



EASTERN WHEATBELT BIOSECURITY GROUP INC.

Annual Report

For

2020/21 FINANCIAL YEAR

Prepared by Lisa O'Neill

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- ◆ SHIRE OF KONDININ ◆ SHIRE OF KULIN ◆ SHIRE OF LAKE GRACE ◆ SHIRE OF MERREDIN ◆
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Department of Biodiversity,
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ROYALTIES
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Primary Industries and
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2.0 Chair Report – Stephen Palm (Mukinbudin Representative)

Another 12 months has passed and the Eastern Wheatbelt have continued fulfilling their strategic plan to help landholders to control Declared Pests within their prescribed area. The Eastern Wheatbelt Biosecurity Groups three LPMT (Licensed Pest Management Technicians) continued their great efforts throughout the year resulting in a significant reduction in declared pests across the eleven shires of the Eastern Wheatbelt Biosecurity Group and continued control of Declared Pests.

The work of the LPMT's included almost 20 000 baits being laid resulting in an estimated 300 wild dogs controlled, 21 wild dogs confirmed destroyed, 32 foxes and 7 cats controlled for the year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the LPMT's for their continued hard work.

The past year has seen the Aerial Baiting Project being completed in October 2020. Looking forward into 2021-22 we will see this project increase in area with the Northern Biosecurity Group and Central Wheatbelt Biosecurity Group following in the Eastern Wheatbelt Biosecurity Groups footsteps to use a helicopter for this project and working with LPMT- Jamie Taylor to put this in place. We thank Frog for coordinating this very extensive project.

This year has seen the fifth year of the Declared Pest Rate and with a consistent and permanent funding system this has allowed the group to go from strengths to strengths. In December 2020, the State Government announced \$13.4 million in continued funding to support the WA Wild Dog Action Plan for four years from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2025. This includes \$800,000 per annum to support the employment of eight doggers who target control of wild dogs on government managed lands. The EWBG will continue to receive \$93,750 annually towards their LPMT's. Last year also saw the start of another three years sponsorship agreement with Western Area's and we thank them for their dedication to the control of Declared Pests.

EWBG were successful in obtaining two Industry Funding Scheme Grants. In collaboration with the Central Wheatbelt Biosecurity Association the EWBG undertook an aerial baiting program targeting areas that are difficult to access by ground. The second grant allowed the EWBG to continue our existing part time Licensed Pest Management Technician and then have the ability to continue this position in 21/22 and 22/23.

DPIRD have once again restructured their staff and we have now seen the formation of the Office of RBG's. This will see more contact from DPIRD on a broad scale through Zoom meetings and hopefully more uniform information supply and increased involvement from the RBG's in important matters relating to the industry. The Minister put together a Roundtable RBG forum in Bunbury earlier in the year which I was able to attend.

Finally, I would like to finish by thanking everyone involved with the EWBG including the board, shire representatives, our hard-working employees Jamie Taylor (LPMT), Stuart McEwan (LPMT), Nathan Richards (LPMT) and Lisa O'Neill (EO), your time and dedication is very much appreciated.

EWBG continue to look forward to working with all stakeholders in the industry and keeping the agricultural region free and safe from declared pests for many more years to come.

Steve Palm – EWBG Chair.

Shire of Mukinbudin

3.0 Overview

The Eastern Wheatbelt Biosecurity Group (EWBG) is an incorporated organisation that commenced operating in 2001. It has eleven Shire representatives making up the EWBG membership. A management group is elected every two years who direct and manage the day-to-day operations via an Executive Officer.

EWBG is a Recognised Biosecurity Group which allows the implementation of a Declared Pest Rate (DPR). This was raised for the first time in October 2016, so this year saw its fifth year with the DPR in place. The Minister of Agriculture and Food, through the Department of Primary Industry and Regional Development (DPIRD) matches rates collected for the management of WA's Declared Pests. The collection rate of the DPR over the past five years has been excellent and the group thanks landholders for their support to allow ongoing management of declared pests across the prescribed area.

The management group work on a voluntary basis, with an in-kind contribution of approximately \$15,000 a year across the eleven shires (volunteer's contribution of time and travel to meetings, plus attending workshops and bait making days). This does not include individual landholder and community contributions which are extensive.

