



# EASTERN WHEATBELT BIOSECURITY GROUP INC.

## Annual Report

For

## 2022/23 FINANCIAL YEAR

Prepared by Lisa O'Neill

Proudly supported by

- ◆ SHIRE OF KONDININ ◆ SHIRE OF KULIN ◆ SHIRE OF LAKE GRACE ◆ SHIRE OF MERREDIN ◆
- ◆ SHIRE OF MT MARSHALL ◆ SHIRE OF MUKINBUDIN ◆ SHIRE OF NAREMBEEN ◆ SHIRE OF NUNGARIN ◆
- ◆ SHIRE OF TRAYNING ◆ SHIRE OF WESTONIA ◆ SHIRE OF YILGARN ◆



Department of Biodiversity,  
Conservation and Attractions



ROYALTIES  
FOR REGIONS



Department of  
Primary Industries and  
Regional Development

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## 2.0 Chair Report – Scott Stirrat (Narembreen Representative)

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I'm pleased to say that the last 12 months have been a successful year for the Eastern Wheatbelt Biosecurity Group. The group through the hard work of its staff and commitment by the Board has again ensured the group's strategic focus of controlling declared pests for our 11 member Shire's and prescribed area has been achieved.

I would like to recognise and thank the staff of our group. Lisa our Executive Officer has put in a tremendous effort in all areas of the administration and ensuring that the LMPT's can get on with their job's and that the groups internal workings are properly managed. Thank you, Lisa, for your work. Frog, Stu and Seb our LPMT's. Your work out on the ground is very much appreciated. You are all very good at your profession and we appreciate the hard work you do working for the group.

Wild dogs continue to be our primary focus when it comes to declared pests. Our records show we have had 87 reported stock loses. We can confirm 11 dogs destroyed. Our aerial baiting program was completed in December, and we have laid over 20000 baits and while the effect of these baits is difficult to measure we are confident that it is significant.

I would like to acknowledge the State Government for the various funding streams that we receive as well as land owners for their contribution under the Declared Pest Rate. Certainty of funding for the group is critical to long term strategic planning and being able to implement programs required to tackle declared pests.

Our relationship with DBCA continues with the signing a new MOU which will see us providing assistance to DBCA for their own dog control activities. We work closely with DBCA, and I would like to thank them for their continued support and commitment to the relationship. Working closely with DPIRD is also very important to the success of our programs and I would like to thank them for the assistance they have provided us.

While wild dog control quite rightly remains our priority, I do believe we have capacity to enter into other areas of declared pest management. We received a request to provide some assistance with rabbit control from one of our member shires. We are currently receiving expressions of interest from our Shires, and we will look to provide assistance with bait mixing to land owners. Thank you to the Central Wheatbelt Biosecurity Group for their assistance with this program.

Also, I want to thank all Shire Representatives for their communication and feedback that we receive.

Our group has a very passionate and committed board. Thank you to all board members for your support towards Lisa and myself over the last 12 months. I do believe we will have some challenges in the future in regards to funding, government and indigenous land access, compliance and various other challenges that will arise. I am sure these challenges can be overcome and I'm confident that as long as we stay committed to being on the front line of declared pest management, we will remain relevant and necessary.

Finally, I want to say that I am looking forward to working with the staff and the board for the next 12 months ensuring that our group moves forward and achieves all of its key objectives. I'm sure we will have another successful year.

Thanks.

Scott Stirrat- Chair  
Shire of Narembreen Representative.

## 3.0 Overview

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Established in 2001, the Eastern Wheatbelt Biosecurity Group (EWBG) is an incorporated entity with a membership comprising of eleven Local Governments. Every two years, a management team is elected to oversee the daily activities, guided by an Executive Officer.

As the EWBG is a Recognised Biosecurity Group, it allows the implementation of a Declared Pest Rate (DPR). This rate was first introduced in October 2016, and 2022-23 marks its seventh year of implementation. The Department of Primary Industry and Regional Development (DPIRD), under the Minister of Agriculture and Food, matches the rate collected, thereby amplifying the group's efforts to manage Western Australia's Declared Pests. The collection efficiency for the DPR has been high over the years, and the group extends its gratitude to landholders for their continued support.

The management team generously volunteers their time and resources, contributing an estimated \$15,000 annually in in-kind assistance across the eleven participating Shires. This figure doesn't account for the substantial contributions made by individual landholders and the community at large.

On the staffing front, EWBG employs a part-time Executive Officer and contracts Licensed Pest Management Technicians (LPMTs)—one on a part-time basis for 90 days a year and two on a full-time basis for 200 days a year.

