completed by December 2017.



Feral Donkeys on Kalli Station

OTHER ACTIVITIES IN 2016/2017

Employment of Executive Officer

In July 2016 capacity building funding of \$50,000 was obtained from DAFWA which when combined with MRBA funding of \$12,920 enabled the employment of a part time Executive Officer for the full financial year.

Technologies to Increase Profits Workshops – Mount Magnet and Capricorn Roadhouse.

With funding provided by the Australian Wool Industry (AWI), and the Meat and Livestock Association (MLA) the MRBA assisted Pastoral Profits in the coordination and promotion of two workshops focusing on technologies to increase profits. The MRBA also obtained a \$12,000 grant from the Mid-West Development Commission as a contribution towards the cost of the workshops.

The workshops were held at Recreation Centre, Mount Magnet and at the Capricorn Roadhouse and were chaired by the Rangelands NRM, Southern Rangelands Program Manager. Attendance was free and in total some 52 pastoralists were involved.



Mount Magnet



Capricorn

It is a pleasure to submit this annual report and in doing so I acknowledge with thanks the contribution over the last twelve months of all Committee Members, the Secretary Treasurer Kath Mahony 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

17 October 2017

For further enquires please contact Geoff Brooks

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