

**Meekatharra Rangelands Biosecurity Association Inc  
Minutes of Committee of Management Meeting  
Meekatharra Sports Complex  
12 October 2021**

## **1. WELCOME AND OPENING**

Retiring Chairman Ashley Dowden welcomed all in attendance and opened the meeting at 10.03am.

## **2. RECORD OF ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES**

### Attendance

#### MRBA Committee Members

Ashley Dowden	Challa
Jorgen Jensen	Yoweragabbie
Liam Johns	Killara
Greg Watters	Mt Clere
Angus Nichols	Edah
Jarrad Blair	Milgun
Murray Pens	Mt Gould
Mayne Jenour	Jingemarra
Clyde Hall	Neds Creek
Rob Lefroy	Nalbarra

#### Observers

Clyde Hall	Neds Creek
Cambell Nichols	Edah
Reg Seaman	MRBA Dogger
Sarah Jeffrey	Rangelands NRM
Eric Moses	Ex Wydgee
Rebecca Rees	DPIRD
Michael Britton	DPIRD
Silvio Brenzi	MRBA Executive Officer Elect
Geoff Brooks	MRBA Executive Officer

#### Apologies

John Coetsee	DBCA
Mike Raykos	DBCA
Tracey Kreplins	DPIRD
Bruce and Suzanne Maguire	Turee Creek
Kevin and Kath Mahony	Judal
Chandra Ridley	Bulloo Downs
Justin and Ruth Rowe	Carlaminda
Greg Payne	Badja
John Darling	MRBA Dogger

**3. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN, VICE CHAIRMAN AND SECRETARY  
TREASURER**

The Executive Officer took the Chair and called for nominations for the position of Chairman.

**MOVED G Watters**

**SECONDED M Pens**

That Liam Johns be elected as Chairman.

**CARRIED 10/0**

In accepting the position Liam Johns call for a vote of thanks for the huge contribution that Ashley Dowden has made to the MRBA and the pastoral industry over his time as Chairman.

**CARRIED Unanimously**

Liam Johns then took the chair and called for nominations for the position of Vice Chairman.

**MOVED A Dowden**

**SECONDED G Watters**

That Murray Pens be elected as Vice Chairman.

**CARRIED 10/0**

The Chairman then called for nominations for the position of Secretary/  
Treasurer

**MOVED R Lefroy**

**SECONDED M Jenour**

That Ashley Dowden be elected as Secretary/Treasurer.

**CARRIED 10/0**

In discussion Ashley Dowden advised that he was accepting the position of Secretary/Treasurer for one year only. Mayne Jenour indicated he would be prepared to take over the position once Ashley completed the year.

Ashley also thanked Eric Mosses for the commitment and expertise he brought to the position of Secretary/Treasurer over the last three years.

**4. DISCLOSURE OF FINANCIAL AND NON-FINANCIAL MATERIAL  
PERSONAL INTERESTS**

Nil

**5. MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING 16 FEBRUARY 2021 AND  
BUSINESS ARISING**

**MOVED A Nichols****SECONDED M Pens**

That the Minutes of the Committee of Management Meeting held on 16 February 2021 be accepted as a true and accurate record.

**CARRIED 10/0**

**Business Arising****Yarlarweelor Bait Racks**

Murray Pens advised that the upgrade works on the Yarlarweelor Bait Racks were yet to be carried out.

**BAM Act - Declaration Status of Wild Dogs within Vermin Fenced Areas**

The Executive Officer advised that a response had not been received to the MRBA's letter to the Minister dated 12 April 2021 regarding the reclassification of wild dogs within vermin fence areas from C2 (control) to C3 (eradication).

**6. REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

The Executive Officer reported to the Committee as follows:

**Wild Dog Action Plan - Control of Wild Dogs on Government Managed Lands – A Royalties for Regions Funded Program**

Funds of \$250,000 have been received for 2021/2022 for the control of wild dogs on government managed lands. This is an increase of \$16,000 over the previous year. Unlike the program prior to 01 July 2020 funding is now approved on an annual basis which makes budgeting and planning very difficult. This also causes significant uncertainty for the ongoing employment of MRBA doggers.

Rebecca Rees agreed to follow up these concerns with her Department.

