



OPERATIONAL PLAN

2023-2024



Picture supplied by Gunnadorah Station

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INTRODUCTION

The Goldfields Nullarbor Rangelands Biosecurity Association (GNRBA) 2023-24 operational plan identifies the priorities and actions for the control and management of priority declared pests in the region. GNRBA funds are primarily sourced from the Declared Pest Account (DPA). In addition to the DPA, funds are sourced from state and federal NRM grants, Royalty for Regions (R4R) contracts, local government shires and other stakeholder bodies.

The GNRBA is a not-for-profit organisation formed under the *Associations Incorporation Act 2015* and operates under the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007*. The primary purpose of the GNRBA is the control and management of priority declared species in the Goldfields Nullarbor region, these being Wild Dogs, Large Feral Herbivores (LFH) and weeds. The GNRBA is formally recognised by the Minister of Agriculture as a Recognised Biosecurity Group (RBG), and is managed by a committee of management, which consists of 8 members.

The Goldfields Nullarbor region has significant exposure to UCL and consequent management issues with pests on the extensive pastoral interface, particularly wild dogs and feral camels. Much of this UCL is determined native title and the GNRBA conducts significant Indigenous Engagement activities and partnership arrangements in order to assist in declared pest management and control. The GNRBA works actively with Ngadju, Spinifex, Martu and Birriliburu Traditional Owners and Ranger groups.

The region is also exposed to two state borders – the Northern Territory and South Australia. Road, rail and air corridors enter the GNRBA area of responsibility through a number of corridors, with only limited quarantine control. The GNRBA remains ever vigilant for declared weeds entering WA from interstate, particularly on uncontrolled corridors (eg Great Central Road).

Extensive abandoned settlements and mining operations over the past 130 years have led to major legacy cactus infestations over much of the Goldfields Nullarbor, which is rapidly spreading as conditions improve. Much of this is on UCL.

Ad valorem/cents-in-the-dollar

The GNRBA recommends that the Minister for Agriculture and Food (as per legislation) determines an ad valorem rate on the unimproved land value for Pastoral land in the local government districts of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, Coolgardie, Dundas, Menzies, Leonora, Laverton, Sandstone, Wiluna and Ngaanyatjarra for the financial year commencing 1st July 2023.

OBJECTIVES

- 1) To enable and assist Goldfields Nullarbor landholders and land managers to develop a coordinated approach for declared pest control in their area, in support of what they are required to do as individual land managers.
- 2) To provide the basis for shared responsibility and funding in the control of declared pests in the region, which enables communities and industry to partner with others, including state government agencies, for landscape and established declared pest management.
- 3) To provide a framework to foster efficiency through partnership arrangements to make the best use of skills, funds, capacities, incentives, and regulations to control declared pests.

BACKGROUND

The GNRBA was one of the earliest Recognised Biosecurity Groups (RBG's) formed in Western Australia following the legislative changes from Zone Control Authorities (ZCA's) operating under the Pastoral Lands Board (PLB) to formally operating as a not-for-profit Incorporated Association in 2011. The GNRBA region incorporates approximately 100 pastoral leases and nine local government shires – Kalgoorlie Boulder, Coolgardie, Dundas, Menzies, Leonora, Laverton, Sandstone, Wiluna and Ngaanyatjarra.

The Goldfields Nullarbor region covers an area of 933,814 square kilometres (ie over 93 million hectares and approximately 33% of the West Australian land mass) and has a population of approximately 45,000 people, concentrated mostly in Kalgoorlie Boulder. This region consists of a diverse range of land tenures, including pastoral leases, mining leases, unallocated crown land (UCL), Department of Biosecurity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) reserves, Indigenous Protected Areas (IPA's) and Determined and Undetermined Native Title.

1. Priority Pests

The GNRBA priority declared pests are wild dogs, large feral herbivores, and weeds such as cactus. These declared pests are the main focus of the operational plan. These pests impact significantly on pastoral production and the environment. GNRBA funds alone are not capable of fully controlling these pests, however the GNRBA manages these pests to the best of their ability within the financial confines of the DPA and opportunistic external funding.

While management of declared pests is the responsibility of individual land holders, the GNRBA offers assistance to landholders through best practice community coordinated control programs.

