



PESTSMART



Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Association

WILD DOG MANAGEMENT CASE STUDY

Demonstrating the impact of the role of an administrator on wild dog management

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Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Association

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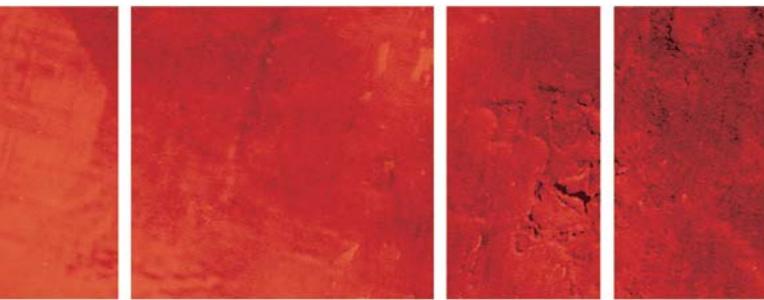
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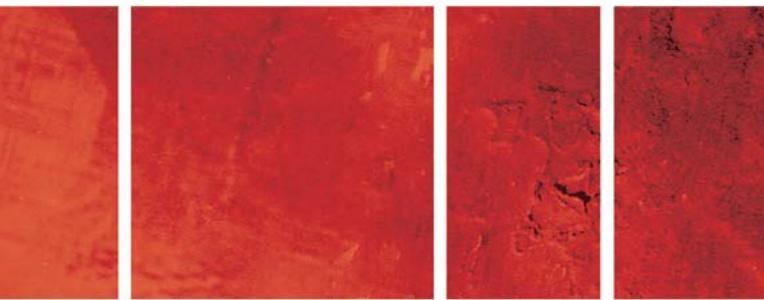
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CONTENTS

Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Association	
regional boundary	3
CRBA Case Study Analysis	4
How CRB is matching criteria for both management and citizen focus	11
Interview 1 - Bill Currans, Executive Officer CRBA	13
Interview 2 - Justin Steadman, Chair CRBA	33
Interview 3 - Jim Miller, Biosecurity Officer	
Southern Rangelands DAFWA	38
Appendix 1 - Duty Statements guiding the CRBA	
Executive Officer role	45
Appendix 2 - Key Definitions	48
Appendix 3 - Project Brief	49
Appendix 4 - CRBA Regional Maps: Bait Rack Regions, LPMT Regions	51



CARNARVON RBA WILD DOG MANAGEMENT CASE STUDY BRIEF

Location of case study: Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Association

Objective: demonstrate the impact of the role of an administrator on wild dog management characteristics

Method: 1. describe what wild dog management looked like before a dedicated administrative role was created. Characteristics of WDM could include:

- i. best practice operations, communication, oversight/governance, community ownership, stakeholder breadth and depth of involvement, and knowledge/skill level.
- ii. the apparent values, beliefs and assumptions of the stakeholders 'then'.
- iii. the apparent behaviours and intentions of the stakeholders 'then' (these may duplicate apparent wild dog management characteristics such as communication, governance, stakeholder involvement, skills).

2. Describe the nature of the dedicated administrative intervention.

3. Describe what wild dog management looked like after the dedicated administrative intervention.

The project scope does NOT cover demonstrating the effectiveness of reduced wild dog impacts. It is assumed that the presence of the pillars of best practice control (collaborative, community based landscape level) do this. The project scope does include an assessment of the effect on efficiency and effectiveness of how collaboration is done, how community involvement is done and how nil tenure is done.

Deliverables: Written drafts and final case study analysis.

ACRONYMS

AGM	Annual General Meeting
BAM Act	Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act of Western Australia
CRBA	Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Association
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DAFWA	Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia
DPA	Declared Pest Account (See definition Appendix 2)
DPaW	Department of Parks and Wildlife
LPMT	Licensed Pest Management Technician or 'dogger'
RBA	Recognised Biosecurity Association
RBG	Recognised Biosecurity Group
RCP	Restricted Chemical Product permit

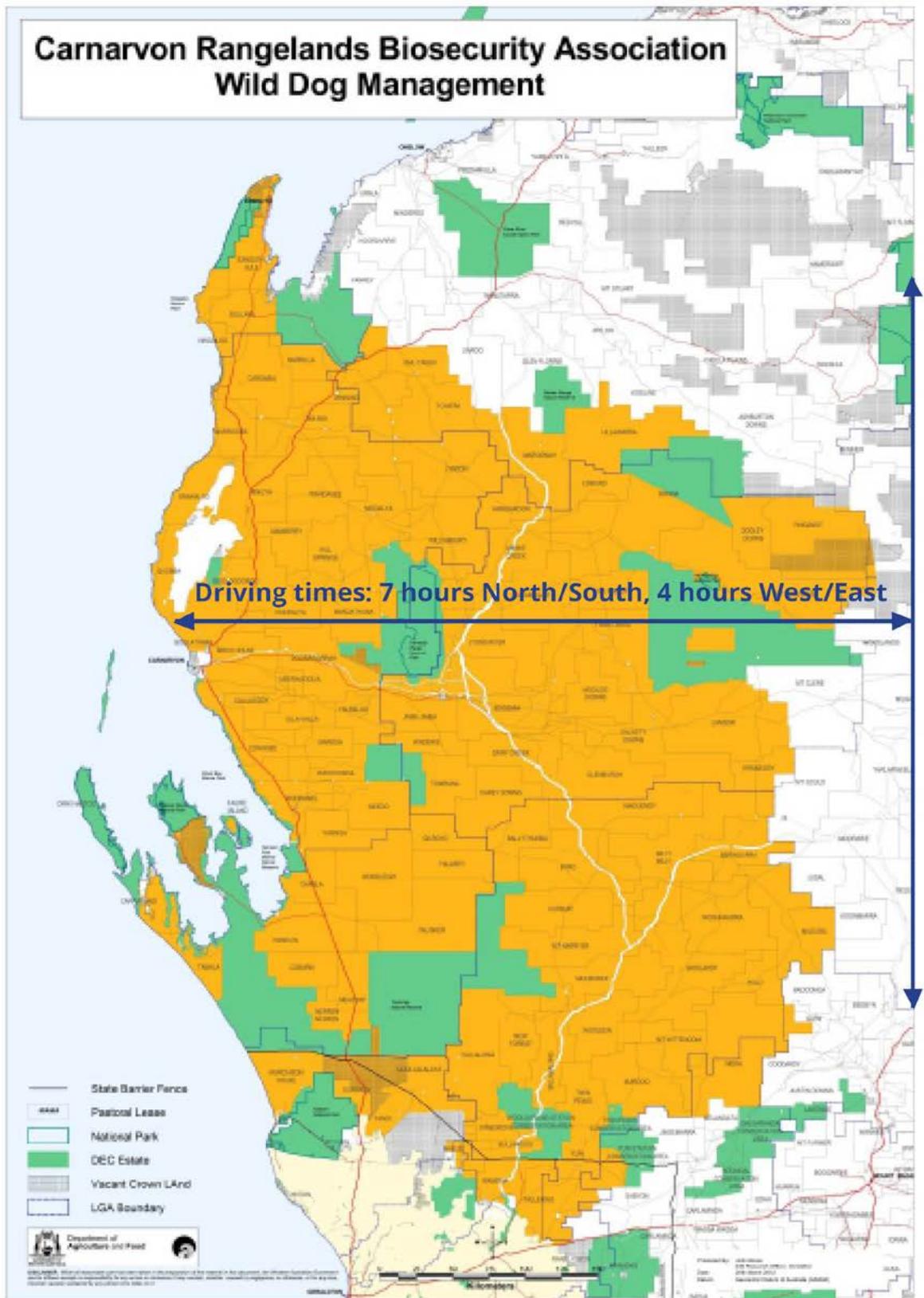
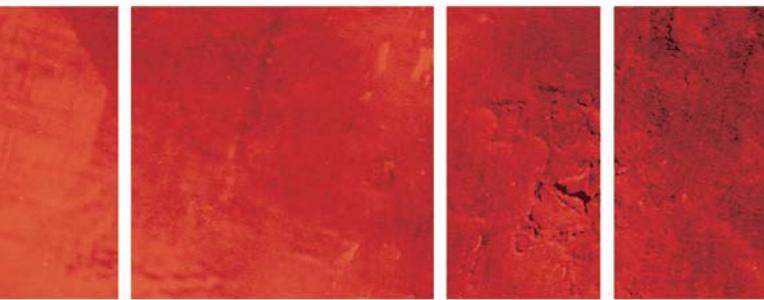


Figure 1. Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Association regional boundary



WILD DOG MANAGEMENT CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

Introduction

This case study on the Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Association was commissioned by the National Wild Dog Action Plan to demonstrate the impact of the role of an administrator on wild dog management characteristics. The study focusses on three interviews with key stakeholders and detailed transcripts begin on page 13. Analysis and interpretation of the administrative intervention is on page 5. Additional resources were provided separately to this report to support future articles including photographs, examples of tracking data, job descriptions.

Description of the group:

The Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Association (CRBA) formed in 2010 and covers five Shires in the Murchison and Gascoyne regions of north west Western Australia (Figure 1). The area to be managed is vast in scale and very remote, with a small population and limited services. Of the total land area 15 per cent is inaccessible and requires aerial baiting to manage wild dogs. These rangelands traditionally supported sheep production, but with the decline of the wool industry and the impact of prolonged drought and wild dogs, many properties have either de-stocked or transitioned to cattle production. Some stations have been purchased for nature conservation purposes.

Approximately 100 rated landholders are members of the CRBA. The organisation is funded by rates contributed by landholders which are matched by funds from the WA State Government's Declared Pest Account (Appendix 2), and other external funding as available. The Association has responsibility to manage weeds and feral animals, but wild dogs are the primary focus due to their economic, environmental and social impacts.

The CRBA consists of a Committee of 11 volunteers with a Chairman, Vice Chairman, a Secretary/ Treasurer and up to eight Committee members. The aim is to have geographic representation on the Committee to match the vast size of the region. Agency staff (Department of Parks and Wildlife(DPaW), Department of Agriculture and Food (DAFWA)) may attend meetings as observers. The Committee has oversight of the volunteer Coordinators identified for each area: there are seven Licensed Pest Management Technician (LPMT) coordinators and seven Rack Coordinators (see Appendix 4).

From 2010 to 2015 the group did not employ an Executive Officer. The group received some support from DAFWA staff member, Jim Miller, who performed some executive functions for the group (see Interview 3 Transcript page 38).

From 2014 the CRBA went through a difficult transition period as government sought to transfer responsibility for biosecurity to regional biosecurity groups, and that DAFWA services were being withdrawn.

Gascoyne pastoralist Justin Steadman became the CRBA Chair from March 2015 and by late July there was a realisation that the group needed an Executive Officer and Bill Currans of Currans Environmental Consulting was contracted to provide part time executive support services. Bill is based in Geraldton and brings over 20 years' experience in natural resource management roles to the position. Bill has considerable experience with funding processes, project planning and management, contract management, group process, facilitation, and providing secretariat and financial management services (Interview 1 Transcript page 13).



CRBA members taking part in the 2015 Murchison Wild Dog management workshop. (Photo: Bridget Seaman)

Analysis and interpretation of the impact of the administrative intervention

Context

Wild dog management in the Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Association's vast area of responsibility is extremely challenging due to the geographical spread across five Shires, the escalation of the wild dog population and its impact, the small number of landholders (100), and the limited funding to support on ground action.

Community engagement is impacted by the vast distances, the limited communications and other services, and the sheer lack of numbers able to participate in events. If a pastoralist is attending a CRBA activity, there is limited or no pastoral labour available to fill in behind them to continue station work and enable their contribution of voluntary effort.

Wild dogs have an economic, environmental, emotional and social cost and the escalating numbers in the southern rangelands have been a contributing factor to the reduction in small stock (sheep and goat) numbers and the decline in pastoral profitability.

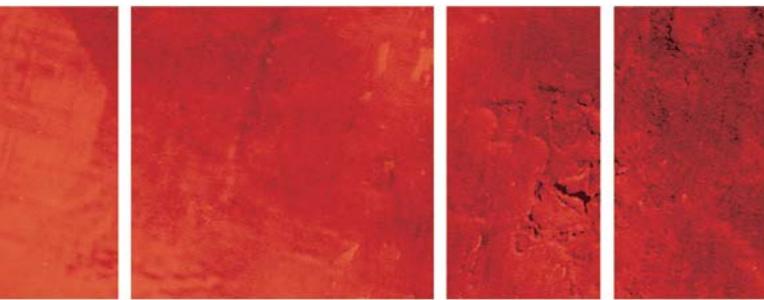
There is no accurate measure of the population of wild dogs across the region, and no baseline data to measure management performance against. Planning has to be based on judgement, relying

on the landholder and LPMT's local knowledge of landscapes and observations of wild dog tracks and stock attacks.

There is still a lot to be learned about how wild dogs behave and interact in this remote landscape; how they breed and adapt, how they learn to avoid baits and traps, how mobile they are across the landscape, how they interact and depend on other species for food that supports further breeding.

In the absence of hard scientific data, the CRBA builds its regional wild dog management plan by engaging landholders to contribute their local knowledge to map regional priorities, employs LPMTs to strategically trap and monitor dogs in priority areas, then marshals volunteers and other resources to participate in broader community baiting programs to address the wild dog problem at the landscape scale. This is in addition to the individual efforts pastoralists carry out continuously on their own properties.

This case study has identified the impacts of a very difficult transfer of responsibility for wild dog management from government to private landholders in 2014, and this context must be acknowledged and the impacts on volunteers recognised. There was a prolonged period of



dysfunction and disengagement as political battles were fought and lost, and many volunteers were burnt out in the process.

There was a strong feeling amongst pastoralists that they had been abandoned by government at a critical time in the battle to control wild dogs, and they were living with the consequences daily and having to deal with distressing attacks on their stock. Strong emotions came to the fore and behaviours and intentions became destructive.

The CRBA itself was very challenged by the withdrawal of state services and the expectation by government that landholders would fill the void in invasive species control and management. An expectation had been created in the transition that DAFWA would support the regional biosecurity groups with administrative resources, but this did not eventuate. Volunteers were now trying to perform roles they were not skilled in (governance, reporting, funding applications and acquittals,

communications, volunteer and contractor management) and were having to balance all this with the daily demands of their pastoral business to remain profitable.

The management style during this period was authoritarian, autocratic and 'top down'. The governance was impacted, and key best practice functions were also impacted. Volunteers did not know what was expected of them, there was little communication happening, and there was no broader plan for them to identify how they could continue to contribute. The CRBA was on the verge of closing down, and major institutional changes had to be made if it was to continue.

The two critical changes that occurred in mid-2015 were the succession of CRBA office bearers and appointment of a new Chair, and the employment of a professional part time administrative resource to support the business management of the CRBA.

Administrative intervention impacts

Best practice operations

There has been a noticeable improvement in best practice operations for wild dog management in the CRBA region since the appointment of a dedicated Executive Officer to support the program delivery. There is now a regional wild dog management plan to work to so priorities have been set by and agreed with stakeholders, the roles for volunteers and contractors have been clarified and supported, procedures for logistics and event management are orderly, and relationships with key stakeholders are being rebuilt and supported.

The Committee is now far less operational: they trust their Executive Officer and rely on him to deliver the program, which has taken the time pressure off the volunteers. There are minimal roles now for the volunteers on the Committee. The LPMT and rack coordinators are taking their role very seriously and are stepping up to organise themselves.

"Things now get done, people put their hand up to get a job done. It has been a long haul to get to this way of working, but they realise if they don't do it the work won't get done. They had to go through that transition stage and it was an uncomfortable and challenging time for everyone, but they are out the other side and getting on with the job. The best value in having a dedicated Executive Officer in place is that the group now has a boss to look to: someone has to take charge, and Bill is good at that role." (Jim Miller, DAFWA)

The Executive Officer is now driving a transition to more evidence based planning for wild dog management by employing technology to assist in capturing data, monitoring and evaluating impacts and outcomes.



Communication

There has been improvement in communication around wild dog management in the CRBA region since the appointment of a dedicated Executive Officer, but as it came from a very low base and tools had to be built to support direct contact to members, there are more gains to be made. Communication is hampered by slow line speeds, lack of mobile coverage, and computer literacy.

The Chair identified the real change is in the management of communications to all stakeholders to support engagement and program delivery, so every member is now included, and in the improved coordination of the LPMTs and the volunteers who need to know what they are doing to participate in the program.

Daily communication has also improved with dedicated executive support ensuring there now a central point of contact to deal with any issues or inquiries stakeholders may have.

Oversight / governance

When the CRBA Executive Officer was appointed in 2015 his initial priorities were to build the systems and procedures to support sound governance to address previous gaps, and to set about rebuilding relationships and trust in the oversight and management of the wild dog program for the CRBA. The oversight and governance of the CRBA wild dog management program is now regarded as exceptional by stakeholders.

The appointment of an Executive Officer has made the oversight and governance of the Association more timely and far less stressful for office bearers. Committee members now have confidence that the oversight and governance is all being done professionally, they know when reporting is due and what is expected of the Association. The Chair has observed a threefold improvement in tracking the finances, there has been of streamlining around the accountability of the LPMTs, and volunteers have a clearer understanding of their role and who they report to so it is easier to participate.