**Application for State NRM Funding**

Two applications have been submitted in the current round of State NRM grants.

The first is for \$13,850 for the eradication of cactus on the abandoned Poona Mine Site on Meka Station.

The second application is for \$208,440 for the erection of foot netting on 110km of the northern boundary fence of ex pastoral lease Burnerbinmah Station between Wydgee, Nalbarra and Muralgarra. If approved this would prevent the movement of wild dogs from Burnerbinmah onto adjoining pastoral leases and thus be a first step in fencing out government managed lands.

**Large Feral Herbivore Control**

Reports of increasing donkey numbers on Bulloo Downs and other stations in the northeast of the MRBA area have been received. The loss of some \$200,000 to the MRBA as a result the impact of pastoral lease revaluations highlights the need to find alternative funding for LFH control.

MRBA Web Site

A web site has been set up for the MRBA – [www.mrba.asn.au](http://www.mrba.asn.au)

The photos on the site have been provided by Debbie Dowden. These photos are of high quality and Debbie's contribution is much appreciated.

**7. 2021/2022 DECLARED PEST ACCOUNT BUDGET**

The Executive Officer advised that whilst the \$200,000 loss in rate income as result of the pastoral lease revaluations could be accommodated up to 30 June 2022 it left the MRBA with virtually no reserve funds in the Declared Pest Account.

**MOVED M Pens**

**SECONDED A Nichols**

That the Committee notes the impact of the reduced rating income on the 2021/2022 MRBA Declared Pest Account budget.

**CARRIED 10/0**

**8. MRBA FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2021**

The Executive Officer briefed the Committee on the MRBA Financial Position Spreadsheet as of 30 June 2021. It was noted that the MRBA cash position at this time was:

GST	\$ 15,950
Declared Pest Account	\$ 139,045
Royalties For Regions LPMT Program	\$ 10,014
Paroo Cactus State NRM Project	\$ 5,000
DPIRD R & D Grant	\$ 2,000
AWI Funded Wild Dog Control Training	\$ 36,611
MRBA Contingency (ZCA) Funds	<u>\$ 174,698</u>
TOTAL Cash as at 30 June 2021	\$ 383,318

**MOVED G Watters**

**SECONDED L Johns**

That the Committee notes the MRBA Financial Position as at 30 June 2021.

**CARRIED 10/0**

**9. 2022/2023 DECLARED PEST ACCOUNT (DPA) BUDGET AND OPERATIONAL MANAGEMNT PLAN**

The Executive Officer briefed Committee members on the draft 2022/2023 Declared Pest Account Budget and advised that the rate income had been set so as to get back to the pre pastoral lease revaluation position.

It was acknowledged that this would involve a 30% rate increased from the 2021/2022 figure and it was up to DPIRD and the MRBA to explain to rate payers the reasons for such an increase.

Rebecca Rees advised that the Department would do much more than the

minimum required by Regulation to explain to pastoralists the need for such an increase.

**MOVED M Jenour**

**SECONDED A Dowden**

That the 2022/2023 Declared Pest Account Budget and Operational Activity Management Plan as tabled be approved noting that expenditure was subject to further review at the February 2022 Committee Meeting.

**CARRIED 10/0**

## **10. POSSIBLE MERGER WITH THE MURCHISON REGIONAL VERMIN COUNCIL (MRVC)**

The Executive Officer tabled an amended MRBA constitution proposed in the event of a merger between the MRBA and MRVC.

**MOVED G Watters**

**SECONDED A Nichols**

That the MRBA Committee of Management endorses the attached draft MRBA amended constitution and advises the MRVC accordingly. In doing so the Committee notes that this amended constitution cannot be referred to MRBA members for approval at an AGM or Special General Meeting until the Deed of Contribution has been formally agreed to by MRVC Member Councils.

**CARRIED 10/0**

## **11. MEEKATHARRA WEST LPMT POSITION**

Ashley Dowden advised that Kevin Mahony had retired from the position of Meekatharra West dogger and that John Mahony had all the skills and local knowledge necessary to very effectively take over the position.

**MOVED A Dowden**

**SECONDED G Watters**

That John Mahony be appointed to the position of Meekatharra West LPMT.