The EWBG employ an Executive Officer part time and contract highly skilled and experienced Licenced Pest Management Technicians (LPMTs) - one part time (80 days) and two full time (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), 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 ensures Eastern Wheatbelt agricultural businesses can become more robust and remain viable through improved productivity and increased income associated with reduced stock losses due to increasingly effective and coordinated declared pest management practices.

3.1 Achievements

Through necessity, the focus to date of the EWBG has been on the management of wild dogs and in conjunction with this, European red foxes, and the feral cat.

The EWBG has been very successful in reducing wild dog predation across the extensive area enabling farming businesses to enter back into livestock and providing additional opportunities for agistment of sheep in the area over the summer months thus diversifying the agricultural economic base.

In 2000-2001 **reported** sheep losses were more than 2000 head. EWBG coordinated activities halved this to 1000 in 2008, 135 head in 2017/18 and 31 in 2020/21. With approximately 15 new RCP Permits in 2020/21 in place in the area due to assistance from the EWBG, this allows landholders to carry out

their own pest control activities as well as provide immediate access and support if required by LPMTs in key target areas. The EWBG encourages all landholders to obtain an RCP Permit and will assist in this process.

EWBG requests from community and LPMTs any reports of wild dogs and records all management activities of Wild Dogs undertaken in the EWBG area. This supports the National Wild Dog Strategy and provides data via the nationally funded Feralscan database.

The EWBG has played a significant role in ensuring farmers can continue to stock sheep and other livestock in the Southwest of WA by leading a collaborative and coordinated approach to provide management of wild dogs inside and outside the WA State Barrier Fence, from Northampton to Esperance in 2020/21.

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 Biosecurity Group is playing a key role in assisting land managers to manage declared pests in their prescribed 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 for our communities and region, include wild dogs and foxes.

Wild dogs continue to cause livestock losses across the Eastern Wheatbelt. Whilst significant reductions in wild dog populations have 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 and state.

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'.

Fox and feral cat 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 impact that foxes have on biodiversity, particularly native fauna.

As the EWBG operational area incorporates many larger areas of remnant vegetation close to and beyond the clearing line, the control of foxes and feral cats is important for the sustainability of livestock enterprises and for the benefit of nature conservation. It is also foundational in ensuring any efforts in Wild dog control are maximised. The management of foxes is imperative to maximise wild dog control however the EWBG have increased monitoring of foxes as response to concern and interest in the Shire of Narembeen.

The EWBG conducted an extensive aerial baiting program in 2020/21. The operation occurred in October 2020 which focused on the northern area of the EWBG from Lake Moore to the east of the Shire of Mukinbudin. The aerial baiting program allows maximum control and provides the LPMT's the ability to conduct surveillance of the area. This control program is essential and reduces the pressure Wild Dogs place on the SBF and allows the EWBG LPMT's to control Wild Dogs that have infiltrated the SBF into agricultural land.

The EWBG has been continuing to work with DPIRD in the use of reporting through Feralscan. This will provide landholders the ability to report pests so the group can better understand the various pests, prevalence, and current pest management in EWBG areas. The EWBG has also included motion censored cameras in their control program to help increase surveillance and monitoring of declared pests within the prescribed area.

6.0 Summary

This year has seen the EWBG develop even further as a Recognised Biosecurity Group. This is the fifth year of the Declared Pest Rate (DPR) within the Eastern Wheatbelt Biosecurity Group's prescribed area. This rate allows the Eastern Wheatbelt Biosecurity Group (EWBG) to support landholders in their ongoing obligation and responsibility to control declared pests on their land.

The group has received great support from landholders and industry. EWBG continued to engage with the local community to canvas declared pest priorities and develop relevant activities and partnerships to pursue continuous improvement of pest management.

Throughout 2020/21 the Eastern Wheatbelt Biosecurity Group has provided landholders the opportunity to obtain 1080 accreditation and apply for a Restricted Chemical Permit (RCP), which the EWBG are currently covering the associated costs, to ensure maximum participation and widespread pest management. This allows landholders the opportunity to control declared pests on their property to the best of their ability. EWBG provide this service so landholders can engage with the RBG and to provide opportunities to input into priority declared pests. Representatives from the group have attended multiple community events (those available due to Covid 19), allowing landholders the opportunity to engage with the group and discuss priority pests. The group will continue to attend industry events in the future as it provides a voice for landholders within the area.