The Executive Officer set a priority on managing and protecting the critical business information of the Association for future succession by establishing a cloud based information database with access shared between the Executive Officer, Chair and Secretary. In future when any of those people change, the security access to the data can simply be changed to ensure whoever replaces them can hit the ground running and get their head around how things are operating.

The Committee has been observed as acting more like a Board: they direct their Executive Officer to go and deliver, and he reports back to the Chair regularly. The Committee is making the higher level decisions, then the implementation is handed to the Executive Officer and that is seen as a great improvement in the way they are operating.

Community ownership

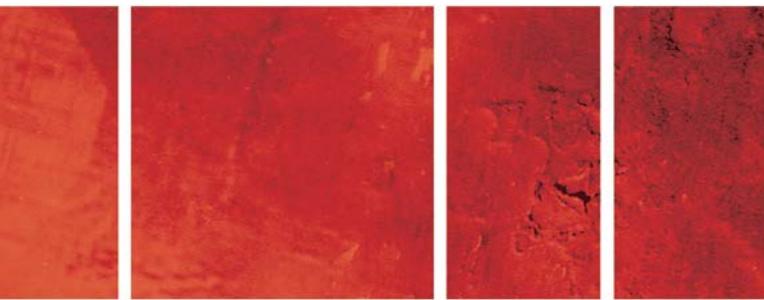
The CRBA Executive Officer has worked hard to find ways to get alongside stakeholders and rebuild relationships to grow community ownership of the wild dog program in his region.

The Chair believes community ownership of the wild dog problem is already improving purely by getting information sent out to each rate payer as to what is going on within the CRBA program. The regional Wild Dog Management Plan will be distributed to all ratepayers directly so everyone can see where they fit into the regional effort.

The observation was made that the landholders now own the new system of delivery: they don't like it, but it has been forced onto them and they realise now that if they don't take industry responsibility to tackle the wild dog problem they won't be in business.

Stakeholder breadth and depth of involvement

The CRBA Executive Officer demonstrates a great deal of respect for member's contributions in their time, effort and resources. He is clear about their roles within the regional wild dog management



program and acknowledges and values their knowledge and experience gained through years of managing the wild dog problem on their own properties. The core activities are set up in partnership with the members, and after providing the logistics and set up, he steps back and allows them to do their part.

This approach meets the expectation on the regional biosecurity groups to understand and value the competencies of their members in delivering their programs.

Knowledge / skill levels

Landholders were well aware of the severity of the wild dog problem and had developed local knowledge and sound skills through managing control on their own properties for decades and through coordinated landholder management programs like the community bait preparation at rack days.

The new skills that are being developed that will strengthen the Association are around setting higher level strategy for program planning and management, monitoring and evaluation using new tools and technologies, data management, managing succession of participants, governance and financial reporting.

Establishing data management systems and analysing data are key to effective wild dog management, which requires additional time/resources beyond the on ground operational activities and events and management of LPMTs. Continuing to map and analyse the data will significantly improve future program effectiveness and efficiency as the group continues to adopt and adapt technology as management tools.

The Executive Officer has a clear view of the skills and knowledge required to perform his role. "This is not a scientific technical officer role, it demands the skills I have picked up on financial management and cash flow and reporting management. It is not a job for an inexperienced graduate. Knowing how to manage group dynamics, group process, and meeting dynamics, as well as incorporated group governance are all essential skills for the Executive Officer. Biosecurity groups have to employ at a high level as it is not an entry level position so that has to be factored into the

cost. It is not a book keeping role, and in fact that part of the role could easily be contracted out to an external book keeper. You need contract management skills and experience to manage the LPMT contracts, so you can manage for performance and address poor performance." (Bill Currans, CRBA)

The apparent values, beliefs and assumptions of the stakeholders

Since the engagement of an Executive Officer the fundamentals of personal responsibility to participate in wild dog management have been maintained, however there has been a shift in pastoralist's perceptions of the regional biosecurity association.

Pastoralists are now more informed about the CRBA, they know there is activity going on to manage wild dogs in their region and that is being monitored so the effort can shift around to target problem areas, and they now know there is an active program underway to try and help them reduce the problem on their own property.

The apparent behaviours and intentions of the stakeholders

The Chair has observed a shift in the behaviours and intentions of the stakeholders since the Executive Officer was employed to coordinate the program. With direct contact to all ratepayers there has been a change in the behaviours because they all now have the facts communicated to them personally and they are informed all at the same time.

"There are a lot more people on board now that the association is not being operated by rumour. There has been a noticeable change in people's attitude to the CRBA, with a lot more people willing to be involved in the regional effort."

"Slowly more people are putting their hands up to take a role in CRBA because they know it is an oversight role now and won't take too many hours of their week; they are more willing to be involved in the Committee or take on an executive position as it won't demand 30 voluntary hours of their week." (Justin Steadman, CRBA)



It was identified that the key for any group is the relationship between the Chair and the Executive Officer, as the Chair has to have 100 per cent trust in the Executive Officer and feel confident to hand over the reins. The Executive Officer runs the business for the group, they are effectively the general manager. The Executive Officer has to know how to communicate with the Chair and Committee, and have the strength to tell them when to step away from operational matters. They need to be strong, and know when to step in and address the behaviours that detract from the performance of the group.

“The Executive Officer needs good feedback, good data and no whinging. If the Executive Officer is getting that, they know their area is working and success is gauged by that behaviour of the stakeholders.” (Jim Miller, DAFWA)

How important to ongoing wild dog management is continuation of the executive role in the future?

There is broad consensus that there will need to be a continuing operating expense for this executive function to support efficient and effective wild dog management program delivery by volunteer land holders within regional biosecurity groups.

The governance and the requirement for managing and supporting a functioning Committee, whilst building the social aspects of group activity and engagement, and the LPMT management, the permit management and compliance all needs to be managed professionally to sustain the business of the biosecurity group.

Just the incorporated group functions and governance requirements demand a resource, in addition to the operational and management components. The core functions of running a group in a region this size means that the currently funded three days a week is the absolute minimum and in reality it should be a full time funded position. Five days a week would see the communications, web site, local government engagement, research and data management happening on top of what is getting done now.

The Chair firmly believes it is critical to the ongoing operation of the CRBA to have a paid executive

resource to support the functions and operations of the group to manage wild dogs effectively at the regional level.

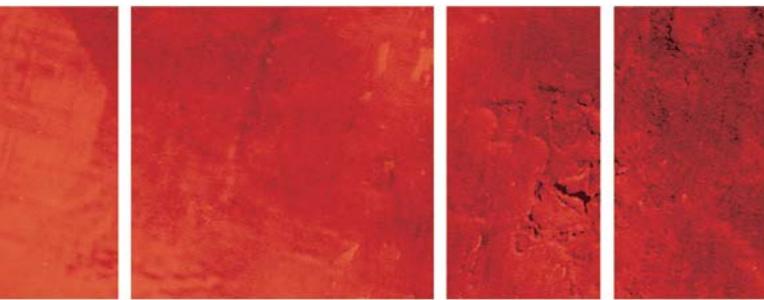
“The critical requirement for executive support for Regional Biosecurity Associations certainly needs to be recognised and supported through government, otherwise it is perceived as purely a cost shifting exercise across to private leaseholders. The expanding roles expected of RBAs are quite huge and will end up becoming very cumbersome. These additional roles at this stage are expected to be absorbed by the RBAs, so the coffer is being stretched thinner while the wild dog issue gets worse and we are spending dollars on other issues at the expense of wild dog control efforts.”

“Inevitably the Executive Officer role will become a full time position to fund a resource to deliver on all the expectations being made of the CRBA. It will also need a trainee brought alongside the position so if there is a transition in future there is someone trained into the position, and in the interim they can do the leg work to keep the costs of running the program down. There needs to be ongoing succession planning occurring to make sure the business side is looked after as people come and go in key roles.” (Justin Steadman, CRBA)

The importance of a paid executive is also supported by external partners: “I would like to drive it home that the value of a good Executive Officer is that it makes good business sense. No group of volunteers charged with the responsibility of delivering on a regional program will survive without a paid Executive Officer as someone must take charge to make things happen, and they must be in a paid position.”

“I believe the Executive Officer role should be funded as a full time position to be really effective. In the Goldfields the EO is building the business, lining up with external funding etc. to really get the effort aligned to manage the wild dog problem. CRBA needs to get to the same realisation of what is possible if a full time position is funded.

“With pastoralists you have to balance the expectations versus what is able to realistically be delivered. Initially they viewed the Executive Officer role as a job for a retiree pastoralist. In reality it is a business, and business is full time and demands the resources to run it professionally.” (Jim Miller, DAFWA)



What are the key lessons from the Executive Officer role for other biosecurity groups?

CRBA Executive Officer, Bill Currans has identified five key lessons from the creation of his role with CRBA that may assist how other biosecurity groups could employ executive support:

1. Start with a full time Executive Officer position funded for six months to enable the systems, governance, contacts, budgets, financial reporting, Committee functioning and operational management planning to be established properly. Build in an option to reduce the time resource once the business of the biosecurity group is well established. Starting with a budget that only covers low hours on start-up is not adequate.
2. Establish the accountability and have clear expectations on how this will work in practice: the Committee meeting papers demand reporting on financials, action lists, and reports. Regular interaction with the Chair provides accountability. Feedback through members provides accountability and delivers independent feedback to the Chair on how the Executive Officer is performing.
3. Build the management plan to drive stakeholder engagement and provide a clear picture of the priorities for action so people can see where they fit and can contribute. Sort out the administration aspects of the business to get the house in order so it is ticking along as quickly as possible, so you can focus on operational management and delivery of the program.
4. Set up an employment contract for the Executive Officer, supported by a clear duty statement relevant to the role expected to be delivered in that region, and ensure that it is signed.
5. Put strategies in place to manage succession of key people. The policies and procedures for the role of the Chair will help manage transition. In the event of the Chair or the Committee members changing, it inevitably costs a time factor to brief the new participants and build the relationships to maintain the effort.



Example of a CRBA report on LPMT tracks showing area covered and effort

How CRBA Is Matching Criteria For Both Management And Citizen Focus

The frame of reference provided by *Invasive Animals Limited* for this case study analysis included the evaluation criteria for management and citizen focus proposed by Martin P, Low Choy D, Le Gal E and Lingard K. (2016). *Effective Citizen Action on Invasive Species: The Institutional Challenge. Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre. The proposed criteria has been matched below by CRBA executive intervention examples identified in the case study.*

Proposed management ('top-down') criteria for invasive species institutions

Performance criteria	Comments	CRBA executive intervention examples identified in case study
<p>1. Strong accountability, at two levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 'Closed loop' accountability for risks or harms; b. Management accountability, including program management. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An effective risk control system should provide reward or punishment incentives to those who cause (or might cause) harm. 2. Good program and project management should ensure clear accountability for management effectiveness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EO manages/maintains all licensing requirements for contractors and volunteers, for example for handling poison (RCP permits). • EO documents and manages procedures for operator safety, for example LPMTs using GPS spot devices/checks to manage personal safety in remote locations. • EO works with the Committee to build the regional Wild Dog Management Plan that is used to guide on ground activity, priority setting and budgeting. • EO provides sound governance and financial reporting to Chair/Committee.
<p>2. Effectiveness in securing and distributing resources</p>	<p>Public funds will generally be insufficient to ensure enough resources for effective management. The amount and distribution of total resources secured (perhaps measured as leverage on public investment) is likely to be an important determinant of outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EO uses his experience and skill in identifying funding skills and professionally delivering the application, financial and operational management, funder relationship management and acquittal procedures. • EO has rebuilt relationships with key suppliers and manages logistics for program activities and ensures timely payment of invoices.
<p>3. Effectiveness in securing community engagement in key roles and activities</p>	<p>Beyond mere legal compliance, there is a need for citizen investment of funds, or volunteered human and economic resources, for action across property boundaries, political support for action and ongoing monitoring.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EO provides templates, procedures and support to volunteer coordinators to provide clarity on their role and expectations for delivery and reporting. • EO works with landholders that have bait racks on their property to coordinate logistics and timing of rack days to maximise landholder participation. • EO targets timely and relevant communication to inform and engage landholders in program activities, for example rack days.
<p>4. Effective and efficient coordination</p>	<p>Effective control often requires coordination across public and private lands and between agencies at three or more levels. High transaction costs, rivalries, insufficient skills and ineffective relationships can prevent effective coordination.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EO works with agencies (DAFWA, DPaw) to align resources to support key on-ground activities, for example aerial baiting in the Kennedy Ranges National Park (plane, avgas, licenses, baits etc.). • EO provides an 'all hours' central point of contact and information for the Chair, Committee, coordinators, landholders/volunteers, contractors and suppliers. • EO demonstrates leadership capacity, credibility and respect to direct the effort.



Proposed citizen-focused ('bottom-up') criteria for invasive species institutions

Performance criteria		Comments	CRBA executive intervention examples identified in case study
1. Respect for citizen contributions (time, effort and resources), roles and knowledge	Central to effective engagement is a mindset that the citizen is a valued partner, rather than just the subject of management. Thus, it is important that government and scientific institutions show respect for citizen knowledge. Ideally, institutional arrangements should optimise the quality of the citizen experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EO arranges all the logistics and coordination for rack days, so landholders can get on with the job on the day and contribute their experience and knowledge in implementation on ground. EO has worked alongside coordinators to clarify their roles and expectations with respect for their voluntary contribution of time and effort, and to reduce the administrative burden. EO has renovated recruitment and management procedures for LPMTs to better support their activities on ground and provide a safer and more accountable work environment through use of technology (GPS spot devices and tracking) and through clearer roles for coordinators. 	
2. Administrative requirements that are efficient and feasible for the citizen	Good administrative design and implementation should reduce the frustrations with, and transaction costs of, citizen interactions. This requires concern for the capacities and preferences of citizens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EO manages all the licensing requirements for landholders, LPMTs and ensures compliance and certification. EO is using teleconference facilities for some Committee meetings to reduce travel time and cost over vast distances for landholders and maximise their capacity to participate. EO streamlines communications to be targeted, timely, relevant, 'need to know' and low data use to be mindful of poor internet speeds and cost in remote areas. 	



Interview 1 transcript

Bill Currans - Executive Officer, Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Association

NOTE: where quotation marks are used they reflect direct quotes of the person interviewed.

Bill Currans of Currans Environmental Consulting was appointed as the Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Association's inaugural Executive Officer in 2015 and is contracted to provide part time executive support services. Bill is based in Geraldton and brings over 20 years'

experience in natural resource management roles to the position. Bill has considerable experience with funding processes, project planning and management, contract management, group process, facilitation, and providing secretariat and financial management services. Bill has also provided part time contracted services to the Pilbara Regional Biosecurity Group and the De Grey Land Conservation District Committee from his base in Geraldton, travelling to the Pilbara as required.

What did wild dog management look like before a dedicated administrative role was created?

The Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Association (CRBA) formed in 2010. For the first five years the group did not have any Executive Officer support.

The group received some support from Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia (DAFWA) staff member, Jim Miller, who performed some executive functions for the group. In addition Jim's wife, Kim Miller, provided some administration support in preparing templates etc.

CRBA Chairman, pastoralist David Gooch, held the position in the early years with a Committee of up to 11 members. Initially the state agencies DAFWA and the Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW) were on the Committee, but they stepped away and the Committee had consisted of only pastoralists in recent years. DPaW and DAFWA would attend as observers only.

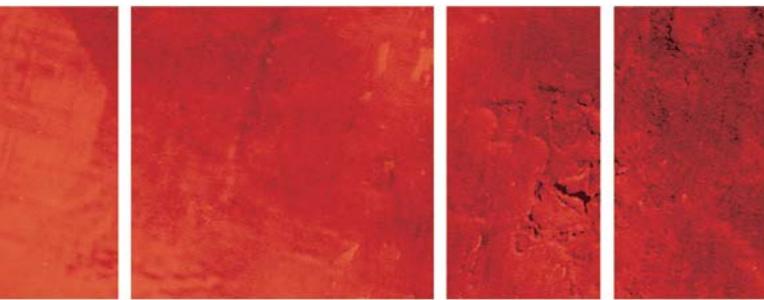
"There had been a good traditional dance between DAFWA and the biosecurity groups: it was a messy dance, with an awful routine. DAFWA withdrew services to biosecurity groups as part of government cutbacks. There were promises made for an Executive Officer to be supplied, and the groups were told many things would be in place that never eventuated. They were told there would be support, but it was probably the department being optimistic about what they thought they could provide but then they found they couldn't.

There was a fair deal of fall-out when there was official notification state-wide in November 2014 that DAFWA services were being withdrawn."

Gascoyne pastoralist Justin Steadman became the CRBA Chair from March 2015. "He stepped into the role with renewed enthusiasm and energy, and a good business approach."