**CARRIED 10/0**

It was agreed that Murray Pens would take over the role of Meekatharra West LPMT coordinator. The tremendous contribution of Kevin and Kath Mahony to the MRBA over many years was acknowledged with thanks.

## **12. MRBA EXECUTIVE OFFICER POSITION**

Ashley Dowden explained the process of recruitment following advice earlier this year from Geoff Brooks that he wished to retire from the position of MRBA Executive Officer. Following the advertising of the position in local and state newspapers six potential applicants came forward. Of these Silvio Brenzi,

former CEO of Yalgoo Shire, was thought to be the most suitable candidate for the position and was recommended by Ashley and Liam to the Committee for appointment.

Following a presentation from Silvio the Committee accepted Ashley and Liam's recommendation.

**MOVED A Dowden**

**SECONDED G Watters**

That Silvio Brenzi be appointed to the position of MRBA Executive Officer.

**CARRIED 10/0**

It was noted that a hand over from Geoff to Silvio would take place in early November.

The Chairman thanked Geoff for his efforts as Executive Officer over the last seven years.

### **13. UPDATE ON WILD DOG RESEARCH PROJECTS**

The Executive Officer tabled an update from Tracey Kreplins and outline the main points. This report is available on request from the Executive Officer.

### **14. DPIRD UPDATE**

Rebecca Rees briefed the Committee on the following:

DPIRD Project - Strengthening Community Action to Manage Declared Pests.  
New OH&S Legislation -The impact on organisations and individuals and the need for updated policies and procedures.

Agricultural RBGs - Community concerns with some agricultural RBGs and a recognition that a different approach was appropriate for pastoral RBGs.

BAM Act review – There will be detailed consultation and there is no intention to remove the government's matched rates contribution.

Reserve Funds – DPIRD acknowledged the importance of RBGs holding some Declared Pest Account funds in reserve and would review current restrictions.

### **15. RANGELANDS NRM UPDATE**

Sarah Jeffrey briefed the Committee on Soil Health Projects including drone monitoring and the importance of achieving balanced social, environmental and economic outcomes.

### **16. DOGGER COORDINATOR REPORTS**

Year to date figures are as follows:

John Darling – report tabled. 50.5 days works. 17 dogs trapped.

Reg Seaman –.15 dogs trapped.

Greg Scott – report tabled. 26 days worked and 24 dogs trapped.

Jon Hehir – 39 days worked and 43 dogs trapped. Chris Richards trapped a

further 4 dogs.  
Wayne Glasson –9 dogs trapped.  
Kris Pascoe –23 dogs trapped

## **17. INDICATIVE BAIT RACK DATES 2022**

### 2022 - Spring Dates

Pullagaroo Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> September.  
Challa Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> September.  
Melangata Friday 23<sup>th</sup> September.  
Killara Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> September.  
Yarraquin Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> August.  
Yarlarweelor Saturday/Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> October.  
Illgararie Thursday/Friday 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> September.

These are indicative dates subject to change by Rack Coordinators.

## **18. OTHER BUSINESS**

### Future Bait Rack Programs

Ashley Dowden advised that once MRBA finances recovered from the revaluation issue it would be appropriate, now that the Murchison Region Vermin Cell is nearing completion, to reinstate the Autumn bait rack program.

Mayne Jenour advised that the Shire of Yalgoo may be in a position to contribute \$10,000 for the supply of additional meat at the Melangata racks.

### Wild Dog Control - Landholder and Injector Training

In response to a questions from Murray Pens and Reg Seaman the Executive Officer advised that it would be possible to arrange 1080 bait injector training in the New Year utilising AWI Wild Dog Control grant training funds. It was suggested that Jim Miller be approached to conduct the injector training along with a separate introduction to wild dog control course intended to assist pastoralists new to the industry. Rebecca Rees offered to follow up with Jim.

### DPIRD R & D Grant – Drone Project

Mayne Jenour advised that once borders reopen, he and Nigel Brown will be travelling to the University of New England in NSW to install and test the facial recognition software.

## **19. CLOSE AND NEXT MEETING DATE.**

The Chairman thanked all present for their attendance and wished everyone a safe trip home.

The next Committee of Management Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 15 February 2022 in Meekatharra commencing at 9.30am.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 3.38 pm.