The GNRBA encourages broad scale, coordinated, cooperative and integrated pest management and control, and promotes best practice control methods. It is playing a key regional role in assisting land managers to control high impact declared pests.

1. Committee of Management

The GNRBA Committee of Management (CoM) consists of 8 members, currently 7 Pastoralists and one Associate member as tabled below.

GNRBA COMMITTEE	Term Remaining	Status	Shire
David McQuie (Chair)	1 year AGM 2023	Full Member	Sandstone
Trevor Schutz	1 year AGM 2023	Full member	Laverton
Carol Hodshon	1 year AGM 2023	Full member	Sandstone
Brendan Jones (Vice)	2 years AGM 2024	Full member	Kalgoorlie-Boulder
Nigel Wessels	2 years AGM 2024	Associate member	Kalgoorlie-Boulder
Brett Lewis	2 years AGM 2024	Full member	Wiluna
Justin Stevens (Treasurer)	3 years AGM 2025	Full member	Kalgoorlie-Boulder
Brett Day	3 years AGM 2025	Full member	Kalgoorlie-Boulder

STAKEHOLDERS

The GNRBA stakeholders are numerous, they include, but are not limited to. All relevant Shires, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD), Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions (DBCA), Rangelands NRM (RNRM), Industry Funding Schemes (IFS), TAFE, Licensed Pest Management Technicians (LPMT's), Meat suppliers, Mining companies (including exploration & drilling), Pastoralists, Prospectors, Tourists, Recreational Users, Main Roads, Rail Operators & Transport, Aboriginal Corporations and Ranger groups.

FUNDING

Due to the circumstances resulting from the 2019 Pastoral Land Valuations and the impact this had on the available 2022-2023 DPA funds, the GNRBA requests a DPR increase of 13%. The GNRBA is aware this results in a budget increase of 13% which includes CPI of 6% and due to the sheer scope and geographical distribution of on ground operations requests the return to this budget figure to be able to operate both effectively and efficiently going forward.

Activities within this Operational Plan DPA funding will cost \$747,000, allocated as follows:

Budget Summary	Budget
Wild dog control	\$430,000
Large Feral Herbivore control	\$18,000
Declared Plant control	\$14,000
Administration and Governance	\$285,000
Total expenditure	\$747,000

The GNRBA requests DPA funding to deliver the operational plan in the following months:

1st Quarter (26 th July 2023)	3rd Quarter (6 th March 2024)
\$380,777	\$366,117

State matched funds	\$380,777
Rate revenue (@80% collection)	\$304,621
Forecast unspent DPA	\$-
Additional from existing DPA	\$ 61,496
Total DPA funds available	\$746,894

Note:

- The value of the 1st and 2nd payment in the above table assumes 80% pastoral rates have been received. Only the funds that have been received by the DPA (plus all matched dollars) are available for transfer from DPA to the RBG.
- \$100,000 will come from R4R funding Wild Dogs Grants
- \$200,000 will come through Shire funding and various Grants.

The budget as presented by the Committee of Management

FORECAST BUDGET 2023-2024

GNRBA Programs have been adjusted to accommodate if funds for 2023-2024 experience a similar shortfall as was experienced in previous years. An expectation if further DPR funds are received into the DPA after the 3rd quarter payment then GNRBA may apply for that additional funding into 2024 funding cycle. Outside Funding, Sponsorship, and grants have helped support this budget for 2023-2024 to deliver on requirements. Note: Budget assumes 100% collection of the Declared Pest Rate

PLANNED PROGRAMS 2023-2024 – ALL FUNDING

1. Wild Dogs

Wild Dogs have the most significant impact on pastoral production and profit in the Goldfields Nullarbor Region. They attack small and large stock, causing direct stock losses, and also cause losses through maiming (and consequently commercial value), lambing and mismothering (Influence of the predatory effect) and the high cost of control measures.

The GNRBA utilises an integrated approach to wild dog management including landscape scale community coordinated aerial and ground baiting programs, supply of appropriate traps, baits and training for landholders and employment of LPMT doggers. This is supported by coordinated and cooperative stakeholder contributions (e.g. DBCA and shires) and external funding (e.g. R4R and grants).