A series of four wild dog workshops were held in the region during 2015. They focussed on the Licensed Pest Management Technician (LPMT or 'dogger') network and local rack groups, which had been in place for some time. The workshops were held to coordinate the use of the LPMTs and baiting. There had been no clear boundaries around where the doggers worked within the region previously, so the CRBA brought them together to establish these boundaries.

By late July 2015 there was a realisation that the group needed an Executive Officer so the new role was created. Bill Currans was interviewed and employed as the group's first Executive Officer. Initially there was just \$15,000 in the CRBA budget to cover executive support, but not long after Bill was employed the group received further funding as part of a government grant that covered Bill's contract for three days per week. Bill Currans was living in Geraldton when he applied for the position and was appointed and provided with a duty statement.



Best practice operations

Licensed Pest Management Technicians

There were seven LPMTs employed in the region under CRBAs management, and there had been a history of LPMTs being contracted to the CRBA. Two of those seven were funded out of Royalties for Regions (RfR) state funding, and four were co-funded out of the WA State Government's Declared Pest Account where rates are collected at local government level for pest management and matched by Treasury funds (see Appendix 2 for full definition).

There were local coordinators (pastoralists) appointed to manage the LPMTs, but there were no consistent or clear guidelines on what their roles were: much of their effort was spent on monitoring where the LPMTs were and managing their safety across very remote, isolated pastoral areas.

The local coordinator role was a volunteer role of management with few guidelines provided. Some coordinators treated the LPMTs like an employee, others were very hands off. There was little interaction between the local coordinators.

Rack Days

The rack days are organised to effectively manage preparation of the 1080 poison meat baits. The rack is a mesh table used to prepare and dry the 1080 field baits that are later distributed voluntarily by landholders. The meat baits are injected with 1080 then laid out to dry, before being bagged and distributed to pastoralists.

Different areas had been making their own arrangements for how this was done. They were relying on volunteers to organise the logistics and conduct the bait preparation. It requires considerable voluntary labour to inject the tonnage of meat required for a baiting round.

"The lack of overall coordination across the region created an issue around when groups were organising their bait preparation. With wild dog breeding times the two windows for baiting in this region are April-May and September-October.

The different groups were deciding their own timing, which was far from ideal."

The supply of meat was another issue for the rack days. Feral horses, donkeys and kangaroos had to be shot and cut up and with the vast areas to cover in the baiting program this can require 12-13 tonnes of meat to be prepared for one baiting round. The meat baits are cut up into 110 gram blocks, so there is a lot of work to supply the meat and it must be organised well ahead.

There are suppliers in Carnarvon, Geraldton, and Perth and the local group entered a purchase arrangement with the supplier they chose to use. The suppliers have had issues with pastoralists turning on and off their supply. Local kangaroo meat was preferred in the belief the dogs prefer that, while the LPMTs believe the dogs prefer a variety of meat types. There are a range of views and beliefs around the best source of meat.

There had been some history of orders for meat being made and then the pastoralists turning off the order in favour of a cheaper option. Some suppliers were pretty frustrated with the way they were treated, from a business relationship they were never sure if they had got the order, and they would have to store 12 tonnes of bait in their freezer at considerable cost.

Baiting

Aerial baiting is done in the hilly country of the upper Gascoyne and the Murchison, on the rough country that is inaccessible on the ground. Two Shires out of the five in CRBA's region require aerial baiting, representing 15 per cent of the land area.

The pastoralists coordinated the aerial baiting, and the secretary/treasurer did a lot of this organisation in a volunteer role. It was done by a contractor from Nor West Airworks, Eric Rolston. He organised the flight path, and the bombardier to drop the baits would be a volunteer/pastoralist. That was partly to do with the permits: whoever is dropping the baits on the property has to have a permit.

The balance of the baiting program is distributed on-ground by pastoralists.

"When I started I was told to organise the next baiting round. When I asked how to go about this,



how the previous baiting rounds were organised, the reply was ‘it just happened!’ From what I heard there were often issues around the delivery time of meat. It was like trying to herd cats, in reality.”

Note: Operationally the Shire of Upper Gascoyne fell out with the CRBA and said ‘give us the rates and we’ll do it ourselves’, so one Shire of the five Shires covered by the CRBA decided to do their own thing. That represents \$135,000 with which they employ their own LPMTs and are fiercely independent in doing their own thing. The area covered represents one fifth of the region. There is no reporting back on that part of the region.

Communication

Before the Executive Officer was employed there was little evidence of what communication tools were used with stakeholders or how effective they were. There would have been notices around AGMs and meetings. There would have been a combination of phone calls and emails. There were compliance communications around proxy and nomination forms, that was well understood and done. But there were no newsletters or regular communications.

There was a handover contact list of sorts that was about 80 per cent accurate.

A frustration for CRBA is that every person that receives a rate notice is a member of their association, but DAFWA can’t provide a list of who receives the rate notice. The privacy provisions are the perceived barrier, but this could easily be sorted by DAFWA getting an approval signature from the landholder to release their details to CRBA. CRBA has since received the name of the business and a mailing address, so there is now at least a station name and postal address, but not people’s names to communicate directly with.

Oversight / governance

The Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Association consists of a Committee of 11 with a Chairman, vice Chairman, a secretary/treasurer and up to eight Committee members. The aim was to have geographic representation on the Committee and

that was achieved quite well.

Within the total of 11 Committee members there was room to have up to four associate members, described in the constitution as having an interest in or management of land in the area.

The Committee had oversight of the LPMT Coordinators identified for each area. These were different to the Rack Coordinators. There were seven volunteers identified for each role.

DPaW would attend meetings as an observer, as the group is responsible for baiting the Kennedy Ranges together with DPaW: CRBA organises the plane, the bait, and the bombardier.

“The communication of baiting of DPaW land and its coordination wasn’t great. Busy pastoralists were trying to run their own businesses and were also carrying out this volunteer role to organise some major logistics. It all worked, it all happened, but they were having to interact with local district offices and there are four different DPaW offices in the area.”

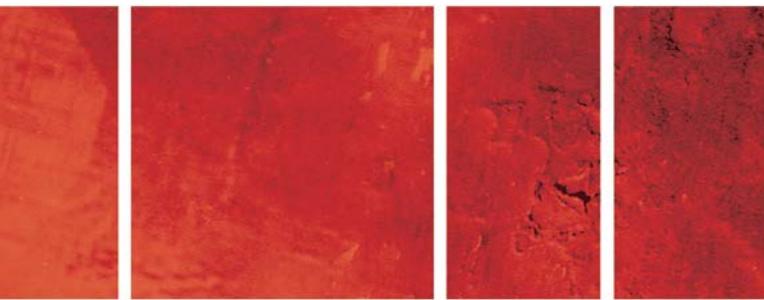
The CRBA had oversight of the series of four pastoralists workshops held in the area, which worked quite well. There were also rack days that were managed by CRBA.

Community ownership

Community ownership of the wild dog problem in the region was, and is now, fiercely strong. Wild dogs directly impact pastoral businesses: “the pastoralists have been at the front line and they have strong ownership of trying to control wild dogs”.

“The rack days are important for pastoralists as they provide an valuable social interaction where they can get together and know that they are working together on addressing the wild dog problem in their region.

Wild dogs are a common problem, pastoralists are working together to tackle it. It is something they can actually do something about, as opposed to other issues like their pastoral lease issues which are determined by government and are outside of their control. Wild dogs are something they can actually



do something about both individually and together as a group.

The wild dog problem is very visual - you see evidence of wild dogs with tracks and direct attacks on stock.

Wild dog attacks are an animal welfare issue for their stock and pastoralists get very emotional, which keeps them motivated to take action.

Also, the withdrawal of DAFWA from wild dog management has highlighted the need for pastoralists to take ownership and action or the problem will become even worse.”

Social impacts of wild dogs

Landholders in the CRBA region clearly identify the social, emotional and financial impacts that wild dogs have on their community and industry.

“People in this region identify themselves as sheep producers, and there is enthusiasm for being able to run more sheep. Where they may only have 2000 sheep left due to the pressure from wild dogs, they arc up at the prospect of running 8000 head again. Without the sheep, how do they define themselves without stock?

Local discussions on a proposed sheep fencing cell to protect stock from wild dogs had people’s eyes lighting up at the prospect of being able to run more sheep again. They are dedicated sheep people at heart, they want to be managing livestock. Their identities as sheep producers are challenged by the wild dog threat.”

“There is a direct emotional and psychological impact of a dog attack, having to put down injured stock, or seeing lambs taken which takes out the income potential for future years. One station on the coast expected to have 2000 lambs this year, and due to dogs they have just a few lambs surviving.”

Pastoralists find themselves having to do sad but important things like shoot injured calves.

“There is a lot of emotion attached to seeing dog tracks - when they do their windmill runs they are seeing visual evidence with tracks and translating

that to impact on their stock. There is a stress impact of constantly worrying.”

There is a lot of country in the region that is not suited to cattle, but they have been forced out of sheep due to the dogs. This impacts with the greater requirements for cattle on fencing and infrastructure like yards, and the greater grazing pressure on the landscape.

Stakeholder breadth and depth of involvement

There had been pretty consistent activity on wild dog control across all the Shires in the CRBA region, with around an 80 per cent participation rate by pastoralists, which was pretty good.

Pastoralist’s participation revolved around the rack days, where the meat was delivered on day one, it was thawed the next day, and on day three the pastoralists brought their own injector gun as an approved pastoralist to inject the baits.

The 1080 bait is supplied by an S7 retailer as per the quantities on the Restricted Chemical Product or RCP permits, which name the people who can use the chemical and the quantity, and each pastoralist collects their own quantity from the retailer.

Meat is supplied by the CRBA, and pastoralists inject their share. The baits have to be turned and dried over a few days, before they are bagged up and collected by the pastoralist.

In theory the baits last a month or more, but in practice they are put out while they are still fresh, and the timing of the rack days is around the dog breeding cycles when there are pups on the ground in September. The April-May effort is timed around the active breeding time.

The aim is to get the baiting on the ground across the whole region at the same time. Some additional rack days were being held outside the key baiting periods, which would not have done any harm, but just added an extra volunteer work load.

There were some areas getting baits from different suppliers at different times which varied between



early April to late May. The impact of this was that dogs moving across the landscape may have missed the area being baited. It is ideal to have everyone baiting at the same time across the whole landscape.

Pastoralists would have contributed roughly two days per rack day, twice a year. Time spent distributing baits would be hard to estimate but often this was done as part of normal station activity like mill/water runs. There were stories of pastoralists throwing the baits out the window as they drove, but that is not ideal. The preference is to get on motorbikes and distribute where the dogs actually move. Most pastoralists would average two days distributing baits, but others that are putting a concerted effort into getting into rough areas would dedicate more time. In general pastoralists would each have spent a total of four days on baiting.

There were stories of bags of baits left sitting in sheds, which the LPMTs then put out.

Some pastoralists would be using 1080 impregnated oats supplied by CRBA, which is then deposited into meat that the pastoralists cut up themselves. There would be a good number of pastoralists doing this throughout the year as opportunistic baiting. This practice is regarded as an easy option: if they come across a dead roo they will cut up the meat and make baits, then dry them out and distribute them on their property. That voluntary time on opportunistic baiting would be hard to estimate.

It is understood that bacteria and moisture destroy the efficacy of 1080, so drying the meat is critical to the toxicity of the 1080 as the bait can become inert. There is also the risk of a dog surviving a bait and then becoming 'bait shy'. The drying is the most critical part of preparing the fresh meat baits, and the meat should dry to 40 per cent of its weight.

Previously there were some stations that were not invited to rack days or had not participated due to a lack of clarity in communication: some missed out on the notices for rack days. That has been picked up now with a better contact list of who is in what area. Now the rack coordinators have a list of who is in their area, and email distribution groups have been set up to communicate directly to the

landholders. We are trying to avoid the 'I didn't know that was on' or 'no-one told me' scenarios. People said they would only get a day or two's notice, it was too short notice to participate. This situation has improved now.

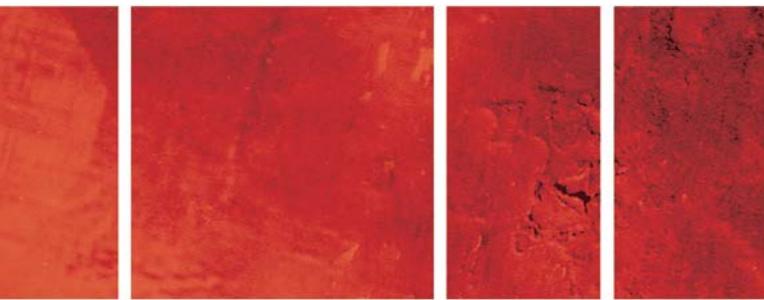
The LPMT Coordinators contribute their time voluntarily to provide the oversight to the local LPMT - advising them of where to work, ensuring they are covering each station, and providing oversight of safety checking by getting them to text in or use GPS safety devices for tracking or spot checks. Some stations use the same device to track where the LPMT is. A spot device is where you press a button, it sends an email to confirm they are ok, in an emergency they can notify for assistance, there is a monitoring option on the internet to monitor current location and their tracks over the past seven days. The former Chair said he spent hours on the computer monitoring where people were.

Previously the Coordinator would sign off on the LPMT reports, like a supervisor, and check that they worked the time they had claimed. The Coordinators were doing some contract management as well, challenging the work effort and application.

The time on this activity varied, it was probably around two hours a week for a typical coordinator, with the time spent on safety, welfare, problem solving and signing off on monthly reports and invoices. Averaged across the year LPMTs would work two weeks out of four, so 26 weeks at two hours times eight Coordinators would add up to 416 hours or 52 volunteer days per year contributed by Coordinators.

There was a lot of time spent in the past printing every report, signing every page, scanning and emailing it to the secretary/treasurer, which took a lot of time. They would then check the report against the invoice.

LPMTs were producing detailed reports that included photos and commentary on their activity. There was some frustration about the time this took. It was about accountability and it was seen as the best way to give a detailed breakdown on how they did their work, with text and photos, which were mostly



of dead dogs. These reports weren't being used for anything. There is no copy of these reports on file: the administrator didn't receive the reports at handover.

Knowledge / skill levels

Pastoralists are well aware they have an obligation under the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management (BAM) Act to take action to control declared pests and that includes feral dogs, feral camels, feral horses and feral donkeys.

To handle chemical for wild dog control landholders require a Restricted Chemical Product permit, an RCP permit, which some choose not to use; they have to want to use the chemicals and apply for the permit. DAFWA administers the permits. Typically this is for 1080 for baits and strychnine used on dog traps. Some properties may have used one chemical and not the other.

To receive and use chemicals the minimum requirement is to complete a DAFWA short course that is typically done online, and this covers handling 1080 and strychnine. Over 95% of pastoralists would have completed the compliance training. In theory once this is done they can set dog traps and use strychnine, but it doesn't provide training in how to use a dog trap.

DAFWA have run trap setting workshops in the past, Jim Miller ran these in July 2015. He was covering trap setting and applying his knowledge as a former LPMT to share dog behaviour and movement to give landholders the best chance of trapping dogs.

"The dogs are continually evolving and changing, and the LPMTs are building their experience and adapting their practices as the dogs change behaviour."

There is a separate course to be completed to enable landholders to inject 1080 into meat baits. DAFWA used to run this course, now it is a one day course provided by Carnarvon TAFE. It is an eight hour room based course, that can be run in other locations. They use chunks of meat to train on. This allows the pastoralist to become an 'approved pastoralist' on their permit and they can inject the baits at the racks and on their own properties as well. They are encouraged to lay baits year round; it is an expectation of an approved pastoralist that they will make their own baits.

Pastoralists have been setting and maintaining their own traps for a long time, as their own voluntary effort. Some have developed their skills and become very good at it over a long period of time. In the mix of personalities and skill sets there are certainly some pastoralists that don't have the aptitude for setting traps.

Some pastoralists are opportunistic shooting, and others are actively staking out a watering point and undertaking a shooting program, particularly where they have sheep. Their peak activity time would be around lambing.

Where there is lack of control of wild dogs on DPaW property the pastoralists are concentrating their effort on their first watering points adjoining the DPaW land.

What were the values, beliefs and assumptions of the stakeholders before the administration role began?

It was difficult for the CRBA Executive Officer to identify the values, beliefs and assumptions of stakeholders prior to when his role began in detail, as he hadn't resided in the region or worked directly with the group, and he deferred this question to the Chair for a more accurate assessment.

He did identify that there was a general belief of pastoralists that the administration role shouldn't be paid for out of Declared Pest Account funds, as they believed DAFWA had promised to fund the role as part of shifting the responsibility for wild dog control to regional biosecurity groups.



Pastoralists shared a strong belief in the importance of maintaining the effort on wild dog control, and they highly valued the opportunity to share the effort through local rack days to achieve action at an across the landscape level.

There was the broad assumption that all pastoralists/landholders would participate in wild dog management efforts with the common aim of minimising the impact of wild dogs on the pastoral industry and the community.

What were the behaviours and intentions of the stakeholders before the role began?

Group nature

The CRBA had been described as having become a dysfunctional group by 2015. The Chair had been in place for years and was described as ‘cranky’, some had had poor interaction with him, and engagement generally had dropped off.

