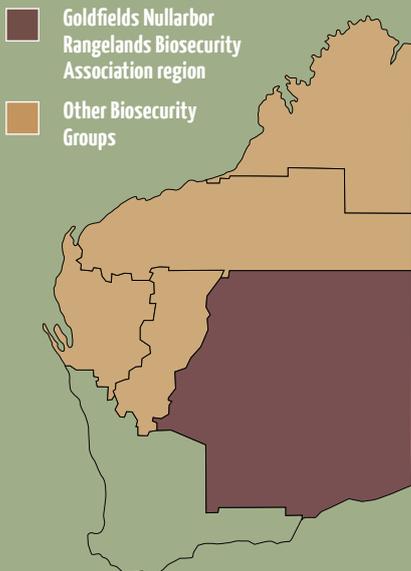


Collaboration to conquer the cacti

CASE STUDY



The GNRBA is the largest biosecurity region in Western Australia, covering an area of 933,814 square kilometres, representing 37% of WA, and incorporating 109 pastoral leases. There is a mix of land tenure ranging from pastoral to mining leases, unallocated crown land, Department of Parks and Wildlife reserve and Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs).

Groups and organisations in the Goldfields and Nullarbor regions have come together to target invasive cacti species that threaten to spread further throughout public land and into private leaseholds.

The attack on the cacti is being led by the Goldfields Nullarbor Rangelands Biosecurity Association (GNRBA) whose aspiration is to “work with all landholders and partners to implement best practice programs that manage the impacts of declared pests, natural resource threats and simultaneously sustains production”. This group has brought together local shires (Leonora and Menzies), Dept of Agriculture and Food (DAFWA), Dept of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW), Rangelands Natural Resource Management (NRM) and local pastoralists with the assistance of funding from the Western Australian Government State NRM Program.

In recent years, invasive cacti species have been found in public spaces, often a result of past protection of mining leases or disposal from household gardens. Of areas found so far, cacti have been growing and spreading for a number of years, to the point where they are spread over a wide area into native scrub and creeklines.

GNRBA Executive Officer, Ross Wood reminds all, “If this cacti is not treated, it will continue to spread and before we know it, it will be throughout the station country damaging pastoralists livelihood.”

“The spines on these plants are large and strong enough to puncture a motorbike tyre. Imagine what they do to native fauna and the impact on domestic livestock.”

Through funding from State Natural Resource Management (NRM) sources, GNRBA has been able to work with all the organisations to develop a programme to find and treat plants in the worst affected areas. This has involved having a spraying contractor travelling around the areas finding every individual plant and spraying with a mix of chemicals developed for the purpose of killing the plants in one treatment. This is no easy feat, given some plants are very small and often obscured by the scrub.

As further investigation has been done in the spread of invasive cacti in the Goldfields Nullarbor region, more species have been identified, as well as other infestations not previously identified. With ongoing vigilance by everyone in the region and through ongoing management, maintenance and awareness programmes, the GNRBA hopes to eradicate any invasive cacti from the landscape and prevent further invasion.

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