The Executive Officer is active in all industry relevant workshops and conferences to maximise collaboration with the other 14 Recognised Biosecurity Groups. This also allows the EWBG Executive Officer to provide support and networking with other RBG Executive Officers. Committee Members are also active in any industry relevant discussions or meetings.

The EWBG also worked in cooperation with several stakeholders to ensure upkeep and maintenance of all grids within our prescribed area. Thank go to Ramelius Resources, MLG, the Shire of Yilgarn and DPIRD for funding and assisting with the upkeep of these grids.

The group is very appreciative of the great co-operation they have had from the landholders, the member Shires, Department of Primary Industry and Regional Development, AWI, Western Area's Ltd and Department of Biosecurity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA). The group is also very grateful for the hard work and dedication the three LPMT's have put towards the group, the success of the group is a large reflection of their solid work.

Committee of Management:

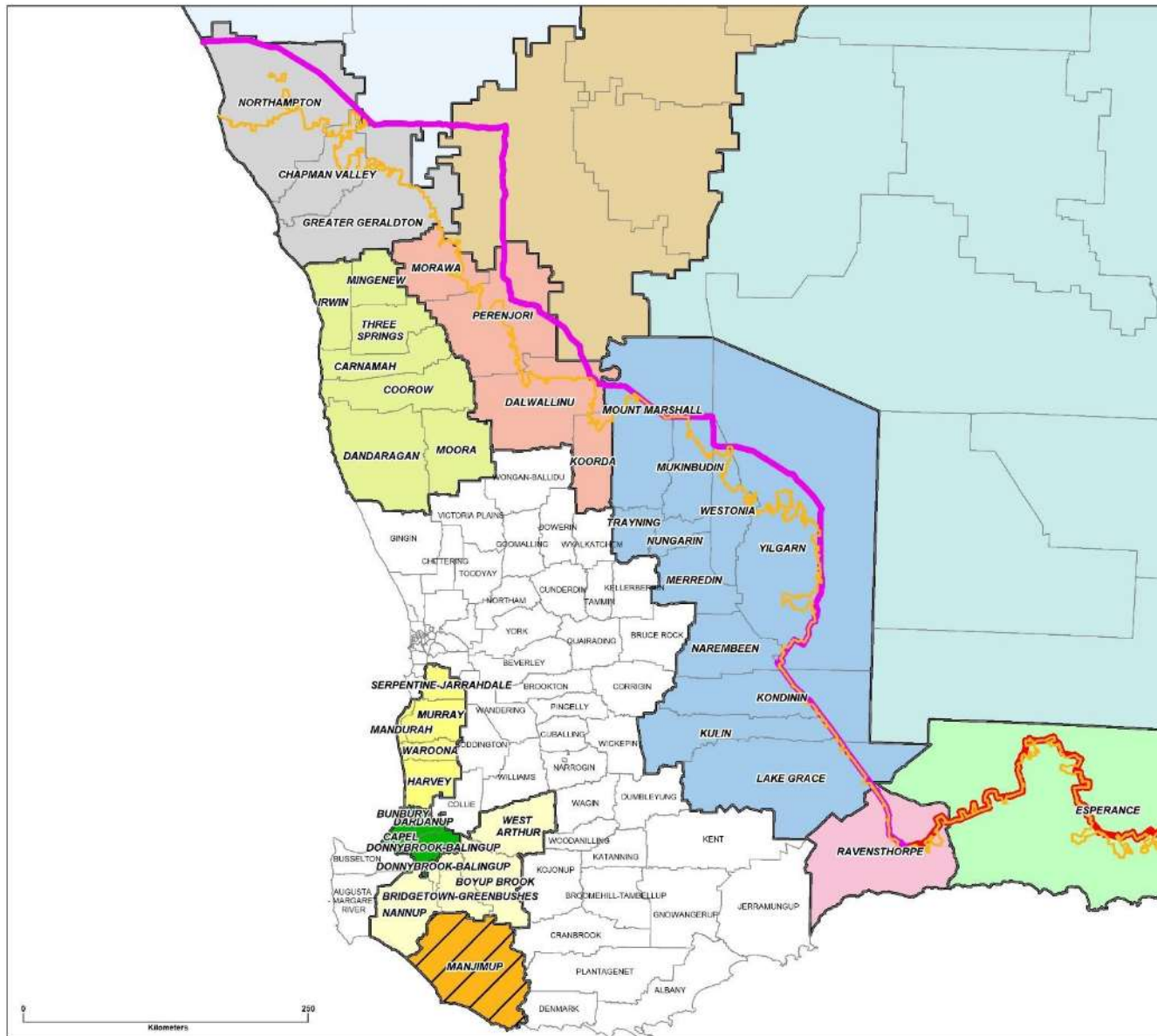
Chair – Steve Palm, Deputy Chair – Scott Stirrat.