“Volunteers were spending a lot of time on the reporting and oversight functions, though the outputs of their efforts effectively were not valued or used at any higher level or purpose.

There were no central resources in the form of contact databases or documented procedures for key group functions like coordination of rack days or baiting programs. The lack of procedures was impacting on key suppliers to the group, like the meat suppliers.”

While the intentions of the landholders were to maintain an effective level of wild dog management, there were key behaviours that had evolved amongst the stakeholders that detracted from this intent.

Stakeholders

As the major stakeholders in wild dog management in this region, pastoralists had faced a number of pressures that impacted their behaviours and intentions prior to the role of Executive Officer being created to support the activities of the CRBA.

The impact of increasing wild dog numbers had severely impacted pastoral productivity and profitability, and many stations had reduced stocking rates or moved out of sheep production entirely as a result. Stocking rates had been further decimated by a period of severe drought.

The changing nature of the pastoral industry and the greatly reduced numbers of people working on stations has added a lot of pressure on the role of volunteers. If a pastoralist is off the station for a meeting, workshop, etc. there is often no-one to fill in behind them. These social pressures demand flexibility, for example a CRBA AGM was timed to coincide with a school of the air meeting to save on travel time.

The Gascoyne and Murchison had been very traditional pastoral areas, but major change factors have been underway with the impact of drought, the shift from sheep to cattle to address the dog impacts, and the decline in goat numbers both from harvesting and from dogs. As stations have been sold, key players have left the region and these have included rack coordinators and Committee members. One or two families leaving can leave a big hole in the program. Where stations are being bought by corporates and for other land uses, like Bush Heritage and CSIRO, it brings different people into the mix with different drivers and a different expectation of their involvement in on-ground activities. Corporate ownership is relatively new to the region, but it will mean a new group of landowners to interact with - once you identify who they are.

The nature of pastoral leases requires regular reporting (to the Pastoral Lands Board) and maintenance of stocking rates to demonstrate the lease is being utilised for grazing purposes. When destocking occurs for drought or wild dog impacts, donkeys, goats, camels and kangaroos may move in and impact on rangeland condition. There are a range of factors a pastoralist has little control or influence over that can make a pastoral lease tenuous.



This history of government control of pastoral leases impacts on attitudes and behaviours, as opposed to freehold where a landholder has more autonomy over how they use and manage the land. It creates some suspicion and wariness of the government, which can impact how pastoralists interact with agency staff in program delivery. A significant wind-back in DAFWA staff and funding had left pastoralists in this region feeling abandoned and bitter.

“DAFWA have been one of the main stakeholders in wild dog management and my observation is that pastoralists are frustrated with DAFWA’s policy and operational changes, which has seen the department withdrawing staff and not delivering on expectations. There has been a lot of disappointment and anger at DAFWA from pastoralists.

As a stakeholder DAFWA hasn’t always been clear on its capacity to service and matching what it has committed to providing and what it can actually

provide, e.g. funding for Executive Officers. DAFWA’s exit strategy from pest management had never been clear.

The BAM Act identifies incorporated groups, the department has had a sense of ownership and control, that they direct and influence these groups, but are also here to work alongside and partner with them. There have been mixed messages from the

department and between different personnel. This has resulted in major breakdowns in relationships between the major stakeholders. DAFWA’s involvement has been difficult and inconsistent.”



Describe the nature of the dedicated administrative intervention

Creation of an Executive Officer role for the Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Association

A dedicated administration role for the Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Association (CRBA) was created in July 2015, five years after the association first formed. The funding available currently only allows for a part time position.

Bill Currans of Currans Environmental Consulting was appointed as the group’s inaugural Executive Officer and is contracted to provide part time EO support services. Bill is based in Geraldton and brings over 20 years’ experience in natural resource management roles to the position. Bill has considerable experience with funding processes, project planning and management, contract management, group process, facilitation, and

providing secretariat and financial management services.

Bill has also provided part time contracted services to the Pilbara Regional Biosecurity Group and the De Grey Land Conservation District Committee from his base in Geraldton, travelling to the Pilbara as required.

“It had been said that not being based in the region is an advantage as you are able to service the region without being embedded. CRBA has five Shires to service, so I can step into the region without prior relationships and perceptions of bias.”

Under his contract with CRBA, Bill continues to operate from Geraldton and travels as required to the Carnarvon RBA area and other locations as required, for example to Perth for meetings.



He maintains timesheets and invoices the Association monthly for the time worked on an agreed hourly rate.

For budgeting purposes the time allowed for in the budget equates to three days per week spread across the financial year. In practice Bill flexibly manages his time and priorities within the budget around busier times where he may work a number of days in a block to travel, attend meetings and field days, and balances this with other periods where he may work minimal hours maintaining tasks like phone calls, emails, website updates etc. Bill uses his own 4WD vehicle and invoices on agreed travel costs. Accommodation costs are minimal as he stays on the stations at no cost when he is on the road.

Bill's induction into the position began with a meeting with the CRBA Chair, Justin Steadman, who had a good idea of what needed to be done in the role and provided a good outline. The duty statement for the role was provided in the form of two examples taken from other regions (see Appendix 1). Bill works to both duty statements as they outline the priorities he works to.

A formal duty statement has not been written specifically for the CRBA position. Bill provided the following overview of the services he would provide in the contract proposal he presented to the CRBA.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER SERVICES SUMMARY

- Day to day functions of the Secretary/Treasurer Committee role including;
 - o Meeting arrangements (including teleconference), agenda, minutes, actions, correspondence, AGM arrangements and follow up actions.
 - o Financial management including book-keeping using accounting software, processing invoices for payment by RBA account signatories, preparing finance reports, budget management, arranging Accountants to provide Audited Financial Statements and Annual Reports.
- Communication within the RBA and with Carnarvon RBA pastoralists, stakeholders and agencies/

organisations;

- Communication and liaison with the Chairperson on emerging opportunities and issues for the RBA e.g. relationships with other RBAs/RBGs, state agencies etc.;
- Provide a contact point for the RBA e.g. funders, media, general inquiries;
- Facilitate the preparation on annual biosecurity programs, including costs, critical assumptions and risks. This would involve using templates and formats used in the Meekatharra and Goldfields-Nullarbor RBA areas for efficiency and consistency;
- Contract and project management of contracted biosecurity projects;
- Governance management including compliance with the RBA's constitution, State and Federal legislation and standards for feral animal and plant control; and
- Where delegated, represent the RBA as required e.g. meeting of RBA/RBGs with DAFWA etc.

In addition the Executive Officer role has been further described in the Association's Operational Plan 2015-2017 which covers the key roles and activities, including risk control, management accountability, securing and distributing resources, community engagement, effective and efficient coordination of group activities, and administrative requirements.

Executive Officer role described in the CRBA Wild Dog Management and Operational Plan 2015-2017:

- Maintain and update the CRBA Wild Dog Management and Operational plan, including obtaining endorsement from the CRBA Management Committee on updated versions.
- Managing the CRBA budget and expenditure including making all purchases and providing finance expenditure reports and revised budgets to the CRBA Management Committee.
- Arranging, coordinating and tracking materials and equipment for wild dog management including traps, poisons, meat baits, electronic field



recording and reporting equipment.

- Trying to ensure that all legal requirements for wild dog management are complied with e.g. that property Restricted Chemical Products (RCP) permits are current to participate in CRBA baiting programs and the permit conditions are being met such as the LPMT is listed on the RCP permits before they commence work on properties.
- Coordinating bi-annual regional ground and aerial baiting programs, including liaising with Rack Coordinators about the timing/quantity of meat bait delivery dates, rack days and aerial baiting arrangements.
- Contract management of LPMT contracts, including:
 - o issuing contracts,
 - o providing clarification to LPMTs and Coordinators around contract expectations, requirements and conditions,
 - o receiving and filing LPMT monthly reports and electronic data, and collating reports into regional LPMT activity and results reports,
 - o monitoring LPMT days worked and expenses against contracted days and budgets,
 - o with the Coordinators involved, provide feedback to LPMTs on their performance,
 - o receiving monthly invoices from LPMTs and payment recommendations from the LPMT Coordinators, paying invoices,
 - o reporting progress, achievements, budget expenditure and major contract issues to the CRBA Executive and Management Committee, and
 - o terminating contracts after briefing and consulting the CRBA Executive where contract performance or breach of contract issues cannot be resolved with the contractor.
- Reporting achievements and expenditure to CRBA members, stakeholders and DAFWA as required.

Description of the key functions

Bill Currans describes the primary responsibility of the Executive Officer as providing the governance functions for the Association through preparation of the budget, managing the accounts with book keeping and financial administration and reporting. This also requires management of the Committee process: the meetings, minutes, and communication to members.

Operationally the role focusses on administration of the operations into a plan to improve coordination, and getting clarity around timing and providing forward notice of activities to encourage participation by stakeholders.

“There is significant logistics management required to align the resources with the volunteer involvement and the contractors to efficiently and effectively deliver the baiting programs.”

“I have put a lot of effort into getting alignment and rebuilding relationships, to ensure there is inclusiveness and to get the non-participating stakeholders back into the fold.”

Bill has been proactive in managing the permits and training as a means of establishing contact and building relationships with participants.

“The interaction back is quite good now, it is improving after 15 months. There were areas that hadn’t been engaged before I started, and now they are participating.”

Communication activities are mostly done based on timeliness, and distributing ‘need-to-know’ and relevant information. I try not to just fill up emails, I understand the challenges pastoralists face with time and resources. I get the local ABC Rural reporter to attend our meetings to follow up on stories and this works pretty well in getting the messages out to the wider regional community. The printed local press is of little value to our communications with stakeholders.”

“The workshops, training and compliance are all part of the best practice required for wild dog management. The permits are part of our risk management as LPMTs have to have their permits in place, and the qualifications have to be attained and



maintained as part of my governance role for the group.”

“I manage the set-up of a new LPMT, which includes setting them up with the spot device we use to manage their safety in remote areas and to also track wild dog management implementation across the region.”

In practice how is the role delivered?

Bill Currans invested effort initially in setting up the administrative processes and tools to support the position, as this had not been handed over or formalised previously. “In the early days in this new role it was about the basic functional aspects: organising the contact list, reviewing the constitution of the group and the scope of operations, managing the set up and start up on bank accounts, BAS, establishing the budget and funding arrangements.”

“I had meetings with the Chair and the secretary/ treasurer. First contact was made with Committee members and as we had a Committee meeting scheduled for soon after I started, I was straight into organising the meeting.”

“I quickly moved on to establishing relationships with primary stakeholders including DAFWA and DPaW.”

“I had to organise a spring baiting round very soon after my position was established. There was no format for how this activity happened and it was left entirely to me to work out. I asked how it had worked in the past and was told it just happened! I had to identify the suppliers and place orders for items like bait and avgas, and importantly rebuild some relationships that had been damaged in the past by fickle decisions on orders.”

“There was initial reserve from stakeholders about my role and misperceptions of who I was working for, and it has taken time to demonstrate that I work for the pastoralists and am employed by them to help deliver their program.”

“The initial budget was approved and I was given authority to deliver on it. My expectation was to get on and deliver on the priorities identified in the

budget, including the employment of the Licensed Pest Management Technicians. There were questions raised later about when the Committee had made a decision on employing a particular LPMT: they had clearly been a very hands-on operational Committee in the past and I have had to manage that carefully.”

“This was an indication of the need to clarify expectations around roles and responsibilities. It is about having a delegation of authority discussion at the Committee meeting to get consensus on when the Committee expects to participate. There is some expectation at the Committee level that they can provide a lot of scrutiny and challenge who gets a job and how they do their job. This is about tight financial management of the main chunk of the funds. They see themselves as the employers of the LPMTs, not the setters of the overall strategy.”

“There is a tension between the operational and the strategic: in reality the Committee members don’t want to commit their time to administration, but they do like to have a hand on steering the ship on the bits they like to get involved in.”

Managing information to measure performance

Managing information is a key role Bill Currans has identified as a priority for improving the effectiveness of wild dog management and maintaining engagement and participation in the program in his region.

“When I started I could see all this work had been done, but I couldn’t see any information or data that would help prioritise the future effort. Capturing and analysing information is key to maximising the effort in wild dog management.”

“There had been no handover of information for the new Chair when he took on the role, and that has directly impacted how he has driven the priority for managing data and information better in future. There were no operational plans or contact lists made available to the new Chair.”

“We have now established a drop box for sharing long term corporate knowledge for the Association, so the group will never again be impacted by



changes to key roles. There is demonstrated value in the Executive Officer managing record keeping, backups, and centralising information.”

“There had been detailed reports completed regularly by LPMTs in the past, and they complained about the time and effort taken to write their detailed reports that included photos. In the changeover there were no LPMT reports handed over, and despite the reporting requirements to retain information it didn’t actually happen.”

“The spot track reporting we are gathering now should cover that reporting requirement. Since October I have been getting the spot report data, so the detailed LPMT reports are no longer required. Some LPMTs are capturing photos. I am now saving the LPMT track data into our system, and the dead dog locations are getting mapped through the spot device. They are thrilled to be able to see the track data across regions. We are looking at how to download the data from the GPS devices, so we can get a more reliable source of reporting data, as we want to be able to better track and analyse outcomes.”

“The Feralscan database was used diligently as a trial in one area, which makes that area look like the problem is so much worse, but it is only because they have been trialling the tool. Access to the data is an issue that needs to be addressed: we need a private log in area, as the information on trap locations for example does not need to be public information and it is a risk that needs to be managed.”

“Previously we haven’t had the information to identify where the wild dog hot spots are. With the change to the permit conditions to enable LPMTs to work across areas, we will be able to better target our resources.”

Monitoring and research are new priority areas for the group. “I am starting to get involved in identifying the technology we can use to better monitor the wild dog impacts, like remote sensing cameras and tracking and data management tools.

I am talking to Murdoch University and DAFWA and we have just got some motion sensor cameras at \$850 each and the assistance of a Murdoch university person to show the LPMTs how to use them, so our monitoring effort is underway.”

Challenges from the scale of region

The sheer size of the geographical area the CRBA has responsibility for presents an enormous challenge to volunteer resources and the coordination of logistics. The CRBA covers five local government areas representing roughly an area the size of Tasmania. It is a seven hour drive from the southern edge near Kalbarri to the northern edge at Exmouth, and from the coast at Carnarvon inland to Mount Augustus at the eastern boundary is a four hour drive.

It is a large area, with very low population, few population centres or services for vehicles, few sealed roads, and no mobile phone coverage beyond a modest radius of Carnarvon and some spots on the highway.

“The region’s size means you have to be very efficient and well planned in where you travel, and how much you can do on one road trip. I have to limit my travel from a time point of view and cost.”

“You need to be reporting back to members, meeting them face to face, so you always use an opportunity for multiple interactions with members when you can. The face to face interaction is so important to building the relationships and trust that you need to be able to engage landholders in wild dog management.”

“Remote area travel demands a higher level of planning and risk management. I use my own vehicle and the mileage is reimbursed, but it requires me to maintain a 4WD diesel so I can drive over rough pastoral paddocks and cope with the gravel roads. You plan your trip around fuelling at the limited options like at Murchison, Gascoyne Junction; you have to use the opportunities and plan ahead. My safety check in is with my wife and at the end of each day I make phone contact with her on the landline at whichever station I am staying at.”



Remote area communication

Email is used as the main communication tool with members of the Association, but with extremely limited download speeds and high cost, it must be used appropriately.

“I am very conscious of only using email when I really need to, for example when I need members to read or respond to information, and I minimise the file sizes on documents because of the very slow download speeds. A two megabit document could take an hour to download, and maps for aerial baiting could take all night to download.”

“Internet access is largely by satellite, the exception is those stations near the North West Coastal Highway. Mobile reception is extremely limited, even along the highway. We have a reliance on GPS

spot devices for the LPMTs to do their daily safety check-ins. Satellite phones are used sparingly because of the high cost, but it is the only option for contact when I am out on properties.”

“Landline telephones are the norm on stations and to make contact I make calls between 12-1pm and in the evenings to catch the pastoralists when they are at the homestead for meals. Some still use fax machines. Some do not use a computer at all, and many rely on another family member to print out emails for them to respond to.”

“It is essential to be very targeted, direct, timely and efficient in all my communication with pastoralists to overcome the limitations of communications and time that they face at their end.”

What did wild dog management look like after the administrative intervention?

Best practice operations

There has been a noticeable improvement in best practice operations for wild dog management in the CRBA region since the appointment of a dedicated Executive Officer to support the program delivery.

“When I started I would rate the best practice operations as a six out of ten: the rack days and the doggers were in place and they were doing stuff, it was disjointed but was still happening. It required better coordination, communication, and supplier management. To improve the effectiveness of the activities we had to get the data capture happening, the permits changed, and work on getting better stakeholder engagement by rebuilding relationships.”

