

CARNARVON RANGELANDS BIOSECURITY ASSOCIATION INC.



ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16

1. INTRODUCTION

About the Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Association

The CRBA is a not for profit association formed under the *Associations Incorporation Act 2015*, providing declared pest control services for land managers throughout Shark Bay, Carnarvon, Exmouth, Murchison and Upper Gascoyne Shires. 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 (subject to rule 19(3) of the groups constitution, 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.

The association is managed by a committee of up to 12 members who act in a voluntary capacity.

Committee of management members (as at 30 June 2016)

Position	Name	Contact details
Chair	Justin Steadman	Wooramel Station, via Carnarvon 6701
Vice-Chair	Tim Higham	Meedo Station, via Carnarvon 6701
Secretary / Treasurer	Andrew Whitmarsh	Byro Station, c/- Post Office, Mullewa 6630
Member	Harry McKeogh	Carey Downs, Gascoyne Junction
Member	Jim Dorrell	Mia Mia Station
Member	Mark Halleen	Booldy Station, Yalgoo WA 6635
Member	Sandy McTaggart	Mt Narryer Station, PMB 11, Mullewa WA 6630
Member	Leonie McLeod	Warroora Station, PO Box 130 Exmouth WA 6707
Member	Vacant	
Member	Vacant	

How the group is funded

The association's main source of funding is from rates paid by pastoral leases that are matched equally by the state government. Grant income has been received from DAFWA: Drought Pest federal funding; Royalties for Regions (R4R) wild dog control funding; and Capacity Building funding. The CRBA has also received contributions from Shires of Exmouth and Shark Bay for wild dog control. The CRBA provides funds to the Shire of Upper Gascoyne for wild dog control, with the Shire adding an additional \$100,000 per annum as a cash contribution for wild dog control within the Shire of Upper Gascoyne area.

The CRBA has specific obligations under the BAM Act regarding the transfer of funds from the Declared Pest Account, which are detailed in sections 170 of the BAM Act. The group also attracts funds from other sources such as Federal, State and Local Government.

2. CRBA AIMS AND AREA OF OPERATIONS

Aims

The Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Association (CRBA) aligned its aims directly to its objects in the groups' constitution.

These are:

- Foster the *control of declared pests* throughout the Area, via the formulation, implementation, and review of appropriate *management plans* and programs
- Encourage *integration, coordination, and general collaboration* of all Area stakeholders in pest management matters
- Promote the adoption of *sound biosecurity practices* throughout the Area

High priority declared pests in the region

Wild dogs are a major problem in the region attacking sheep, goats and young cattle. Not only do wild dogs cause direct stock losses, they also cause losses through maiming and control costs.