Financial backing for the group comes from a variety of sources, including Western Areas LTD (WSA), the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD), the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA), the State Government's Royalties for Regions program, and the eleven member Shires, which include Kondinin, Kulin, Lake Grace, Merredin, Mount Marshall, Mukinbudin, Nungarin, Narembeen, Trayning, Westonia, and Yilgarn.

The group's success is pivotal for bolstering the Eastern Wheatbelt's agricultural sector. By enhancing pest management practices, EWBG helps local businesses improve productivity and increase revenue, thereby mitigating livestock losses.

### 3.1 Achievements

Historically, the Eastern Wheatbelt Biosecurity Group (EWBG) has primarily focused on controlling wild dog populations, along with European red foxes and feral cats. This focus has yielded significant results, allowing local farms to reintroduce livestock and offering new opportunities for seasonal sheep agistment, thereby diversifying the region's agricultural economy.

In the 2000-2001 period, the area experienced a loss of over 2,000 sheep. However, thanks to EWBG's coordinated efforts, these numbers have dramatically decreased: to 1,000 in 2008, 135 in the 2017/18 period, and a mere 47 in 2022/23. The introduction of around 10 new RCP Permits in the 2022/23 period, facilitated by EWBG, empowers landholders to conduct their own pest control measures. It also ensures immediate support from Licensed Pest Management Technicians (LPMTs) in critical areas. EWBG not only encourages landholders to acquire an RCP Permit but also assists in the application process and covers the permit costs.

# COMMUNITY CONTROL OF COMMUNITY PESTS



KONDININ • KULIN • LAKE GRACE • MERREDIN • MT MARSHALL • MUKINBUDIN • NAREMBEEN • NUNGARIN • TRAYNING • WESTONIA • YILGARN

EWBG actively seeks reports of wild dog sightings from the community and LPMTs and meticulously records all wild dog management activities within its jurisdiction. This data contributes to the National Wild Dog Strategy and is also included in the nationally-funded Feralscan database.

In the 2022/23 period, EWBG has been instrumental in enabling farmers in the south west of WA to sustain sheep and other livestock farming. This is achieved through a unified and well-coordinated strategy to manage wild dogs both within and beyond the WA State Barrier Fence, stretching from Lake Moore to Lake Grace.

## 4.0 EWBG Aims and Objectives

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### 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

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The Eastern Wheatbelt Biosecurity Group (EWBG) serves as a pivotal force in aiding land managers to tackle declared pests within their designated area. Various data sources indicate that the Eastern Wheatbelt is home to considerable numbers of declared animal pests, posing both environmental and financial threats to private farmlands, unallocated crown lands, and ecosystems.

Some of the most pressing declared animal pests affecting our communities and the broader region include wild dogs, feral cats, and foxes. Despite significant strides made by EWBG in reducing wild dog numbers, continuous efforts are crucial to maintain populations at levels that allow for sustainable and profitable livestock farming across the region and state.

The group's wild dog operational plan aligns with the WA Wild Dog Action Plan: Research and Development Fund 2023-2025. This industry-led initiative assesses the economic, environmental, and social repercussions of wild dogs and outlines key strategies for their management across Western Australia. The plan aims to safeguard livestock, tourism sectors, and public safety, while also acknowledging the dingo's ecological and cultural significance.

Control of foxes and feral cats has been flagged as a high-priority issue within our operational scope, especially for livestock owners. EWBG also acknowledges the detrimental effects of foxes on local biodiversity, particularly native wildlife. Given that the EWBG's jurisdiction includes large tracts of remnant vegetation, managing foxes and feral cats is vital for both livestock sustainability and nature conservation. Effective control of these pests also enhances the efficacy of wild dog management efforts.

In December 2022, EWBG executed an aerial baiting program targeting the northern region from Lake Moore to east of the Shire of Mukinbudin. This approach maximises control and enables Licensed Pest Management Technicians (LPMTs) to survey the area effectively. The program is indispensable in alleviating the strain wild dogs place on the State Barrier Fence (SBF) and helps LPMTs manage any wild dogs that have breached the SBF into agricultural lands.

EWBG continues to collaborate with the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) using the Feralscan reporting system. This tool empowers landholders to report pest activities, helping the group to better comprehend the types, prevalence, and existing management of pests in the area. Additionally, EWBG has incorporated motion-activated cameras into their control program to enhance surveillance and monitoring of declared pests within the designated region.

## 6.0 Summary

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This year marks another milestone for the Eastern Wheatbelt Biosecurity Group (EWBG) as it continues to evolve as a Recognised Biosecurity Group. Now in its seventh year of implementing the Declared Pest Rate (DPR) within its designated area, EWBG has been instrumental in aiding landholders in fulfilling their responsibilities to manage declared pests on their properties.