Committee: Jim Sullivan, Cyril Smith, Mark Crees, Dean Sinclair, Stuart Putt, Ron Burro.

Shire Representatives for EWBG

Merredin - Mal Willis, Mukinbudin- Steve Palm, Narembreen- Scott Stirrat, Westonia- Ross Della Bosca, Trayning- Jim Wilkins, Nungarin- Gary Coumbe, Mt Marshall- Stuart Putt, Lake Grace - Len Armstrong, Kulin-Brad Taylor, Kondinin- Tom Mulcahy, Yilgarn- Gary Guerini.

Appendix 1: RBG Area of Operation



Appendix 2: Audited Financial Report

EASTERN WHEATBELT BIOSECURITY GROUP INC
ABN 97 381 980 973

INCOME STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2021

Income	Grant - Aerial	Grant - Staff	DPR	R4R	Other	Total
Grant Funding (IFS)	20,760	33,000	-	-	-	53,760
Declared Pest Account	-	-	307,035	-	-	307,035

R4R Funding	-	-	-	93,750	-	93,750
Membership Fees Received	-	-	-	-	1,100	1,100
Interest	-	-	-	-	1,873	1,873
Other Income	-	-	-	-	29,000	29,000
Total Income	20,760		307,035	93,750	31,973	486,518
Expenses						
Accounting Fees	-		3,250	-	-	3,250
Administration Costs	-		1,941	-	-	1,941
Aerial Baiting	11,340		-	-	-	11,340
Audit Fees	-		55	-	-	55
Baits, Toxin & Traps	-		34,539	-	-	34,539
Bank Charges	-		151	-	-	151
Catering	-		792	-	-	792
COM Event Attendance	-		-	-	-	-
Community Engagement	-		3,386	-	-	3,386
Computer Software & Support	-		117	-	-	117
Conferences & Seminars	-		2,470	-	-	2,470
Consultancy Fees	-		-	-	-	-
Contractor Payments	9,420	33,000	192,030	93,750	-	328,200
Executive Support	-		390	-	-	390
Insurance	-		19,291	-	-	19,291
Office	-		3,545	-	-	3,545
Other - Annual Leave Provision	-		1,724	-	-	1,724
Postage & Stationery	-		146	-	-	146
Subscriptions & Licenses	-		-	-	-	-
Subscriptions & Licenses	-		173	-	-	173
Superannuation	-		4,241	-	-	4,241
Travel	-		367	-	-	367
Wages	-		46,849	-	-	46,849
Total Expenses	20,760		315,457	93,750	-	462,967
Carryover	-		(8,422)	-	31,973	23,551

COMMUNITY CONTROL OF COMMUNITY PESTS



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

Appendix 3: Reported Wild Dog Activity in EWBG Operational Area

END OF YEAR STATICS

2020-21 Fiscal Year

	LPMT 1	LPMT 2	LPMT3	Total for EWBG
Number of days worked	191	201	83.5	475.5

days worked				
Baits laid (inc Aerial Bait)	1200	17150 (inc. Aerial bait)	1000	19350
Wild Dogs destroyed (not inc. all baited)	10	5	3	18 (300 expected baited)

- Additional 2 Wild Dogs controlled including reported Landholder operations, not including baiting.

Total Wild Dogs Destroyed (including destroyed by landholders) and number of Wild Dogs with a very high probability of having taken a 1080 Wild Dog bait.

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