Table 1: Wild Dog Program

Actions	Input	Measurement	Budget & Source

<p>Co-ordinated baiting programs & LPMT's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - April - September - Baits available all year round for target specific work 	<p>CEO/EA plan, co-ordinate and deliver programs. Inform & advertise. RCP Permits.</p> <p>LPMT time both dogging and bait prep (harvest, cut, inject, bag & deliver baits). 1080 Signage.</p> <p>Landholders trapping & bait distribution.</p>	<p>No. of participating members</p> <p>Landholder feedback</p> <p>LPMT feedback and Post Activity Reports</p>	<p>Budget: Operational \$680,000</p> <p>Administration & Governance \$123,000</p> <p>Source: 88% DPR 12% R4R</p>
<p>Pastoral Trap Training days</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - April - August 	<p>CEO/EA plan & co-ordinate</p> <p>LPMT prepare trap boxes and deliver training</p>	<p>No. of participating members</p> <p>LPMT & landholder feedback</p>	<p>Budget: \$10,000</p> <p>Source: 100% DPR</p>

The GNRBA budget allocation to wild dog management of 70% (including R4R) reflects the priority of wild dog control due to impact on pastoral production.

2. Large Feral Herbivores (LFH)

Large feral herbivores (feral camels, horses, and donkeys) are having a significant impact on pastoral production and the environment in the Goldfields Nullarbor. They compete directly with stock for food and water, spread weeds, contribute to soil erosion, damage pastoral infrastructure including fences and water points, and foul natural waters.

The GNRBA assists with an annual LFH aerial shoot in the area of highest LFH impact. Traditionally this has been within the Shire of Wiluna which has been a broad scale, coordinated program in partnership with Pastoralists, Wiluna Shire, Desert Support Services (DSS) and Tarlka Matuwa Piarku Aboriginal Corporation (TMPAC).

It is essential the GNRBA continues to source appropriate partnerships to ensure the ongoing development of aerial programs within the region. These multiple stakeholder programs are very expensive, require significant planning and strategic

on ground operations. GNRBA are delivering detail and funding for specific short notice programs at times of emergency impact from feral camels.

Additionally, the GNRBA provides a limited ammunition subsidy to any pastoralists located along the desert interface that experience high level LFH impact.

Table 2: Large Feral Herbivore Program

Actions	Input	Measurement	Budget & Source
LFH aerial cull programs reactive to impact with stakeholders Continue to source appropriate partnerships to ensure development of programs in response to demands	CEO Plan & Mentor Accredited shooters & aircraft Landholder time and support. CEO	Post activity report Numbers culled Landholder feedback Partnerships developed Secured funding	Budget: Operational \$25,000 Administration & Governance \$15,000 Source: 100% DPR
Pastoralist aerial or ground shoots when/if required reactive to impact. Based on strict GNRBA allocation criteria.	CEO planning & operational/ safety guidelines LPMT time to assist with program Landholder time and support	Pre-Activity Plan Post activity report Numbers culled Landholder feedback	Budget: Operational \$25,000 Administration & Governance \$15,000 Source: 100% DPR
Pastoral ammunition subsidy with GNRBA responsive to sudden impact culls.	CEO allocate and record	Numbers culled Landholder feedback	Budget: Operational \$10,000 Source: 100% DPR

Eight percent of the GNRBA budget is allocated to LFH control, which continues to be supplemented by significant shire and stakeholder contributions for use on aerial shooting operations.

3. Priority Declared Weeds

Declared Cactus, Parkinsonia, Bathurst Burr and Onion Weed are the GNRBA priority weeds. These weeds spread quickly by a variety of means, outcompete native vegetation and reduce the productive grazing capacity of pastoral lands.

With grant assistance from State NRM, Rangelands NRM and local Shires, the GNRBA have undertaken successful and ongoing success with its cactus biological control programs. Managing and distributing host specific cochineal, the GNRBA, participating shires and pastoralists have successfully introduced various cochineal biotypes to 4 major cactus species to date. Species targeted will continue to diversify as the cochineal species becomes available.

The GNRBA conducts numerous declared weed spraying activities utilising a qualified LPMT weed spraying contractor in partnership with external funding bodies (eg shires and grants). The GNRBA also supports land holders with limited herbicide reimbursement for widespread weed control.