The group has strong backing from both landholders and the broader industry. EWBG has been proactive in consulting with local communities to identify key pest issues and to formulate effective strategies and partnerships for ongoing pest management improvements.

In the 2022/23 period, EWBG offered landholders the chance to gain 1080 accreditation and apply for a Restricted Chemical Permit (RCP), covering the associated costs to encourage maximum participation and comprehensive pest control. This initiative enables landholders to actively engage with the group and contribute to setting pest management priorities. EWBG representatives have been present at numerous community events to facilitate discussion with landholders about pressing pest issues and plan to continue this engagement at future industry events.

The Executive Officer actively participates in industry-relevant workshops and conferences to foster collaboration with the other 16 Recognised Biosecurity Groups. This also provides a platform for networking and mutual support among Executive Officers from different RBGs. Committee members are similarly engaged in pertinent industry discussions and meetings.

EWBG has collaborated with various stakeholders, including Ramelius Resources, MLG, the Shire of Yilgarn, Shire of Kondinin and DPIRD, to maintain all grids within its operational area. The group extends its gratitude for the substantial support received from landholders, member Shires, the Department of Primary Industry and Regional Development, Western Areas Ltd, and the Department of Biosecurity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA). Special acknowledgment is also given to the three Licensed Pest Management Technicians (LPMTs) for their unwavering commitment and contributions to the group's success.

Committee of Management:

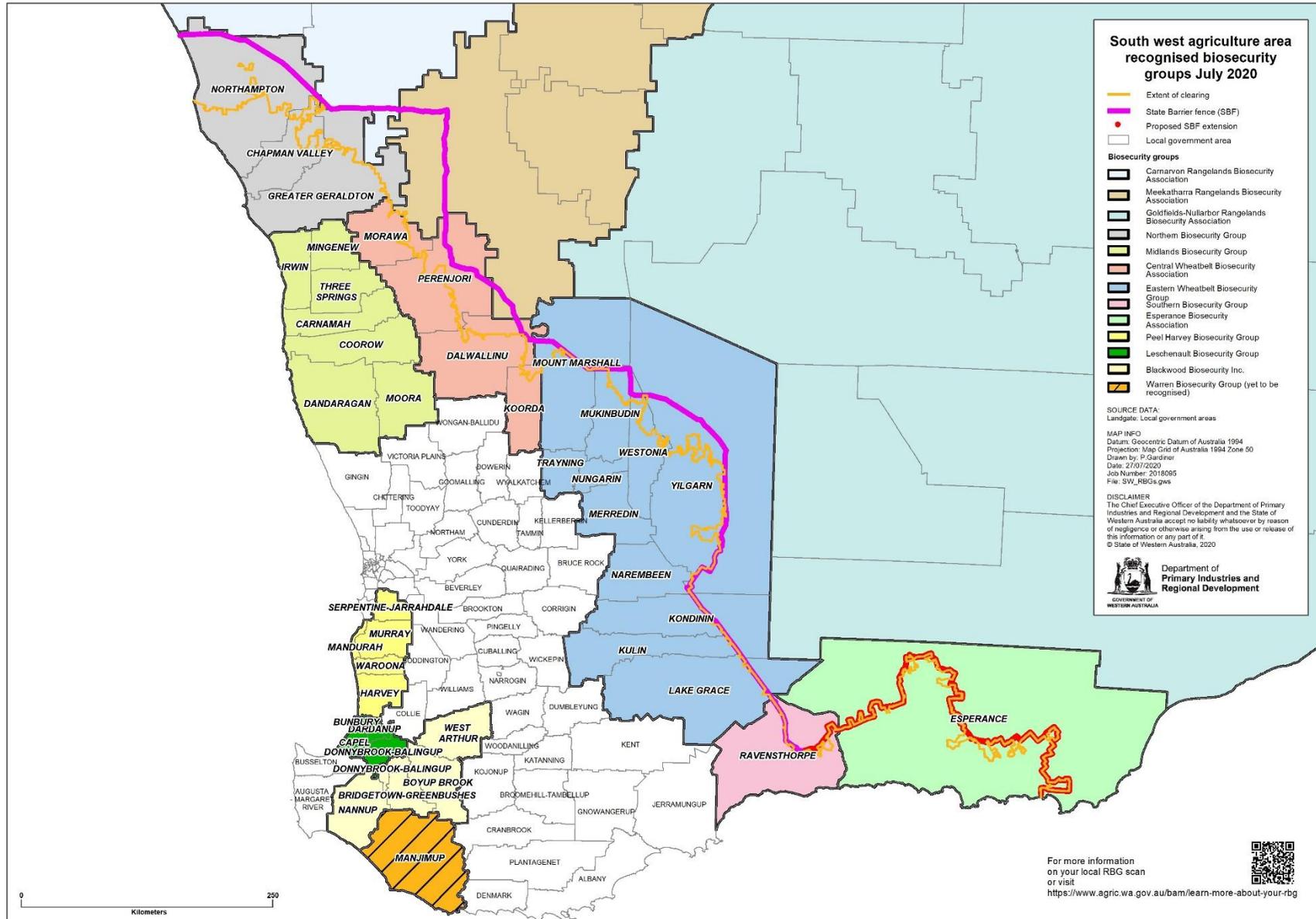
Chair – Scott Stirrat, Deputy Chair – Jason Davis.