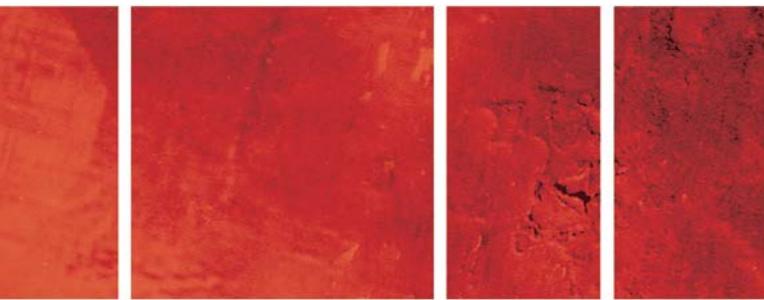
“Today I would rate the group as an eight out of ten on best practice. The rack days are a really good social day as they are one of the few opportunities for the pastoralists to get together and talk. Standing around the racks injecting baits is now regarded as one of the best social interaction opportunities for pastoralists. It is about people coming together with a common purpose and putting

the effort in together. It is also a social networking opportunity to catch up with neighbours and discuss issues.”

“I plan to use the rack days to interact with members, though the challenge at the moment is that they coincide so I plan to get a chiller to be able to store the meat and spread the effort apart on different days. I envisage spending two weeks with a trailer to get across the region. I also plan to use this opportunity to engage the members by spending a couple of hours talking around the maps, the reporting of dead dogs, sharing the learning around setting traps, and I will try and use that time to talk about other pest issues like donkeys and weeds.”

Communication

There has been improvement in communication around wild dog management in the CRBA region since the appointment of a dedicated Executive Officer, but as it came from a very low base and tools had to be built to support direct contact to members, there are more gains to be made.



“When I started I would have rated the communications at four out of ten as there was very little communication to the broader member group. Today I would rate it at about a six out of ten as there is ongoing work to re-engage members and there is still room to improve.”

“The communication has widened in scope now. Getting an up to date contact list was a big start, and getting the external linkages happening. My effort has gone into making sure there is relevant and timely communication on a ‘need-to-know’ basis so it is noticed, read and responded to. There is a web site to be built and our Chair, Justin Steadman, has mapped out a complex three tiered site with login access to meet the data capture and management needs of the Association in future. For me Committee communication is the primary driver for my role so I have set up a cloud based drop box for more efficient executive interaction and information management.”

“As part of the Pastoral Lands Board reporting requirements of lease holders, pastoralists are supposed to supply an annual report on dog damage. I need to access this information as I understand there is a history of pastoralists under reporting. I need to look at that data, and there are additional questions I need to ask to build more of a picture of wild dog impacts in our region. I want to be able to do awareness raising of the damage and impacts across the region.”

“Hard data, information and stories that demonstrate wild dog impacts need to be collected to be able to demonstrate the requirement for raising income to fund our effort. Questionnaires will be used to get stakeholders to contribute what they know to build this story. It is currently a challenge to get agreement on the need to raise rates, so we need a solid argument to raise funds from all sources.”

Oversight / governance

When the first Executive Officer was appointed in 2015 his initial priorities were to build the systems and procedures to support sound governance to address previous gaps, and to set about rebuilding relationships and trust in the oversight and

management of the wild dog program for the CRBA.

“When I started governance was rated at a very low three out of ten. With significant improvements in systems, compliance, policies and procedures, role descriptions and definitions, and finance procedures now in place I would rate CRBAs governance today at seven out of ten. There was none of this in place on start up.”

“The priority in the next six months is to put some governance training in place as part of the capacity grant we have secured, and to get the policy and procedures in place and adhered to. For example, the emergency procedures need to be documented.”

“There were some templates that appeared after I had been in the position for a while, I had the Constitution, and there were some forms for Committee nominations, but it took time to get these. I had to do a lot of work on building the contact list initially just so I could establish who our members were. It also took time to get the banking assignments tidied up.”

“In terms of oversight of the program, the rack coordinators are in place and the LPMT/dogger coordinators have a list of stations in each area. There are roles and responsibility statements for coordinators and these also outline what I do.”

“Some coordinators felt they had to do contract management on LPMT/dogger employment, but I had to make it clear that I manage that now. They are focussed on coordinating the activity and localised problem solving, and they sign off on the LPMT invoices to ensure that the work has been completed. I oversee the coordinators and if there is a gap I sort out a replacement. The invoices come to me as well as the coordinator and I don’t pay them until the coordinator signs off.”

“The group is starting to record the data on a centralised database of track data and dead dog data. I have a map of the last aerial baiting run, and the data log is improving as the pilot gets comfortable with it. I am using a local resource to set up the data management/mapping tool”.

“For me data management is about building the picture and telling the story: where are we



active, what are we recording, where is the effort and the outcome. In the past there has been no information stored and there is no history of activity or outcomes. Now I have spreadsheets to record activity by LPMT so I can build the picture of what has been done on ground.”

“My key performance indicators for governance and oversight are around Committee meetings, with minutes done and actions completed, accurate and timely financial records are kept, BAS statements are done, the reports are prepared as required. I update the accounts and report the financials at Committee meetings so I can talk to the reports, rather than circulate a report by email. Sourcing external funding is an important part of the my role.”

“My role is to focus on declared pest animals and weeds. We have a growing donkey issue in the region, and there is an expectation to address weeds like Parkinsonian and mesquite. Carnarvon’s top priority is dogs, so I spend 95 per cent of my time on dogs.”

“In terms of my performance review I have had one discussion with the Chair about my position, but there has been no formal review since I started. I am working three days a week on average.”

“To lift the rating on governance further I am addressing the gaps caused by the time delays to get the systems up and running: the spot devices and tracking system, and the new accounting system that the Chair will also be able to oversight remotely. It took time to sort out the accounting system after the accountant upgraded the version then couldn’t make it available.”

Community ownership

The CRBA Executive Officer has worked hard to find ways to get alongside stakeholders and rebuild relationships to grow community ownership of the wild dog program in his region.

“A good inroad for me to interact with pastoralists has been upgrading the permit system which is our mechanism for LPMT/dogger access and chemicals and I am now managing this where DAFWA had done

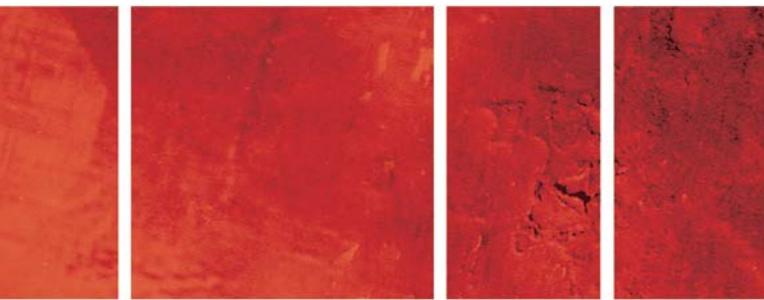
it in the past. Previously I didn’t have access to the permit, and although stepping in and providing the service to get the permit in place has taken a fair bit of time to get it sorted out, and getting pastoralists to pay a fee now as well, it has opened the door for me to build the relationships.”

“This process has helped people to build trust in me, simply by providing a good service and being respectful. I make things as easy for them as I can by filling in forms, easing the change process to a new way of doing things, and making it clear I am there to help them. It is about using inclusive language, and making it easy for them to comply with what needs to be done to keep the system running and the programs on track.”

“We have five local government authorities to work with in the CRBA area. The Shire of Upper Gascoyne had been very independent, but we are starting to work pretty well together now and they are spending ratepayer funds on top of other funding to employ two LPMTs/doggers. The Shire of Murchison is buying meat for baits as an additional local government investment in the wild dog management effort and they also oversaw a bounty program in their Shire. We have had financial contributions from the Exmouth and Carnarvon Shires as general contributions, but we want to revisit this and identify what they would like to pay for within the wild dog program for their Shires so it is targeted and they can see a benefit for their investment locally.”

“Raising local community awareness of the wild dog problem is part of my role and CRBA has had the local government ranger attend our Committee meeting to have discussions around town dog interactions. At Exmouth there is more of an issue about dogs not being controlled on DPaW land.”

“There are open communication lines when we need and when we are baiting I communicate with visitor centres and tourism places and road houses to raise awareness to try and avoid issues. There is a requirement to do at least a regional press statement and/or a radio story a week prior to baiting, there is a requirement for signage on each property entrance, and properties have to notify their neighbours when baiting.”



“Within this region there are a number of remote indigenous communities and a number of indigenous landholders that we interact with on organising permits. Early discussions were held about whether we could help these communities with organising de-sexing to control the breeding of community dogs.”

Stakeholder breadth and depth of involvement

The CRBA Executive Officer demonstrates a great deal of respect for member’s contributions in their time, effort and resources. He is clear about their roles within the regional wild dog management program and acknowledges and values their knowledge and experience gained through years of managing the wild dog problem on their own properties. The core activities are set up in partnership with the members, and after providing the logistics and set up, he steps back and allows them to do their part.

“I am clear that it is not my role to direct how they do their business: with the rack days for example I set everything in place and the members run the days themselves on property. I am respecting and valuing our volunteers by making communication easier so everyone understands what is expected of them, and by supplying what they need and when they need it. The rack days happen without me having to attend: I organise everything so they can get on with doing what they do best.”

This approach meets the expectation on the regional biosecurity groups to understand and value the competencies of their members in delivering their programs.

A challenge for stakeholder involvement in the CRBA region is the increasing changes in both ownership and land use on pastoral stations.

“A change of ownership does create some uncertainty around wild dog control. I have to spend time transferring over permits to the new owners, but the state government can’t tell you who the new leaseholders are under privacy provisions. This can lead to a lag time in establishing who to talk to, and getting the new permit in place (a LPMT/dogger can’t work on that property until the new permit is

in place) which may mean a six month’s gap in wild dog control. I also have to get the right chemical training in place for the new owners or their managers and their permits approved. That means no baiting and no LPMT working on the property in that time. That gap can be critical in control.”

“With 100 stations across our region, there is always turnover so gaps in the program due to changes in ownership may impact on a landscape scale. There can be holes in the patchwork quilt and it is very challenging to have everyone across the whole region doing everything at the same time.”

“Changing land use from pastoralism to nature conservation and other outcomes is taking place within the understanding that there still is an obligation to control invasive species on that land, regardless of whether livestock are being run. An example in our region is Hamelin Station which is now owned by Bush Heritage: they came to the AGM and are keen to be part of the community, and are interested in a dog proof fence for their boundary. We will continue to work closely with them as one of our bait racks is on Hamelin Station as it was run as a pastoral station until recently.”

“We had a new challenge recently for a member marketing his produce as organic beef when there was an understanding that 1080 couldn’t be used on a station with a United States organic certification. The position was clarified recently that it won’t affect certified organic beef certification, and while it disrupted baiting for a while, they are back into it now.”

The CRBA Executive Officer has worked persistently to change and evolve the relationship between the CRBA members and the state agency that previously had responsibility for wild dog management, the Department of Agriculture and Food or DAFWA.

“There were established behaviours and triggers that had evolved over time, so to try and create a new way of interacting I have changed the nature of the engagement with DAFWA to get a chance to build new behaviours and expectations. There was a co-dependency that was a carryover from the past; it can’t continue, so we needed to establish a new way of interacting.”



“It wasn’t helpful to keep repeating the way things had been done, because there are now new expectations of the group and how we are expected to deliver on wild dog management in future.”

“It takes time to build relationships and trust; even with the Committee members it has taken time for them to build trust in the person, understand where they fit in, and share their information. This is mostly around how their information will be used; there are animal welfare issues, and there are sensitivities around where the dogs are, with people trying to sell their businesses concerned about reporting wild dog stock losses and impacting the saleability.”

“They are trying to deal with a common problem, but it is not easy to admit you are getting hammered by dogs and are losing all your lambs. With a new Executive Officer stepping into the region they are naturally cautious.”

“A fair bit of my time has been spent establishing credibility and rapport, and the sheer size of the region makes it challenging to meet everyone up front. You meet some at field days and meetings, but other members you have to ring on the phone. I have been emailing people from the start, but it takes time and consistency of approach to establish rapport and trust, and to build credibility.”

“For me it is around everyone being a member of the organisation and my role is to provide a practical service and be helpful. When someone asks for help and I help them, it is my chance to demonstrate value and credibility. There is inevitably a time factor and it takes time to build the connection.”

“Some people mistakenly think I work for the government, which is a legacy of the way the biosecurity groups were set up initially. Zone control authorities had a DAFWA person provided to run meetings and take minutes. I have stepped into the role called Executive Officer and there is an assumption that because DAFWA used to do that role I must be a DAFWA employee.”

“There is also a broader expectation that people that service the pastoral region on declared pests or weeds are public servants. It requires me to clarify over time that I work for the members and am employed by the pastoralists themselves.”

“Because the department was expected to provide an executive support to each RBG, the pastoralists took the position they didn’t want to use their DPA funds to pay for executive support, they preferred to see it allocated to on ground work. Things have shifted now, but there is some carry over from that position. For this reason the wild dog grant funds is what my time has been paid out of rather than the DPA funds.”

Who are the other players / participants in wild dog management?

The Executive Officer identified a range of external stakeholders in wild dog management:

- The Department of Agriculture and Food WA - is the key stakeholder. I interact with Simon Merewether and Richard Watkins on an occasional basis, but mostly with Jim Miller at Carnarvon District Office.
- Department of Parks and Wildlife - has four districts spread across the CRBA area, mainly I work with the Carnarvon office. There is an MOU in place for our group to work with DPaW across tenure, reflecting the nil tenure management approach around sharing resources and coordinating baiting programs etc. We get the Kennedy Ranges DPaW land aerially baited twice a year, and they contribute resources and people to support the program.
- Other Regional Biosecurity Groups - Meekatharra and Goldfields Nullarbor - we interact and do trap orders together for example. We sit on a finance Committee for DAFWA that oversees the rating mechanism and checks the numbers, and provides linkage to the Declared Pest Account so we interact on that. We also talk about governance training, that is very good network to have. We meet face to face once a year, and have teleconferences organised through DAFWA facilities. It is an informal network outside of these events. I work for the Pilbara RBG as well, and we are talking about a joint donkey project between the regional groups.
- Australian Wool Innovation State Wild Dog Coordinator - has attended CRBA meetings, and is mapping the CRBA’s activities to show interactions



and crossover with the adjacent regions of Meekatharra and the northern agricultural region to identify gaps in areas not covered.

Who managed this external relationship management before and Executive Officer was appointed? “I’m not sure how much was actually done, we are talking about pastoralists who are very busy. Some arrangements like baiting programs with DPaW were in place, but it appears to have been disjointed. The feedback from stakeholders has been “it is good to have you on board Bill, to get this organised”.

Resources

(financial, in kind, physical. What the group is getting from what sources (not \$ values). Want to measure the capacity to access extra resources - what difference did the administrator role make?)

The limited resources are identified as a major constraint for effective operation of a regional biosecurity group with the vast region that the CRBA is expected to manage.

“The initial budget for my position when I started in 2015/16 financial year in the DPA funds was \$14,400 which equated to 36 days. I held back on paying my contract to use the anticipated external grant funds. When I first started the funds budgeted for the Executive Officer position were totally inadequate to get the work done to turn the Association around.”

“The 2016/17 budget includes a capacity grant from DAFWA under the Royalties for Regions funding of \$130,000 to the CRBA, within that I have an average of 3 days a week for 12 months paid under contract plus a \$9,000 travel operating budget to work within.”

“There was tension from pastoralists about using DPA funds to pay for an Executive Officer as they expected those funds to be focussed on operational activities on ground.”

“The expectation was that there would be external funding, so the initial meagre budget was always expected to grow and that I would bring in additional grants to cover my time. It is unlikely other people would have committed to the position without the certainty of ongoing remuneration. I had to have

confidence and optimism that other funds would come through and the budget would be sourced.”

“The limited financial resources mean you have to prioritise from a page of jobs that you have to spend your time on the things that really matter, on the limited number of days available. In reality that has meant I have had to prioritise what I essentially have to do in the early days. Things like the web site cannot be built in the first 12 months as the weeks of work required for this task could not be at the expense of on ground or organisational functioning. Committee meetings, minutes and actions and rolling out the operational program with baiting and rack days had to be the priority, and LPMT management, budgeting and finance and paying the bills are the core functions that must be delivered.

“There are a minimum of two Committee meetings a year, but we plan to hold four. We have had two teleconferences to cut down on the time and travel demanded of our volunteers and they are pretty good, they are an hour or less and we hammer through the agenda.”

“As I am a shared executive resource between the Pilbara and Carnarvon RBAs it does work being a neighbouring region, but it depends on how operationally active the groups are. The volume of transactions, the requirement for hands on operational time. It works sharing with Pilbara because they focus their operational effort once a year, whereas Carnarvon requires the three days a week.”

Where would the group be today if the Executive Officer role had not been created?

The Executive Officer believes the CRBA would be in a very different position today if they had not taken the step of employing professional executive support for the group’s core functions.

“The CRBA would have been struggling to hold an AGM and hold a quorum, and to be operating their business right now. From a workload point of view, the governance requirements and the time the Committee members would have had to spend on the operational management of the program would simply have been too much to sustain.”



