

<p>Meekatharra Rangelands Biosecurity Association Inc Minutes of Committee of Management Meeting Meekatharra Sports Complex 13 October 2020</p>
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1. WELCOME AND OPENING

The Chairman welcomed all in attendance and opened the meeting at 10.05am.

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
Eric Moses	Wydgee
Murray Pens	Mt Gould

Observers

Jim Miller	DPIRD Biosecurity Officer Southern Rangelands
John Coetsee	DBCA Senior Operations Officer Rangelands
Mike Raykos	DBCA Operations Officer Rangelands
Magdalena Zabek	DPIRD Development Officer Invasive Species
Tracey Kreplins	DPIRD Research Officer Invasive Species
Peta Fissioli	DPIRD Project Officer Rangelands
Debbie Dowden	Challa
Darren Cousens	Hillview
Reg Seaman	MRBA Dogger
Geoff Brooks	MRBA Executive Officer

Apologies

Mayne Jenour	Jingemarra
Bruce and Suzanne Maguire	Turee Creek
Kevin and Kath Mahony	Judal
John Mahony	Moorarie
Chandra Ridley	Bulloo Downs
Justin and Ruth Rowe	Carlaminda
Greg Payne	Badja
Rob Lefroy	Nalbarra
John Darling	MRBA Dogger
Clyde and Raelene Hall	Neds Creek

**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 Ashley Dowden be elected as Chairman.

CARRIED 8/0

Ashley Dowden then took the chair and called for nominations for the position of Vice Chairman.

MOVED G Watters

SECONDED J Jensen

That Liam Johns be elected as Vice Chairman.

CARRIED 8/0

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

MOVED J Jensen

SECONDED G Watters

That Eric Moses be elected as Secretary/Treasurer.

CARRIED 8/0

In discussion Ashley Dowden advised that this was his last year as President. Eric Moses advised that for the present he would continue as Secretary/Treasurer however as Wydgee was on the market it was not possible to commit to serving a full term in this position.

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

Nil

**5. MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING 25 FEBRUARY 2020 AND
BUSINESS ARISING**

MOVED A Nichols

SECONDED M Pens

That the Minutes of the Committee of Management Meeting held on 25 February 2020, after correction of the spelling of Murdoch University, be accepted as a true and accurate record.

CARRIED 8/0

Business Arising

Bullseye Project

Darren Cousens advised that following completion of Bullseye, \$37,000 of unspent funds had been transferred to the BeefLinks project. It is possible these funds could be matched by MLA and there is an opportunity for supply chain proposals from beef producers for the allocation of these funds.

April Community Bait Rack Program

It was agreed that the reinstatement of the April (Autumn) community bait rack program would be further considered at the February 2021 Committee Meeting. This was in the context of the soon to be completed Murchison Region Vermin Cell.

6. REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The Executive Officer reported to the Committee as follows:

Restricted Chemical Permits for Wild Dog Control on Government Managed Lands

The Executive Officer advised that in some areas DBCA was endeavouring to pass responsibility for Restricted Chemical Permits to local biosecurity groups, a move which these groups were rejecting. This however was not an immediate issue for the MRBA as all RCPs had recently been renewed for a five-year period.

The challenge over the next twelve months will be to work with DBCA to achieve an extension beyond 30 June 2021 of the current R4R dogger program.

Paroo Cactus Control Project

State NRM funding of \$12,000 has been obtained for the control of an infestation of cactus at Landil on Paroo Station. An herbicide trial had been conducted and spraying of the infestation is underway. The project is due for completion at the end of this financial year.

DPIRD Wild Dog Action Plan – Research and Development Grant

A grant of \$140,000 has been obtained to develop and test a drone fitted with a facial recognition camera technology capable of identifying a wild dog from the air. The funding is also for the development of a delivery system that will enable the drone to drop baits in the vicinity of wild dogs detected by the camera.

To date the drone and bait delivery has have been developed and successfully tested. The next step is development of the facial recognition software which is being carried out by researchers at the University of New England in Armidale NSW.

Large Feral Herbivore (LFH) Dry Conditions Grant

A further grant of \$25,000 has been obtained from DPIRD for the culling of LFHs in the north east of the MRBA area. MRBA LFH reserve funds of some \$33,000 will be combined with this grant to conduct a cull in November/December this year. The operation will be conducted by DPIRD Biosecurity staff.

Supply of Meat for the Manufacture of Baits

As previously advised Gary Stone, MRBA meat supplier for many years, has retired. For the current spring bait rack program meat was supplied by Perth based Pets Meat Supplies with a single successful delivery to all three freezers on 25 September. Pets Meat Supplies have agreed to supply and deliver meat for the manufacture of wild dog baits at the same rate as Gary Stone until the end of 2021.

7. MRBA RESERVE FUNDS – ALL CURRENT PROGRAMS

The Executive Officer briefed the Committee on the All Current Program Spreadsheet as of 30 September 2020. It was noted that the MRBA cash position at this time was:

DPIRD LFH Dry Conditions Grant	\$ 25,000
Declared Pest Account	\$ 301,193
Royalties For Regions LPMT Program	\$ 192,279
Paroo Cactus State NRM Project	\$ 12,000
DPIRD R & D Grant	\$ 2,000
MRBA Declared Pest Contingency Funds	<u>\$ 78,427</u>
TOTAL Cash as at 30 September 2020	\$ 610,899

MOVED G Watters

SECONDED L Johns

That the Committee notes the status of All Current MRBA Programs as at 30 September 2020.

CARRIED 8/0

8. 2020/2021 DECLARED PEST ACCOUNT (DPA) BUDGET AND OPERATIONAL MANAGEMNT PLAN

The Executive Officer briefed Committee members on the 2021/2022 Declared Pest Account Budget. In discussion it was agreed that an additional \$10,000 should be allowed for the purchase of Strychnine and an additional \$2,500 should be allowed for traps. Further it was agreed that for future reports the \$93,000 reserve figure should be removed from the DPA budget and included as part of MRBA Declared Pest Contingency Funds.

