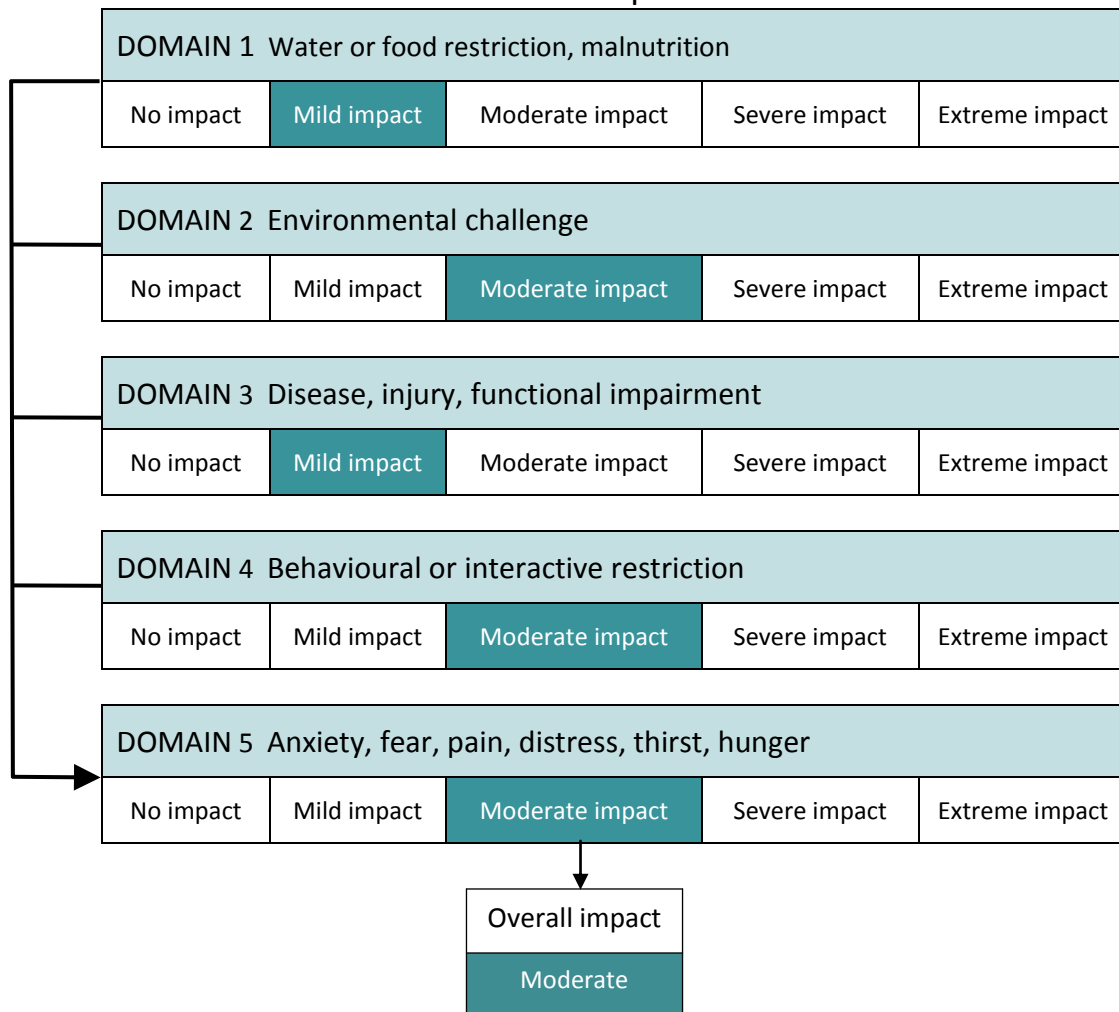


Control method: Mustering of feral camels

Assumptions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best practice is followed in accordance with the standard operating procedure CAM003 Mustering of feral camels (http://www.feral.org.au/tag/camel-sop/). • It is assumed that mustering is completed within daylight hours and that feed and water is provided on completion of mustering according to the standard operating procedure. • A skilled operator, who holds an appropriate firearm license, is always readily available with a suitable calibre firearm to euthanase any injured and non-commercial animals. • Removal of camels for slaughter or export is a multi-stage process. This assessment applies from the beginning of contact with the herd to when they are contained in yards (i.e. up to the point of shutting the gate). Separate assessments have also been made for yarding and holding; loading and transport; and slaughter. The assessment of the impact of mustering should not be considered in isolation from these subsequent stages as the cumulative effects of these procedures will compound welfare impact. • Aerial and ground mustering are often used in combination so they are considered together here.
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PART A: assessment of overall welfare impact



DURATION OF IMPACT				
Immediate to seconds	Minutes	Hours	Days	Weeks

SCORE FOR PART A:	5
Summary of evidence:	
Domain 1	Mustering is usually performed over the period of one day, between dawn and dusk. Although camels are still within their normal environment they are moved along towards the yards at a moderate pace and therefore probably won't have access to feed or water during this period. There will be some water loss with increasing exercise especially in hotter weather.
Domain 2	Camels are mustered in hot, dry areas of Australia and therefore are likely to experience short-term heat stress caused by exposure to high ambient temperatures combined with exercise. To avoid heat stress it is best to muster camels during cooler months, however this is not always possible so mustering occurs all year round. Also, because of the long distances moved, the heat of the day cannot be avoided, so heat stress can be a common problem in the warmer months.
Domain 3	Minor injuries to the feet or legs could occur during mustering. Also, existing injuries, for example lameness, could be exacerbated by moving camels over long distances.
Domain 4	Some animals will find mustering aversive and will try to escape. There is disruption to the normal social group during mustering which can have a significant impact on any animals that are left behind. Small calves often cannot keep up with the older animals and can get separated or left behind. For those that are still dependent, if they are not euthanased by operators, the impact is likely to be severe to extreme. Old, sick or injured animals that cannot keep up with the pace can also get left behind.
Domain 5	Camels are likely to experience a moderate degree of distress when being mustered due to the combination of heat and exercise, behavioural restriction and social disruption. Younger animals are more likely to be affected since they often cannot keep up with the mob and do not have access to food and milk/water for a significant period.

PART B: assessment of mode of death

Not performed – see assessment for slaughter

Summary

CONTROL METHOD:	Mustering of feral camels
OVERALL HUMANENESS SCORE:	5
Comments In a descriptive, qualitative study to assess animal welfare outcomes of camel mustering, approximately 0.4% of animals died or required euthanasia during mustering (unpublished data, J. Hampton). In this study of a single mustering operator (who was using one gyrocopter, three 'bull-catcher' vehicles, one motorbike and five staff), approximately 500 animals were observed being mustered. Two animals were observed to collapse and one died (cause of death unknown) whilst the other could not rise from a recumbent position (however this animal was not euthanased). The pace of mustering during these observations was deemed to be 'moderate' with the tail end of the mob dictating speed of movement. Animals that were unable to keep pace with the main mob were not pursued and the pace of mustering was not deemed to cause excessive exhaustion.	