“The operational activities would have been uncoordinated, while relationships with suppliers would have further eroded. There would be little external interaction compared to what I have been able to engage through my relationships and contacts with key stakeholders like DPaW where I have known the key people for many years. Those relationships and contacts really help the functioning of the group.”

How important to ongoing wild dog management is continuation of the executive role in the future?

The Executive Officer believes there will need to be a continuing operating expense for this executive function to support efficient and effective wild dog management program delivery by volunteer land holders.

“The governance and the requirement for managing and supporting a functioning Committee, whilst building the social aspects of group activity and engagement, and the dogger management, the permit management and compliance all needs to be managed professionally to sustain the business of the biosecurity group.”

“In reality the Executive Officer role should be a full time funded position. Just the incorporated group functions and requirements demand a resource, then you add the operational and management components. The core functions of running a group, in a region this size, means that the currently funded three days a week is the absolute minimum.”

“Getting data management established, chasing external funding, and analysing data are key to effective wild dog management, which requires additional time/resources beyond the on ground operational activities and events and management of LPMTs. Continuing to map and analyse the data will significantly improve future program effectiveness and efficiency as we continue to adopt and adapt technology as management tools.”

“Five days a week would see the communications, web site, local government engagement, research and data management happening on top of what is getting done now.”

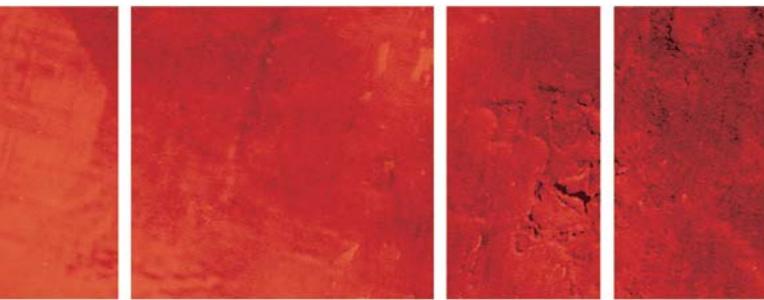
“This is not a scientific technical officer role, it demands the skills I have picked up on financial management and cash flow and reporting management. It is not a job for an inexperienced graduate. Knowing how to manage group dynamics, group process, and meeting dynamics, as well as incorporated group governance are all essential skills for the Executive Officer. Biosecurity groups have to employ at a high level as it is not an entry level position so that has to be factored into the cost. It is not a book keeping role, in fact that part of the role could easily be contracted out to an external book keeper. You need contract management skills and experience to manage the LPMT contracts, so you can manage for performance and address poor performance.”

Why do biosecurity groups need administrative support?

“Pastoralists are already stretched. The volunteer contribution has been increased as more people are being included, communicated with and invited to participate. The communication is key to engagement, and it requires the resource and effort to build and maintain volunteer participation.”

“Because I have taken responsibility for the logistics management and the decision making, it has freed the pastoralists up to just turn up on the day and participate, so they are not bogged down in the level of detail. The detailed planning has shifted across to me so they can focus on when they need to turn up and participate, and this has removed the background noise and frustration.

“I have regular communication with the doggers, with phone calls and email, and I always take their calls as they are our contractors so I am working for them. If it wasn't me dealing with their issues, it would be their coordinators having to be involved at the operational level again, and that just didn't work previously.”



What will wild dog management in this region look like in 2 years' time?

“In two years' time the procedures and administration functions for CRBA will all be in place. We will have an accurate picture of wild dog control effort across the region, and a clearer understanding of wild dog effects including dog behaviour information and dead dog statistics. Our technical information and facts will be a lot sharper, so our decisions will be better informed.”

What are the key lessons from the Executive Officer role for other biosecurity groups?

Bill Currans has identified five key lessons from the creation of his role with CRBA that may assist how other biosecurity groups could employ executive support:

1. Start with a full time Executive Officer position funded for six months to enable the systems, governance, contacts, budgets, financial reporting, Committee functioning and operational management planning to be established properly. Build in an option to reduce the time resource once the business of the biosecurity group is well established. Starting with a budget that only covers low hours on start-up is not adequate.
2. Establish the accountability and have clear expectations on how this will work in practice: the Committee meeting papers demand reporting on financials, action lists, and reports. Regular interaction with the Chair provides accountability. Feedback through members provides accountability and delivers independent feedback to the Chair on how the Executive Officer is performing.
3. Build the management plan to drive stakeholder engagement and provide a clear picture of the priorities for action so people can see where they fit and can contribute. Sort out the administration aspects of the business to get the house in order so it is ticking along as quickly as possible, so you can focus on operational management and delivery of the program.
4. Set up an employment contract for the Executive Officer, supported by a clear duty statement

relevant to the role expected to be delivered in that region, and ensure that it is signed.

5. Put strategies in place to manage succession of key people. The policies and procedures for the role of the Chair will help manage transition. In the event of the Chair or the Committee members changing, it inevitably costs a time factor to brief the new participants and build the relationships to maintain the effort.

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Interview 2 transcript

Justin Steadman - Chair, Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Association

NOTE: where quotation marks are used they reflect direct quotes of the person interviewed.

Justin Steadman is a pastoralist on Wooramel Station, 120km south east of Carnarvon in the Gascoyne region of Western Australia. Justin took over the role of Chair of the Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Association in May 2015. Justin has had extensive experience working at the frontline of the wild dog problem over the past 30 years in his region. He took on a state wide role in July 2015 to Chair the WA Wild Dog Action Group which

worked with all stakeholder groups to develop the WA Wild Dog Action Plan 2016-2021.

The CRBA had been through a challenging transition period when government withdrew resources and landholders were charged with new responsibilities to manage the wild dog problem through regional biosecurity groups (RBAs) assuming responsibility for invasive species management. Justin's first priority as Chair of CRBA was to employ a dedicated administrative resource in the role of Executive Officer to support the delivery of CRBAs program.

What did wild dog management look like before a dedicated administrative role was created?

Best practice operations

Before Justin Steadman took over the role of Chair of the Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Association and the Committee appointed an Executive Officer, the previous Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary/Treasurer had responsibility for all of the coordination for wild dog management in the region.

“The business of the CRBA was totally in the hands of the three key roles, which meant that time to ensure the auditing was completed and sourcing funding etc. was limited as it was up to the same volunteers who held these positions.”

“They were expected to provide the oversight for governance and running the business of CRBA, along with the demanding role of managing and coordinating staff (Licensed Pest Management Technicians or ‘doggers’) and the pastoral constituents who contribute financially to be involved in the wild dog program.”

“Inevitably for pastoralists focussed on the demands of running their own business as well as volunteering for the wild dog program, time was short and

the job was not being done correctly.”

“No-one was putting their hand up to help, and the people in the arena walked away and wanted nothing more to do with it due to the size of the task in hand and the time commitment needed to try and make it work.”

“During this time there was a high burn-out of volunteers. That issue compounded as others saw that burn-out happening, and it became harder to get the participation of pastoralists.”

“It also became harder to attract participants to perform the administrative roles for the CRBA.”

Communication

With volunteers stretched in their executive roles for the Committee, there was effectively no communication happening to the broader group of stakeholders.

“Pastoralists had to be directly involved themselves or they didn't know what was happening in the wild dog program. There was little distribution from the Committee down.”



“Part of the problem for members was that there was no real plan in place for implementing the program, other than for auditing purposes. There was nothing sent out to anyone outlining where the effort was going and what was happening across their region.”

“There was really only the basic communication needed to coordinate the on-ground activities around the bait preparation days.”

“The Committee knew what was going on but 80 per cent of the ratepayers didn’t know, unless they took the initiative themselves to ring and ask the office bearers.”

Oversight/governance

Justin was unable to provide a view on how the oversight and governance of the CRBA was previously managed, as there was no handover provided to him as the new Chair.

“When I took on the role of Chair of CRBA we basically had to start again and rebuild the business of CRBA from the ground up as nothing was handed over in the transition.”

“There are apparently records kept of previous activity, but no one knows where they are.”

“One of our first priorities was to set up a cloud based data management system for CRBA so we could better manage future transitions in key positions for the Association. We now put everything into this system including accounting and auditing records, minutes of all the meetings, and copies of all the communication to ratepayers.”

“All the information is now all in one place so transition to new office bearers can occur easily by simply changing passwords and the business of CRBA can continue regardless of who is in the role in future.”

Community ownership

Prior to the CRBA appointing a dedicated Executive Officer there was very little evidence of community ownership of the wild dog program at the regional level.

“There was still some individual effort to control wild dogs continuing on stations, but it wasn’t measured.”

Stakeholder breadth and depth of involvement

Despite the difficulties for volunteers in office bearing roles prior to an Executive Officer being employed, it appeared the on ground support for wild dog management was very good.

“While the involvement of pastoralists in organised wild dog management activities varied from area to area within the region, on average 70 - 90 per cent would turn up to events. They may not have attended all the days of the program, but they would swap over and share the load at key events like the rack days so there was always enough attendance to get the job done.”

“I believe they were taking their baits back to their own properties and were distributing them.”

Knowledge / skill level

“The skill level of the stakeholders was at a good level at this time. The number of licensed bait injectors was fair and there were enough to get the job done: they were relied on to be at the rack days to get the job done.”

What were the values, beliefs and assumptions of the stakeholders before the administration role began?

“Pastoralists really believed they were fighting a losing battle on their own on the wild dog problem.”

“Pastoralists see themselves as leaseholders renting land that is a public resource and they strongly believe there is a shared requirement for government to be involved in managing issues on that land, and that government should stump up for more than just the matching rates.”

“They knew they had a problem and had to get rid of it, but not how to do it beyond what was already being done and that was severely stretched with the total reliance on what effort volunteers could afford to contribute.”



“The majority of pastoralists saw government’s withdrawal from wild dog management as simply a cost shifting exercise and most believed it should be a shared government responsibility as they were only leaseholders of that land, they didn’t own the asset themselves.”

“They understood they had to be actively engaged in the effort to control wild dogs, but they believed they should be getting more support than they were getting.”

What were the behaviours and intentions of the stakeholders before the role began?

The CRBA was effectively at a crisis point prior to an Executive Officer being appointed and its future was in real jeopardy.

“The pastoralists literally threw their hands up in the air in frustration at the lack of support for the new Regional Biosecurity Association (RBA) arrangements by government.”

“The pastoralists’ intention at this stage was to shut the RBA down, and they were just not interested in keeping it going.”

“When I took over as Chair the CRBA was ready to fold: they rang to see if we wanted to keep it going and who could be involved to drive it. The small stock people saw real value in keeping it going as they were being hammered by the escalating wild dog problem, so I agreed to become involved to keep the association operating.”

Describe the nature of the dedicated administrative intervention

Justin Steadman identified the priority for the new Executive Officer role for the CRBA was to ensure there was one point of contact for any issues or for pastoralists who wanted to know what was going on to manage the wild dog problem across the region.

“The executive support also had to ensure that the administrative base and functions like bookkeeping were maintained to support the governance of the association.”

“And with a limited budget for such a large region, it was critical we had someone focussed on seeking out opportunities for funding so we could write up proposals to keep us in the game.”

“The key role for our Executive Officer is to act as

a coordination point to ensure people are receiving what they need to keep them engaged in wild dog management.”

“Now the CRBA Committee are doing as much as they used to, but the Chair and Secretary/Treasurer are only having to put in a quarter of the time and effort they used to have to contribute to keep the group running.”

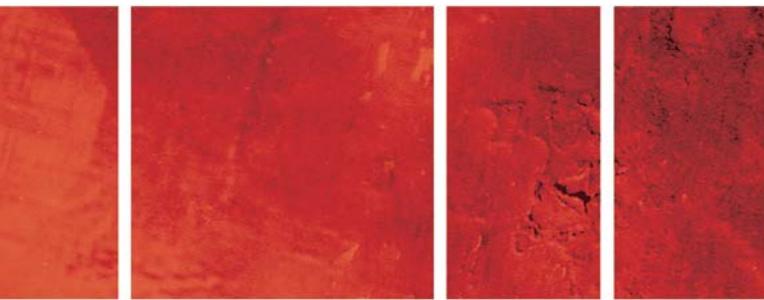
“With a professional Executive Officer in the role, it frees up the Chair and Vice Chair to provide the oversight to ensure the biosecurity group is adhering to its values and protocols and that money is being handled as the constituents expect it to, and that the governance and auditing process is in order.”

Describe wild dog management after the dedicated administrative intervention

Best practice operations

“On the ground not much has changed in the implementation of best practice operations since the appointment of an Executive Officer. The real

change is in the management of communications to all stakeholders to support engagement and program delivery, and in the improved coordination of the LPMTs and the people who need to know what they are doing to participate in the program.”



Communication

Justin Steadman believes that communication has improved with dedicated executive support to ensure there are communication emails going out to all members, and because everyone now has a central point of contact to deal with any issues or inquiries they may have.

“Knowing what the left hand is doing is now much better because all the information and communication is going to one central point and that knowledge can be shared accurately and in a more timely way.”

“People are happy to be involved now because they can cope with the workload and know what is expected of them. They don’t have to spend two hours at night chasing up issues. It didn’t work before because there simply wasn’t time in the day for them to run a demanding pastoral business and chase up on the group business.”

Oversight / governance

The appointment of an Executive Officer has made the oversight and governance of the Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Association more timely and far less stressful for office bearers.

“We have confidence now that the oversight and governance is all being done professionally, we know when reporting is due and what is expected of the Association to be delivered.”

“There has been a lot of streamlining around the accountability of the LPMTs, and there is more to be done.”

“Tracking and knowing where the money is being spent has improved threefold I believe since we employed a dedicated administrative officer.”

“The understanding of who has a role within the CRBA, what their role is and who they have to report to has become clearer and made a lot easier for all stakeholders.”

“From the business of CRBA perspective everything is now on record in one place with our cloud based

information database and access to that is via the Executive Officer, Chair and Secretary. In future when any of those people change the security access to the data can simply be changed to ensure whoever replaces them can hit the ground running and get their head around how things are operating.”

“There are new tools coming in that are designed to collect data to monitor and manage the wild dog program: the reports come back to the Executive Officer and he makes these an agenda item to be discussed by the Committee to inform their decision making around budgets and program priorities.”

“All feedback from pastoralists on the wild dog problem now comes back to one point, and if there is a break out or hot spot, it is referred to the Chair and Vice Chair to make decisions around allocation of resources as required, or if it is a bigger problem it is escalated to the Committee to get a majority decision to direct some action to address the problem.”

Community ownership

Justin Steadman believes community ownership of the wild dog problem is already improving purely by getting information sent out to each rate payer as to what is going on within the CRBA program.

“We now have a regional Wild Dog Management Plan in a draft stage that has been communicated verbally to pastoralists and will soon be distributed to all ratepayers directly so everyone will get the plan and can see where they fit into the regional effort.”

What are the apparent values, beliefs and assumptions of the stakeholders now?

Since the engagement of an Executive Officer the fundamentals of personal responsibility to participate in wild dog management are the same,



however there has been a shift in pastoralist’s perception of the regional biosecurity association. “Pastoralists are now more informed about the CRBA, they know there is activity going on to manage wild dogs in their region and that is being

monitored so the effort can shift around to target problem areas, and they now know there is an active program underway to try and help them reduce the problem on their property.”

What are the apparent behaviours and intentions of the stakeholders now?

Justin has observed a shift in the behaviours and intentions of the stakeholders since the Executive Officer was employed to coordinate the program.

“There are a lot more people on board now that the association is not being operated by rumour. With direct contact to all ratepayers there has been a change in the behaviours because they have the facts communicated to them personally and they are informed all at the same time.”

“There has been a noticeable change in people’s attitude to the CRBA, with a lot more people willing to be involved in the regional effort.”

“Slowly more people are putting their hands up to take a role in CRBA because they know it is an oversight role now and won’t take too many hours of their week; they are more willing to be involved in the Committee or take on an executive position as it won’t demand 30 voluntary hours of their week.”

Summary

Justin Steadman firmly believes it is critical to the ongoing operation of the CRBA to have a paid executive resource to support the functions and operations of the group to manage wild dogs effectively at the regional level.

“The critical requirement for executive support for RBAs certainly needs to be recognised and supported through government, otherwise it is perceived as purely a cost shifting exercise across to private leaseholders.”

“The expanding roles expected of RBAs are quite huge and will end up becoming very cumbersome. These additional roles at this stage are expected to be absorbed by the RBAs, so the coffer is being

stretched thinner while the wild dog issue gets worse and we are spending dollars on other issues at the expense of wild dog control efforts.”

“The RBAs are being looked at as a conduit for every other program that wants to get in on the game to get the participation of the CRBA stakeholders; they are looking to use the CRBA vehicle to get people involved, which adds to the time and cost of the Executive Officer that the RBA is having to foot as well.”

“Inevitably the Executive Officer role will become a full time position to fund a resource to deliver on all the expectations being made of the CRBA. It will also need a trainee brought alongside the position so if there is a transition in future there is someone trained into the position, and in the interim they can do the leg work to keep the costs of running the program down. There needs to be ongoing succession planning occurring to make sure the business side is looked after as people come and go in key roles.”