MOVED G Watters

SECONDED J Blair

That the 2021/2022 Declared Pest Account Budget and Operational Activity

Management Plan as tabled be approved, with the modifications mentioned above, noting that expenditure was subject to further review at the February 2021 Committee Meeting.

CARRIED 8/0

9. EMPLOYMENT AND SUPERVISION OF DOGGERS

Eric Moses advised that the main purpose of this item was to update MRBA practises for the employment and supervision of doggers. It was agreed that for the February 2021 Committee Meeting the Executive Officer would prepare a report on the recruitment/performance management of doggers with a view to the establishment of a sub-committee to oversee the process. Further it was agreed that the Executive Officer would review current LPMT contract wording with the aim of making provision for an option of a second years employment.

10. DR TRACEY KREPLINS – DPIRD – UPDATE ON WILD DOG RESEARCH PROJECTS

Tracey Kreplins briefed the Committee on the following research projects:

Bait Uptake – how to make baits attractive to wild dogs.

Bait Storage – identification of different options for bait storage.

Non-lethal deterrents - the effectiveness of turbo fladry (flapping fabric), electric fencing and sirens for wild dog control.

Canid Pest Ejector and lure trials.

Cell fencing trails involving fitting collars to sheep and goats to track their movement.

What wild dogs eat?– analysis of dead dog stomach contents.

11. PETA FISSIOLI – DPIRD - UPDATE ON RBG SUPPORT

Peta Fissiole briefed the Committee on the new DPIRD organisation structure set up to support the State's fifteen RBGs.

Peta outline her role as Rangelands Project Officer which included:

Technical Support

Capacity Building

Governance and Reporting Processes

Community Events and Community Engagement

The Chairman thanked Peta for her recent initiative in attending the Pullagaroo bait racks and her much appreciated contribution to cutting up the meat.

12. DOGGER COORDINATOR AND AGENCY REPORTS

DBCA – John Coetsee

The Department is still working on a generic MOU.

RCP's have been renewed for all DBCA managed lands within the MRBA area and all dogger paperwork is up to date. Pending finalisation of an agreed MOU R4R wild dog control activities will continue to operate as set out in the 2019/2020 MOU.

The Pullagaroo, Melangata and Killara bait rack days went well. When required DBCA is happy to supply MRBA doggers with pre-prepared wild dog baits for distribution on government managed lands.

The Chairman acknowledged with thanks the efforts of DBCA staff at MRBA baits racks.

DPIRD - Magdalena Zabek

The Department's LFH Strategy document has been finalised and is available on the DPIRD web site.

A donkey genetic study is underway with pastoralists being encouraged to collect tissue samples from animals that are shot on their stations. To date 400 samples have been collected with a target number of 1000. It is expected that during the planned LFH cull in November further samples will be collected.

Dogger Coordinator Reports

Annual and year to date figures are as follows:

John Darling – report tabled. 76 dogs trapped, 8 dogs shot 2019/2020. YTD 15 dogs trapped.

Reg Seaman – 120 dogs trapped in 2019/2020. YTD 28 dogs trapped.

Greg Scott – report tabled. 106 dogs trapped in 2019/2020. YTD 16 dogs trapped.

Jon Hehir – 221 dogs trapped in 2019/2020. YTD 40 dogs trapped.

Wayne Glasson – YTD 17 dogs trapped.

Kevin Mahony – 45 dogs trapped in 2019/2020. YTD 15 dogs trapped.

Kris Pascoe – 78 dogs trapped in 2019/2020. YTD 8 dogs trapped.

13. 2021 INDICATIVE BAIT RACK PROGRAM

2021 - Spring Dates

It was agreed to move the program back a month when cooler temperatures prevail and Bungarras are less active.

Pullagaroo Monday 23th August.

Challa Wednesday 25th August.

Melangata Friday 27th August.

Killara Wednesday 8th September.

Yarraquin Wednesday 1st September.

Yarlarweelor Saturday/Sunday 11th and 12th September.

Illgararie Thursday/Friday 16th and 17th September.

These are indicative dates subject to review at the February 2021 Committee Meeting.

14. OTHER BUSINESS

Property Activity Report (PAR)

As requested by Reg Seaman it was agreed that the Executive Officer update the current PAR to remove the need to write in the coordinates of dogs trapped. It was felt writing in coordinates was a needless duplication of data already being entered by doggers directly into FeralScan. Removal of the need to enter coordinates would free up room on the PAR for reporting on cats and LFHs. The Executive Officer will prepare a draft of the updated form and circulate it to doggers and coordinators for input.

Ammunition for LFH Control by Doggers

It was agreed that the DPA line item "Ammunition Subsidy Northern" should be re-titled to make provision also for the supply of ammunition to doggers for LFH control work.

Cactus on the Mount Magnet Town Common

It was reported that there were small infestations of Cactus on the Mount Magnet Town Common. The Executive Officer will contact the Shire to discuss the eradication of these infestations.

BAM Act Declaration Status of Wild Dogs within Vermin Fenced Areas

MOVED G Watters

SECONDED L Johns

That the MRBA write to Victoria Atkin, DPIRD Director of Invasive Species, requesting a change in the declaration status of wild dogs, dingoes and hybrids from C3 (control) to C2(eradication) inside predator proof fenced areas.

CARRIED 8/0

It was agreed that the Executive Officer would follow this issue up with the Carnarvon and Goldfields RBGs seeking their support for such an action.

15. 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 16 February 2021 in Meekatharra commencing at 9.30am.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 3.38 pm.