Committee Members: Jim Sullivan, Mark Crees, Dean Sinclair, Ron Burro, Steve Palm, and Steve Hunt.

Shire Representatives for EWBG:

Merredin – Romolo Patroni, Mukinbudin – Steve Palm, Narembeen – Scott Stirrat, Westonia – Ross Della Bosca, Trayning – Peter Barnes, Nungarin – Jason Davis, Mt Marshall – Stuart Putt, Lake Grace – Steve Hunt, Kulin – Brad Taylor, Kondinin – Tom Mulcahy, Yilgarn – Gary Guerini.

# Appendix 1: RBG Area of Operation



## Appendix 2: Audited Financial Report

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### EASTERN WHEATBELT BIOSECURITY GROUP INC ABN 97 381 980 973

#### INCOME STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2023

Income	DBCA	DPR	R4R	Other	Total
DBCA	24,500	-	-	-	24,500
Declared Pest Account	-	403,060	-	-	403,060
R4R Funding	-	-	100,000	-	100,000
Membership Fees Received	-	-	-	1,100	1,100
Interest	-	-	-	461	461
Other Income	-	-	-	10,000	10,000
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>24,500</b>	<b>403,060</b>	<b>100,000</b>	<b>11,561</b>	<b>539,121</b>
<b>Expenses</b>					
Accounting Fees	-	330	-	-	330
Administration Costs	-	4,576	-	-	4,576
Administration Support	-	42	-	-	42
Aerial Baiting	-	23,300	-	-	23,300
Audit Fees	-	2,364	-	-	2,364
Baits, Toxin & Traps	6,000	5,164	-	-	11,164
Bait Production	-	20,700	-	-	20,700
Bank Charges	-	138	-	-	138
Community Engagement	-	1,795	-	-	1,795
Conferences & Seminars	-	1,953	-	-	1,953
Contractor Payments	15,000	233,305	100,000	-	348,305
Consultancy Fees	-	2,360	-	-	2,360
Executive Support	-	1,265	-	-	1,265
Insurance	-	21,502	-	-	21,502
Office	-	3,963	-	-	3,963
Other - Annual Leave Provision	-	3,035	-	-	3,035
Subscriptions	-	191	-	-	191
Superannuation	-	4,855	-	-	4,855
Travel	-	1,223	-	-	1,223
Wages	-	46,422	-	-	46,422
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>21,000</b>	<b>378,483</b>	<b>100,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>499,483</b>
<b>Carryover</b>	<b>3,500</b>	<b>24,577</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>11,561</b>	<b>39,638</b>

## Appendix 3: Reported Wild Dog Activity in EWBG Operational Area

### END OF YEAR STATICS

#### 2021-22 Fiscal Year

	LPMT 1	LPMT 2	LPMT3	Total for EWBG
Number of days worked	200	200	52	452
Baits laid (inc Aerial Bait)	5,200	10,400 (inc. Aerial bait)	4,600	20,200
Wild Dogs destroyed (not inc. all baited)	3	7	1	11 (460 expected baited)

\*Landholder 1 Wild dog Destroyed.

#### 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 Losses	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 Losses	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 Losses	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 Losses	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 Losses	4	5	0	2	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	1	16
2017/18	Attacks	1	2	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	12
	Stock Losses	5	2	8	0	3	60	3	8	2	27	12	5	135
2018/19	Attacks	2	1	2	1	0	2	0	0	0	2	1	0	11
	Stock Losses	10	3	28	2	0	13	0	0	0	4	10	0	70
2019/20	Attacks	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	4
	Stock Losses	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	50	1	55
2020/21	Attacks	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	6
	Stock Losses	1	8	0	0	4	3	0	8	8	0	0	0	32
2021/22	Attacks	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	1	6
	Stock Losses	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	2	1	51	5	69
2022/23	Attacks	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	7
	Stock Losses	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	15	16	0	10	1	87