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Interview 3 transcript

Jim Miller - Biosecurity Officer Southern Rangelands, Biosecurity and Regulation Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia

NOTE: where quotation marks are used they reflect direct quotes of the person interviewed.

Jim Miller has worked in the Carnarvon region for the Department of Agriculture and Food WA for many years in a range of roles around rangelands biosecurity. He had been part of the previous regime of government-led invasive species management

programs, and had extensive experience working with both the people and the wild dog problem across the whole region. Prior to a dedicated administrative role being created for the CRBA Jim provided support to the group in its early stages, though this was outside of his revised departmental role after the move to regional biosecurity groups assuming responsibility for invasive species management. Jim left the department and worked in Queensland for fourteen months, but has now returned to a re-defined DAFWA role, based at the Carnarvon district office.

What did wild dog management look like before a dedicated administrative role was created?

Best practice operations

The actual work done on ground to control wild dogs in the Carnarvon region was quite good prior to the CRBA employing an Executive Officer, but it tended to be ad hoc and sporadic.

The former Chairman was absolutely passionate about the wild dog issue and put an enormous effort into the role. He was faced with a lot of frustrations around the lack of support during the transition from the Department being responsible for wild dog management programs.

“This was the first time the landholders had run a regional wild dog program on their own. The former service was just turned off one day, and they were left to their own devices. The Chair was very hands-on out of necessity to get the job done, but because of his demeanour this was perceived as dictatorial. There were personality clashes and some people got off side.

The stakeholders had little understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and while the Committee was made responsible they didn't really understand the governance procedures and financial reporting requirements expected of them.

Stakeholders got better service if they were on the Committee and ‘connected’ to the right people to hear about the program, their responsibilities were described better. When it got to operational level, this created chaos. People were shouted at to act, without being told what they were supposed to be doing.”

Communication

At the time there was no written regional wild dog management plan communicated out to stakeholders.

“They would receive an email with a date, and were expected to turn up. Expectations weren't managed well, so landholders just didn't know what was expected of them and their role in the overall regional program. Some areas were operating really well and were well coordinated, while others just fell by the wayside.”

Communications to stakeholders were delegated to be sent out from the Committee members: there were approximately 100 members of the CRBA.

“Ten Committee members had to send out emails to ten members in their area, but it started to



break down when not all the members received the information. The emails were sent out, but pastoralists often didn't check their emails. They were sent a couple of reminders, but the Committee members could have engaged the stakeholders a lot better. There was no follow up. An email went out and they were expected to act."

"The politics from the Committee at that time (there had been heated exchanges and argument over the withdrawal of government services) meant they often put it aside: they ignored it because they were sick of the politics."

Oversight / governance

The Committee members knew the requirement of them to oversight wild dog management in the region and provide good governance, and they had a capable Secretary/Treasurer in the role.

Issues arose because there was no communication to members on what the budget was going to be and what the overall regional program was that were contributing to.

"Pastoralists had the quite reasonable expectation to be informed: if I pay rates, what am I getting? This lack of information impacted behaviours, because the overall effort of the regional wild dog program and the budget around it was not sold to the members. They took the view that they used to get a service provided, and now government was expecting them to do all this extra work with no indication of how it was being paid for."

The Committee meetings started to become less effective when they were expected to do it all themselves.

"The rot set in when my position was withdrawn. On the operational side, no one gave them operational advice while I was out of the region for 14 months. They were implementing on-ground programs that they hadn't had to organise before. The first program was a logistical nightmare.

I gave them a basic plan before I left, and they were forewarned by the department they had to assume responsibility for the program and provide someone for handover training, but they

were in denial and arguing for a continuation of government involvement so no-one was trained into a coordinating role.

They employed someone to get the meat, fuel etc. organised for the on-ground effort, but the plan wasn't communicated well to stakeholders and people weren't turning up, fuel was delivered to the wrong location, it was a mess. Contracts were in place with meat suppliers, then when personalities came into play individual groups went out and found cheaper or more local suppliers, with no authority to pay for it. There was nothing written down, no plan of attack or delegated responsibilities.

Community ownership

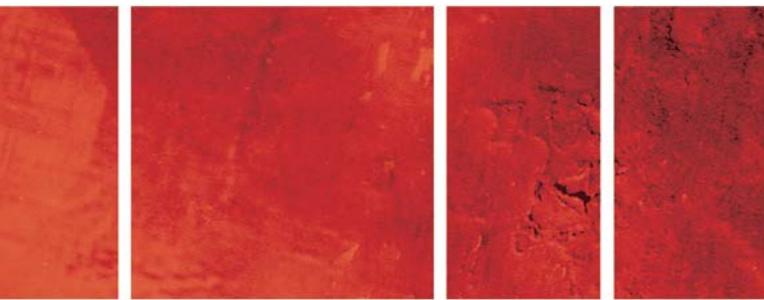
"The community didn't really own the wild dog management program at all as they still viewed it as a program to be delivered by government: they denied that the program and the problem was theirs. They paid tax, they wanted the delivery, just as they'd had before.

"At the same time they were complaining that the dogs were getting worse, they just didn't own the action.

"Some pastoralists, probably 20%, still took it seriously and did their own thing on their own place; they just got on with it, and still do today. These stakeholders didn't rely on a regional program to address the escalating wild dog problem on their own land.

During the transition from the public to private sector responsibility and the breakdown in relationships, one Shire broke away from CRBA to do their own thing and have been autonomous ever since. They are still part of CRBA but they invoice the Association and deliver the program in their area. That is the only area that gets their CRBA funds directly that includes DPA funds matched dollar for dollar by their Shire. It evolved as a result of bad relationships, but it has become a model that works for them.

"In reality no one is actually managing wild dogs, we are managing expectations and perceptions: if you keep the noise down then that is good enough.



It is actually more about managing people, not wild dogs, and the hardest part is managing the people. The dogs are far easier to manage.”

Stakeholder breadth and depth of involvement

“At the regional level there would have been 60-70 per cent of pastoralists turning up twice a year at the rack days where they volunteered their labour to prepare the dried meat baits for the biannual regional baiting programs. For those who didn’t turn up, often because they just couldn’t afford the time away from their work on station, baits would have been delivered to them on property. We don’t know if they distributed these baits, and there is anecdotal reports that baits were left sitting in sheds. It was part of the “it’s not my job” syndrome that was a carry-over from when the service was provided by government.

“The CRBA had really reduced aerial delivery of baits due to reduced budgets and also a realisation that they were wasting effort on non-targeted baiting. Distribution by air was not best practice as the baits were not being dropped in effective and targeted areas. Aerial baiting has been limited to where it is more appropriate in inaccessible terrain, like the Kennedy Ranges which is managed by the Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW).

“DPaW had copped a hard time from the pastoralists and the relationship was non-existent due to the excitement of the Chair around the withdrawal of government services. They were trying to milk DPaW and there was blame shifting that the dogs were on DPaW land. Industry has always said that DPaW manages vast tracts of land but doesn’t pay rates to contribute to wild dog management, so they should pay for it. It is a complicated history as the department (at the time Conservation and Land Management) was made responsible to manage the land, but was not provided with the budget that the Agricultural Protection Board (APB) had previously had to manage it. Landholders still believe DPaW should look after Crown land within their own departmental budget.

Knowledge / skill level

The knowledge and skill level of pastoralists in wild dog management were sound in the CRBA’s region, because it had been part of DAFWA’s role to train landholders as part of the accreditation around handling restricted chemicals with the 1080 poison used in meat baits.

“At the point of DAFWA pulling out of wild dog management in the region, less than 10 percent of CRBA members didn’t have the accredited skills. DAFWA staff had trained 60-70 landholders to inject baits themselves as ‘approved pastoralists’, which means they were accredited to have access to liquid concentrate and needles, so as individuals they knew what to do at the rack days organised by CRBA.”

“Individual pastoralists had been trained how to manage wild dogs on their own land, but there was no written plan and no accountability.”

What were the values, beliefs and assumptions of the stakeholders before the administration role began?

The stakeholders certainly believed wild dogs were a serious problem, and they saw evidence of the destruction the dogs were causing on their own properties and felt very strongly about it.

“Pastoralists felt abandoned by the department, that they had walked away from the wild dog problem and left landholders with a problem that was escalating. They were very bitter about this as they felt no one was listening to their concerns.

“At the time of transition from government to the private sector there was talk about ‘don’t make it personal’ when meetings got very heated, but dogs do make it personal with the stress and trauma they create when they attack valued livestock, so of course the whole issue was personal.

“What communication pastoralists were receiving from the Department during this challenging transition time were very ‘anaemic’; there was no compassion or empathy for the position pastoralists



were facing, and they were practising political correctness to the point of being anal. A lot of this response stemmed from the hysterics displayed in heated meetings. But when you are dealing with people and their livelihoods there needs to be attention given to maintaining the relationships throughout a difficult transition process.

“I operate on the basis of maintaining a relationship, you treat people as people, not as numbers on a spreadsheet. You have to do this to build respect and credibility.

“You have to build credibility, and once you are credible and they see you know them, you know

the problem, and you know their industry and understand their way of life, then you build their trust to be able to work alongside them to tackle the problem. At times that trust can waver. At times you have to be stern, and at times that line can falter if they perceive you haven’t done exactly what they wanted. At times you need a ‘naughty corner’ to deal with the behaviours, as emotion inevitably causes behavioural issues.

“Meanwhile the dog numbers were stable in some areas and in other areas the numbers were increasing. Overall the negative impacts across the region were a lot greater, which built up the emotion around the wild dog problem.”

What were the behaviours and intentions of the stakeholders before the role began?

During the transition of wild dog management out of government there was evidence of some destructive behaviours and there was also denial of ownership of the problem by stakeholders.

“Some stakeholders had the perception that if they hijacked the effort and it failed, then the government would be forced to step back in and pick it up again.

“There was also a misunderstanding by government around some of the stakeholders’ behaviours. People in DAFWA don’t comprehend that some pastoralists do not use a computer, and they don’t understand the low level of computer literacy and accessibility on remote pastoral properties with appallingly slow download speeds.

“Often the pastoralist’s wife or another family member is the gatekeeper on the emails coming in to the property, and if they determine they are not important enough in the mountain of information to be dealt with running a business, they may not be passed on.

“When you are on the bones of your backside financially and have the seasons against you with a prolonged drought which was impacting the region at that time, when you are trying to muster and load

cattle to keep the cash coming in, there are business priorities around why you don’t turn up to a CRBA rack day. They are actually making the hard choice between making money rather than volunteering their time.

“Volunteering only goes so far in getting things done in communities, and there comes a time where you will say you simply can’t provide that time any more.

“That is why it is so important that there is recognition of the amount of effort required to run a regional biosecurity group with a financial reward, it is the only way to ensure a voluntary group can get the executive functions done and meet the governance and reporting requirements demanded of it by government.”



Describe the nature of the dedicated administrative intervention

The administration of the Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Association is now being delivered perfectly, and with Bill Currans in the Executive Officer role it is great.

The CRBA Committee members are a lot more hands off now. Bill has a lot of autonomy and is able to get on and get the job done.

There is no real time keeper for the group's functions, which is a challenge for keeping things on track and timeliness. With my experience in the region I am acting as the EOs timekeeper, gently reminding him when operational actions need to be underway.

Describe wild dog management after the dedicated administrative intervention

Best practice operations

Prior to the appointment of a dedicated administration resource the CRBA's Chairmanship changed to pastoralist Justin Steadman. One of the first actions of the new Chair was to appoint experienced environmental management consultant, Bill Currans, to the newly created role of CRBA Executive Officer.

"The Committee is now a very 'hands off' Committee following the appointment of a dedicated Executive Officer."

"The Committee trusts their Executive Officer and they rely on him to deliver pretty much everything across the program, which is great as it has taken the pressure off the volunteers."

"The care factor as a Committee is less now and the passion is not there in the way it was displayed when everything was in transition and uncertain."

"There are minimal roles now for the volunteers on the Committee. Most of the dogger (Licensed Pest Management Technician) / rack coordinators take their role very seriously and are stepping up to organise things themselves."

"Things now get done, people put their hand up to get a job done. It has been a long haul to get to this way of working, but they realise if they don't do it the work won't get done. They had to go through that transition stage and it was an uncomfortable

and challenging time for everyone, but they are out the other side and getting on with the job."

"The best value in having a dedicated Executive Officer in place is that the group now has a boss to look to: someone has to take charge, and Bill is good at that role."

"Partly because of the time that has passed from when the program was going pear-shaped to the stakeholders seeing the light and paying an Executive Officer to get the job done, they now accept the direction a lot quicker. It is not a squatter dictating to another squatter - it is someone from outside the industry and the district delivering the orders."

"It works much better that it is not a mate or industry person, it is a paid person telling them what to do. This comes down to managing personalities and expectations appropriately and professionally. It also works to Bills advantage that he is based just outside the region, so there can be no perceptions of allegiances or bias in the program delivery."

"From what I am hearing, the LPMTs are stronger in not letting the shenanigans go on that aren't best practice, so I can only assume things are going well on the ground."

"Talking to pastoralists in the region they are happy with how the program is being delivered."

“They recognise that the Committee couldn’t run without a paid Executive Officer. They are still bitter that they have to pay for it, as they feel betrayed by government and that it shouldn’t come out of Declared Pest Account matching funds, it should be separate and publically funded.”

Communication

Communication has been improved with the appointment of an Executive Officer, although it is recognised it still could be a lot better.

“I still hear pastoralists say they haven’t had notice of an event or have missed out on information, so it will take some work around the problems with relying on email to get the message out.

The CRBA were early adopters of the Feralscan software to capture and record wild dog management data.

“While the group loves the Feralscan facility and the concept, they are not quite happy with it because they don’t trust how the Feralscan data may be made public and potentially used. They are suspicious of the federal component, and how that data will be used. As a result of the promises made and not delivered by government during the difficult transition, there is a lack of trust in Feralscan even though it is the best tool they have at the moment and they continue to gather data manually.

“Another concern arose because where they were actively collecting and entering data, the program made it look like they have the biggest wild dog problem and no one wants to admit they have failed in their efforts.

“It comes down to the social science around the fear of failure. A lot of marginal businesses operating on 250mm or less of rainfall during bad times just don’t

need another failure. In the transfer of responsibility for wild dog management to industry it now becomes their failure.”

Oversight / governance

The oversight and governance of the CRBA wild dog management program is now seen as exceptional.

“The Committee are acting more like a Board: they direct their Executive Officer to go and deliver, and he reports back to his Chair regularly.”

“The Committee is making the higher level decisions, then the implementation is handed to the EO, and that is a great way for them to be operating.”

“They are getting the funding, so the governance has to be in order as they are jumping the hoops required of them.”

“The stakeholders appear to be a lot more comfortable with how the program is being run, as evidenced by the fact that CRBA struggled to get a quorum at their last Annual General Meeting.”

Community ownership

Jim believes the landholders now own the new system of delivery: they don’t like it, but it has been forced onto them.

“They realise now that if they don’t take industry responsibility to tackle the wild dog problem they won’t be in business and no one will care if they are not there.”

“The pastoral industry has taken a hard reality check that they are just another business, and if they fail they will be replaced. No one cares about their lifestyle or history of managing the land, that’s the hard reality of it.”

What are the apparent behaviours and intentions of the stakeholders now?

Jim has identified some clear behavioural changes since the appointment of the Executive Officer role.

“To lead a regional program you have to have a strong Executive Officer that people respect and are prepared



to take direction from. Bill is very good in this role because he stands his ground.

“You need experience in this role, and I believe for the pastoral industry the job is best delivered by a 40+ male, because you need to have established credibility in the pastoral industry. Not that a woman couldn’t do the job and there are plenty of capable women who could, but in remote pastoral regions it is still a man’s world.

“The success of the role can be so personality based and of the four regional biosecurity groups I deal with there are very different personalities but they are each suited to their region and they have established respect and rapport with their stakeholders.

“The key for any group is the relationship between the Chair and the Executive Officer. The Chair has to have 100 per cent trust in the Executive Officer and feel confident to hand over the reins.

The Executive Officer is going to run the business for the group, they are effectively the general manager. The Executive Officer has to know how to communicate with the Chair and Committee, and have the strength to tell them when to step away from operational matters. They need to be strong, and know when to step in and poke them in the ribs.

“The Executive Officer needs good feedback, good data and no whinging. If the Executive Officer is getting that, they know their area is working and success is gauged by that behaviour of the stakeholders.

“The Executive Officer has had a struggle with managing supplier relationships as he hasn’t gained their trust yet. The suppliers liked the old way of having a fixed contract, but they got messed around in the transition when they produced bait product that the group committed to and then pulled out.

The Executive Officer is rebuilding the relationships again as part of the logistics delivery for the program.”

Summary

“I would like to drive it home that the value of a good Executive Officer is that it makes good business sense. No group of volunteers charged with the responsibility of delivering on a regional program will survive without a paid Executive Officer as someone must take charge to make things happen, and they must be in a paid position.