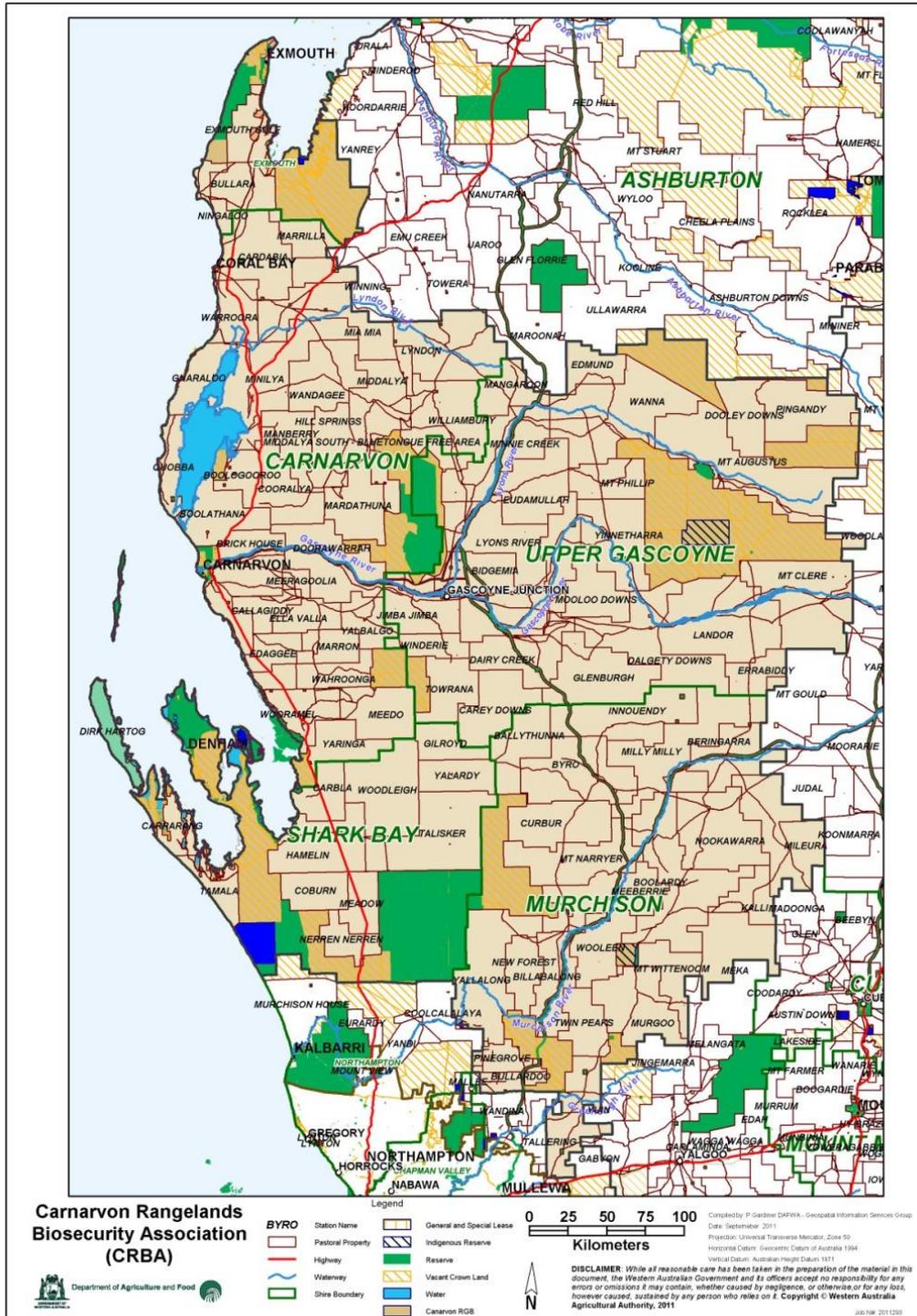
Mesquite There are currently twelve pastoral leases with Mesquite infestations from the Gascoyne Junction to the Gascoyne river mouth at Carnarvon.

Parkinsonia is present on three pastoral leases.

Donkeys are present on properties in the north and east of the region.

Area of operation

The CRBA area of operation takes in the Shires of Carnarvon, Exmouth, Shark Bay, Murchison and Upper Gascoyne and has a total population of 10,300. Its largest town is Carnarvon, with a population of approximately 7,100 residents, is the regional service centre for the whole Gascoyne-Murchison. There are over 90 pastoral leases in the area.



3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – 2015/16 FINANCIAL YEAR

The key points from 2015/16 were:

- We are holding wild dog numbers at bay in some areas, losing in other areas. The CRBA used up spare days to place doggers into hot zones to help with “new” areas of dog activity.
- The Licenced Pest Management Technicians (LPMT's) have to stretch their “existing” areas of operation to service properties that in the past have not had issues, but have been paying rates.
- There are additional LPMT's being trained for succession of those moving on and to build capacity and resources in order to utilise additional skills and finances become available.
- The wild dog workshops were held around July/August, resulting in clearer documentation and maps, with great participation and support from DPaW and DAFWA;
- The need to get information from heads onto paper has been identified for ongoing management and succession – for LPMTs, Committee and EO;
- The Executive Officer (EO) continued engagement with CRBA members and stakeholders with Wild Dog funding provided by DAFWA. Thanks to EO Bill Currans who has helped the group to function better, streamlining permits and having State agency discussions;
- A MOU on wild dogs signed with DPaW for the entire CRBA area to improve coordination and understanding;
- Licenced Pest Management Technician (LPMT) operating boundaries have been sorted out;
- Meka and Mt Clere stations boundary changed back to Meekatharra RBA area, where these stations had previously been included in the CRBA area, and had been rated by the CRBA but were being serviced by MRBA;
- Regional community wild dog aerial and ground baiting coordinated in November 2015 and May 2016, including aerial baiting the Kennedy Ranges in partnership with DPaW.
- A CRBA hosted public briefing held in Carnarvon on the Draft State Wild Dog Plan.
- A CRBA LPMT workshop was held in June 2016 in Carnarvon.
- The WA State Wild Dog Action Plan was completed, providing security for the CRBA to continue with R4R funding for an additional 3 years. The CRBA also welcomes other programs and funding associated with the plan and government help.
- The CRBA is regularly approached by a range of organisations to disseminate info and participate in a range of processes and events, not all related to managing declared pests and weeds. The CRBA needs to be careful not to spend time and effort on issues outside the CRBA's main business.

JUSTIN STEADMAN

Chairman

Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Association

4. CRBA OPERATIONS 2015-16

The CRBA has 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. The CRBA also has ongoing Royalties for Regions agreement with DAFWA/Department of Regional Development (DRD) for establishing enhanced wild dog control operations on government managed lands and neighbouring pastoral regions in the southern rangelands to enable increased stocking of small farm stock in these areas.

In 2015/2016, operational income (excluding GST) was:

- DAFWA - Declared Pest Rates \$677,415
- DAFWA – Royalties for Regions \$238,273
- DAFWA – Drought Pest Control..... \$250,000
- DAFWA – Capacity Building..... \$130,000
- DAFWA – Wild Dogs..... \$33,333
- DPaW – Wild Dog Aerial Baiting..... \$16,352
- DPA – Shire Upper Gascoyne (refund).... \$5,000
- Shire Contributions \$ 10,000
- Rangelands NRM..... \$4,000
- Interest Received \$2,732
- Agvivo event refund..... \$2,623

Total Operating Income **\$1,369,728**

Operation activities and expenditure covered:

- Two combined aerial/ground baiting programs (Autumn and Spring);
- Contracting 7 local Licenced Pest Management Technicians (LPMTs) for local wild dog trapping, baiting and shooting functions, costing around \$495,000;
- Payment of \$125,000 to the Shire of Upper Gascoyne for local wild dog management, with the Shire of Upper Gascoyne contributing an additional \$100,000 of Shire rates towards wild dog control – aerial and ground baiting, plus contracting two LPMTs for local wild dog trapping, baiting and shooting functions.

Total Operating Expenses **\$919,548**

Surplus committed to ongoing programs and projects \$450,180.

The CRBA 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 CRBA also relies on CRBA members from each pastoral station to participate in preparing wild dog meat baits at "Rack Days", distribute dried meat baits across their property, trap/shoot wild dogs where required, and to also interact and support local LPMTs operating on their properties.

Voluntary roles performed by CRBA members include:

- Participation on the Management Committee;
- Time and fuel commitments by members to attend training days, workshops, industry and government meetings and liaisons;
- Negotiating and developing partnerships with WALGA and DPaW;
- Local Rack Coordinators who coordinate local pastoralists to attend bait preparations racks to inject, dry and bag meat baits ready for baiting programs;
- LPMT Coordinators – local pastoralists who are responsible for supervising and guiding local LPMTs who operate across a defined network of pastoral properties;
- Assistance with wild dog aerial baiting programs, including helping with loading baits and fuel into the contracted charter plane, as well as taking on the roles of navigator and/or bombardier during aerial baiting flights to ensure baits are dropped in areas of need on rough terrain that cannot be accessed for ground baiting; 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.



Allan Straw, LPMT on the left, and Jim Miller, DAFWA (standing) providing wild dog control risk mapping assistance to a CRBA member at the 2015 wild dog workshop held at Meedo Station (Photo supplied: Jane Bradley).

Signed:

Justin Steadman, Chairman, Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Association