“I believe the Executive Officer role should be funded as a full time position to be really effective. In the Goldfields the EO is building the business, lining up with external funding etc. to really get the effort aligned to manage the wild dog problem. CRBA needs to get to the same realisation of what is possible if a full time position is funded.

“I know when I did the role from inside government during 2008-9 I would have spent 0.75 of a full time equivalent (FTE) of my time on the role, so it demands the resources to do it comprehensively. There are a lot more stakeholders that haven’t been embraced yet so I see it as a full time position.

“With pastoralists you have to balance the expectations versus what is able to realistically be delivered. Initially they viewed the Executive Officer role as a job for a retiree pastoralist. In reality it is a business, and business is full time and demands the resources to run it professionally.”

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**APPENDIX 1 - TWO DUTY STATEMENTS GUIDING THE CRBA EXECUTIVE OFFICER ROLE
KIMBERLEY RBG EXECUTIVE OFFICER DUTIES**

	Frequency
	M (monthly)
	Q (quarterly)
	W (weekly)
	A (annually)
Financial	
Payments recorded on a cash flow management system and hard copy filed	M
Payment of contractors on report of output	M
Prepare and submit invoices to DAFWA twice yearly for operational plan funding	A
Prepare BAS quarterly and pay accordingly	Q
Monitor bank account and reconcile payments with receipts	M
Prepare financial reports for Committee of management	Q
Source quotes and pay for appropriate level of insurance cover	A
Organise for annual audited final statements through CPA	A
Administrative	
Maintain RBG membership (lease holders) and Committee registers (including forms)	Q
Apply for DEC fauna licence and email all members copy	A
Organise 2 /3 Committee meeting per year including an annual AGM (includes drafting agenda, preparing minutes, meeting papers, venue, accommodation, and catering)	Q
Prepare annual communications plan	A
Record all association correspondence (includes emails, letters) and present at meetings	Q
Prepare annual operational plan in consultation with Committee and Department of Agriculture	A
In consultation with Committee prepare risk management plan	A
Prepare annual report (including audited financial statement) on operational activities	A
Document processes and where needed prepare policies	A
Project management	
Manage delivery of annual operational plan and budget	W
Source quotes for delivery of operational services	A
Prepare contracts for operational services (template provided)	A
Manage contractors (ensure appropriate insurances are held) collate contractor reports and prepare reports on outputs achieved	Q
Develop funding proposals on behalf of Pilbara RBG	Q

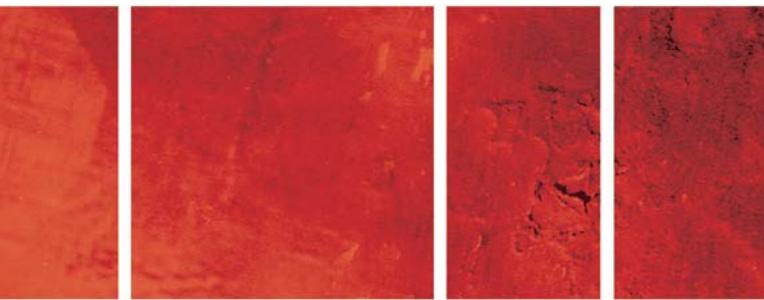


MEEKATHARRA RANGELAND BIOSECURITY ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVE OFFICER DUTIES

	DUTIES	WITH WHOM	DATE DUE	COMPLETED
1	Purchase traps ,GPS's Spot devices, bait and poison requirements for LPMTs (doggers)	Appropriate suppliers	As required	
2	Complete annual Budget and operational Plan	DAFWA Committee	November in year prior	
3	Liaise with treasurer and complete BASs if required.	treasurer	Per Quarter	
4	Liaise with treasurer and complete BASs if required.	treasurer	Per Quarter	
5	Complete and circulate Committee meeting minutes	All members	Within 10 days of meeting	
6	Discuss with Committee Members for future management Committee positions/terms and request applications as necessary.	All members	Prior to AGM	
7	Draft contract for bait meat tender and circulate appropriately. Establish quantities. Obtain quotes and order	Rack coordinators	At least 2 months prior to baitings	
8	Draft contract for aircraft tender and circulate appropriately. Obtain quotes	Committee	As required	
9	Draft contracts for LPMT's and others to freight and inject baits at community racks, and circulate appropriately. Obtain quotes.	Chairman	As required	
9	Draft annual contracts between MRBA and LPMTs and ensure their insurance is in place, licences are current and appropriate properties are listed on contracts.	Chairman Committee	June annually	
10	Report to all Members with; Annual, financial and other Reports, Notice of AGM by 30 September, AGM to be held prior to 30 October. all templates, Agenda, election documentation to be prepared and distributed	Chairman treasurer	30 September annually	



	DUTIES	WITH WHOM	DATE DUE	COMPLETED
11	Allocate all association Members to a rack coordinator, as point of contact.	Rack coordinators	Include with Annual Repor Include with Annual Report t	
12	Draft frame Draft framework of 5 yr Strategic Plan work of 5 yr Strategic Plan	DAFWA Chairman	Revise annually	
13	Establish appropriate financial management systems	treasurer	ongoing	
14	Develop or revise MOU with DAFWA for RBG (general)	DAFWA	annually	
15	Develop or revise MOU with DAFWA for WD bounty	DAFWA	annually	
16	Develop or revise MOU with DPAW for baiting requirements	DPAW	annually	
17	Review and distribute wild dog bounty documentation	Chairman	annually	
18	Establish quantities required and order baiting requirements.eg onion bags, gloves, needle guns etc.	Rack coordinators	At least 2 months prior to baitings	
19	Establish poison requirements and order	S 7 Retailer	annually	
20	Re draft EO duties and or contracts if required	Chairman	As required	
21	Any other relevant MRBA business which may arise from time to time	Chairman	As required	
22	All reporting required for DAFWA, DPAW and grant funding	treasurer	ongoing	
23	Prepare grant funding applications as they arise		ongoing	
24	Liaise with mining companies relating to funding and declared pest responsibilities		ongoing	



APPENDIX 2 - KEY DEFINITIONS

Declared Pest Rate (DAFWA website)

The *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007* (BAM Act) allows a rate to be raised for purposes of controlling declared pests in prescribed areas. This rate is known as the Declared Pest Rate (DPR).

What is the declared pest rate?

The declared pest rate (DPR) is a rate that can be raised under the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007* (BAM Act) for the purposes of controlling declared pests in a prescribed area. The Minister of Agriculture and Food determines the rate chargeable on the land in the defined area. This is done in partnership with a Recognised Biosecurity Group which operates in the relevant area and Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia (DAFWA).

The DPR has been collected in the pastoral lease areas since 2014. Prior to 2014 and since the late 1970s, it was collected as the Agriculture Pest Rate under the previous legislation (*Agriculture and Related Resources Protection Act 1976*).

In conjunction with newly formed biosecurity groups, the DPR is being extended into the agricultural areas. In 2016/17 the rate was determined to apply in 11 Shires in the Eastern Wheatbelt region and to an area in the Shire of Carnarvon classed as agriculture freehold land for the first time.

The DPR is collected by the Commissioner of State Revenue through the Department of Finance's Office of State Revenue (OSR). Rate assessment notices (invoices) are usually issued in September each year.

Rates are matched with State Government funds and transferred to the Declared Pest Account (DPA) administered by DAFWA. These funds are made available to the respective Recognised Biosecurity groups to manage declared pests in their area of operation.

What is the purpose of the DPR?

The DPR is a mechanism that provides RBGs with ongoing funds to control declared pests over the long term. It is based on the principle of shared responsibility and partnerships between the government and landholders for the control of widespread declared pests. Funds raised by the rates are matched by the State Government under the BAM Act.

How are rates determined?

The BAM Act enables the Minister to determine a rate chargeable on land prescribed by regulation. The rate is determined either as an ad valorem rate or a flat rate:

- A flat rate: where the same amount is charged for each property.
- An ad valorem rate: a charge (cents-in-the-dollar) applied on the unimproved value of land as provided by the Valuer General.

The process of planning for the determination of a rate starts with an RBG determining or reviewing their priority declared pests and developing a declared pest action plan. This is done in consultation with affected landholders through meetings, public forums or attending the group's Annual General Meeting among other activities.

The plan and budget is submitted to DAFWA for review and approval. DAFWA then advises the Minister for Agriculture and Food as to what rate should be determined to raise adequate funds for each RBG to deliver on its plans.

Before setting the rate, the Minister consults with landholders and affected parties in the RBG's operational area by inviting and giving 20 working days for people to make submissions. A public notice is placed in the local or regional newspaper(s). This is done annually and is required under the BAM Act.

Rates are determined before 30 June for the following financial year. The rates for financial year 2016/17 were published in the Government Gazette on 21 and 24 June 2016.



What role do RBGs have?

The BAM Act enables the Minister to formally recognise a group as a Recognised Biosecurity Group for the purposes of controlling declared pests in a specified area. RBGs provide landholders and managers a way to adopt a coordinated approach to controlling and managing declared pests in their area.

Rates collected from landholders in one RBG area are not available for use by another RBG.

RBGs are DAFWA's preferred partnership arrangement for the control of widespread and established declared pests. Work undertaken by RBGs is intended to add value to individual landholder's control activities, not replace individual responsibilities to control declared pests.

APPENDIX 3 - PROJECT BRIEF

Objective

Through the description and analysis of a case study report, the project will demonstrate the impact on wild dog management from the role of a dedicated wild dog management group Executive Officer performing administration. The case study will be developed in consultation with a dedicated writer for multimedia contacted separately by IA Ltd. The project will not demonstrate the efficacy of reduced wild dog impacts as it is assumed that community driven landscape scale (i.e. nil-tenure) best practice is efficacious. However, the project scope does include an assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of how community involvement, resource collaboration and nil tenure is done.

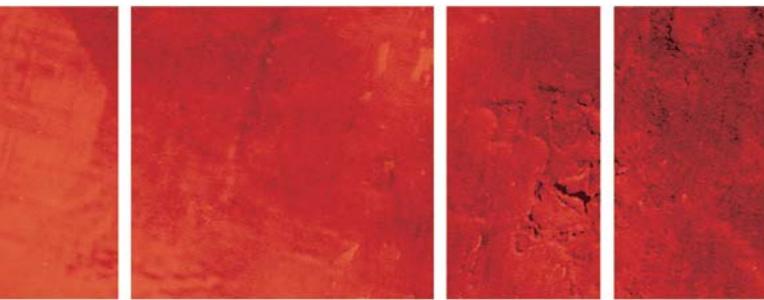
Background

The National Wild Dog Action Plan is a strategic plan that guides wild dog management across Australia. It promotes the principles of community driven, landscape scale best practice. To assist in that promotion and continuously identify improvements to wild dog management initiated by its stakeholders or social research, this case study is one of a series conducted 2016-17 that describes and analyses interventions and their effect on

successful or unsuccessful wild dog management. These case studies will form the content for online multimedia in the form of news articles, magazine articles and videos. Where possible, case studies will be developed in consultation with a dedicated writer to both inform the case study investigator of the content needs of the writer and inform the writer of what content may be available.

Terms of Reference

1. The Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Association, Western Australia will be the subject of this case study.
2. The definition of wild dog management will include (but not necessarily limited to):
 - a description of best practice operations, communication methods within and out of the group, oversight/governance of the groups finances, operations and communications, the level of community ownership, the breadth and depth of stakeholder involvement, the knowledge and skill level of the stakeholders involved and the sources and type of cash or in-kind plant and equipment, disposables, labour and advisory resources contributed.
 - the apparent values, beliefs and assumptions of the stakeholders.
 - the apparent behaviours and intentions of the stakeholders (these may cross over with wild dog management characteristics).
3. The definition of wild dog management does not include the value of the resources contributed, the number of control tools deployed, the number of dogs killed or the value of negative impact reduction.
4. The description of the administration function of the Executive Officer will include all roles and responsibilities (within the job description and any extra functions evolved since employment began).
5. The frame of reference for the analysis will include the evaluation criteria for management and citizen focus proposed on

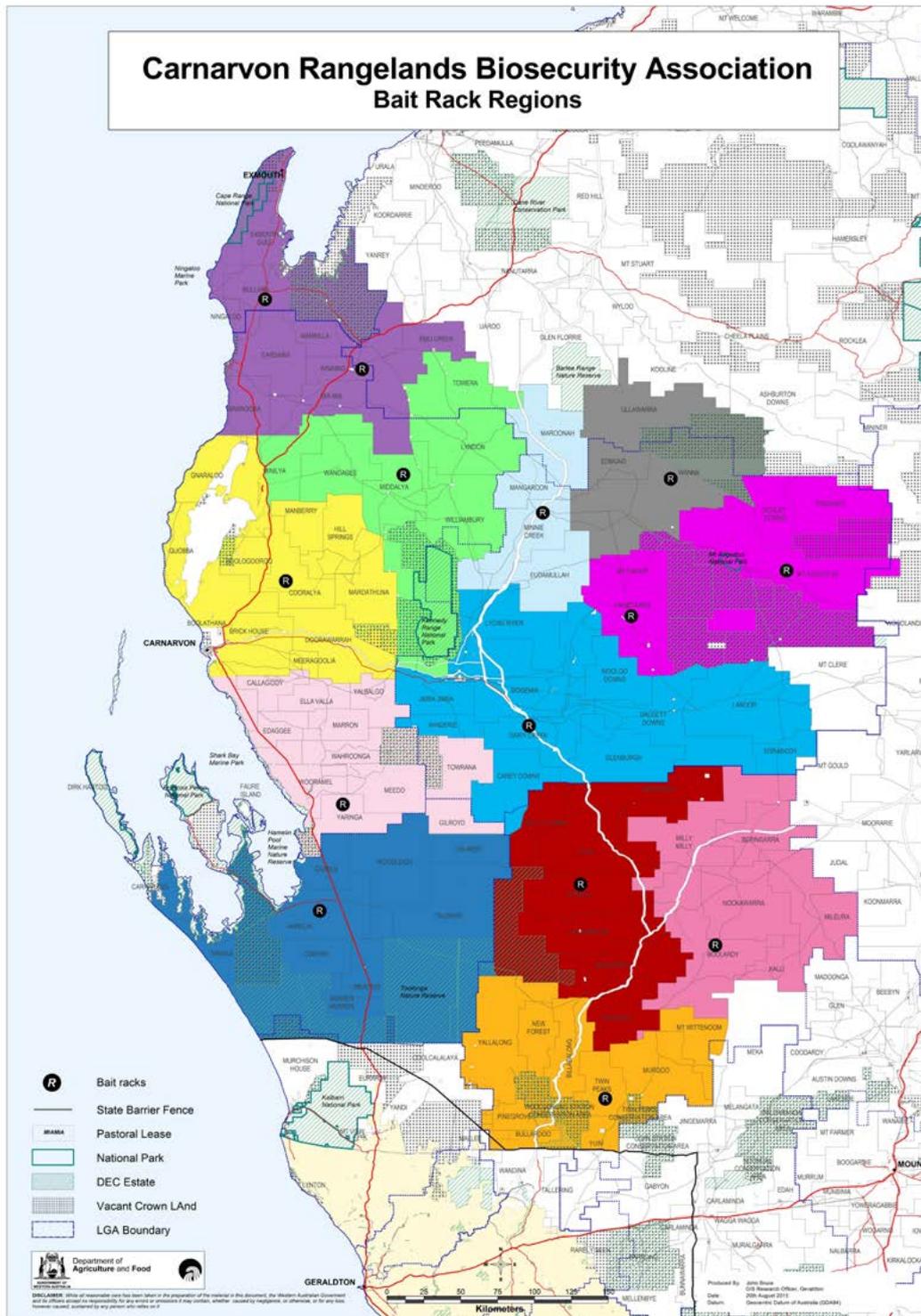


page 19 by Martin P, Low Choy D, Le Gal E and Lingard K. (2016). Effective Citizen Action on Invasive Species: The Institutional Challenge. Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre: Canberra.

6. Risk control, management accountability, effectiveness in securing and distributing resources, effectiveness in securing community engagement, key roles and activities, effective and efficient coordination, respect for citizens and administrative requirements that are efficient and feasible for the citizen.
7. The interviewees will include the Executive Officer, the group Chairman or vice Chairman and any other person deemed appropriate to meet the objective of the case study.
8. The method will be to collect opinions by interview to describe what wild dog management looked like before a dedicated administrative role was created, and what it looked like after the role was implemented.
9. Any identified issues of sensitivity for any interviewee or wild dog group member will be recorded as a historical narrative without further analysis or interpretation by the consultant in order to maintain a high ethical standard for the project
10. The consultant will produce interview questions, transcripts or write ups of each interview (allowing for confidentiality if that is the request of the interviewee), any permission/authorisation or privacy consent documentation from interviewees (in consultation with the multimedia writer), a written description about the group and written analysis and interpretation of the impact of the administrative intervention.
11. The consultant will consult concurrently with the multimedia writer to use the data, quotes, interviews and final analysis to inform her own deliverables under a separate contract.



APPENDIX 4 - CRBA REGIONAL MAPS - Bait Rack Regions





APPENDIX 4 - CRBA REGIONAL MAPS - Pest Management Technician Regions