Table 3: Weeds Program

Actions	Input	Measurement	Budget & Source
Ongoing management of existing cactus biological control programs (Aug-Sept & Mar-May)	CEO/EA co-ordinate and manage programs. CEO train relevant stakeholders Landholders time	Regular visits to sites to monitor & manage Landholder/stakeholder feedback	Budget: Operational \$102,000 Administration & Governance \$31,000 Source: 100% DPR Input from partnerships/external support yet to be identified.
Onion weed trials, evaluation, and study	CEO & Pastoralist monitor sites	Regular visits to sites to monitor success Report on results	

(Throughout the year) work with CSIRO and State NRM re biological controls.			
Bathurst Burr trials Develop & manage potential new programs (Throughout the year)	CEO & Pastoralist monitor and report on sites	Regular visits to sites to monitor success Report on results	
Chemical subsidy (As requested, generally spring/autumn)	CEO allocate and record	Monitoring of sprayed site Landholder feedback	Budget: \$10,000 Source: 100% DPR

The GNRBA will allocate 11% of its budget to priority declared weed control, however, continues to rely heavily on external funding for extra assistance in the costs associated with the management of priority declared weeds, particularly cactus.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The timeline incorporating GNRBA core activities is presented in Table 4 below

Table 4: Timeline of Core Activities

Month	Planned Activity	Medium/Consultation	Purpose
July	Commence reporting & financial audit Autumn Newsletter (March, April, May- out June)	CEO, Financial Officer, committee, accountant, auditor GNRBA members	Governance Pastoralist awareness
August	Committee of Management meeting	CoM	Update CoM & request input to high level operations.

	Cactus & Cochineal monitoring & distribution	CEO/EA, Landowners, Shires & stakeholders	Cactus management
September	Ground Baiting program	Pastoralists, media, shires & roadhouses, (3-14 days prior)	Wild dog management
	LPMT engagement as required	Pastoralist & LPMT	Wild dog management
	Winter Newsletter (June, July, August- out Sept)	GNRBA members	Pastoralist awareness
	Trap training	GNRBA members	Pastoralist engagement & training
October	Annual Report and Audit	GNRBA members & DPIRD	Governance
	AGM & Field Days	Pastoralists & relevant stakeholders (DPIRD, RNRM, Shires & industry)	Pastoralist & stakeholder engagement & training
	LPMT engagement as required	Pastoralist & LPMT	Wild dog management
November	Small ground baiting available to members if required	Pastoralists, media, shires, and roadhouses (3-14 days prior)	Wild dog management
	LFH Aerial program as required	Relevant stakeholders	LFH management
	LPMT engagement as required	Pastoralist & LPMT	Wild dog management
December	Operational Plan/Budget	GNRBA CoM & DPIRD	Governance
	Committee of Management (CoM) meeting	CoM	GNRBA CoM engagement & input
	LFH control as required (ground operations only)	Pastoralists, LPMT's, ammunition & meat suppliers	LFH Management
	LPMT engagement as required	Pastoralist & LPMT	Wild dog management
	Spring Newsletter (Sep, Oct, Nov -out Dec)	GNRBA members	Pastoral awareness

January	LFH control as required (ground operations only)	Pastoralists, LPMT's, ammunition & meat suppliers	LFH Management
	LPMT engagement as required	Pastoralist & LPMT	Wild dog management
February	Committee of Management (CoM) meeting	CoM	Update CoM & request input to high level operations
	LFH control as required (ground operations only)	Pastoralists, LPMT's, ammunition & meat suppliers	LFH Management
	LPMT engagement as required	Pastoralist & LPMT	Wild dog management
March	Ground baiting	Pastoralists, media, shires & roadhouses (3-14 days prior)	Wild dog management
	LFH control as required ground	Pastoralists, LPMT's, ammunition & meat suppliers	LFH management
	Cactus & Cochineal monitoring & distribution	Landowner's, shires & stakeholders	Cactus management
	LPMT engagement as required	Pastoralist & LPMT	Wild dog management
	Summer Newsletter (Dec, Jan, Feb- out Mar)	GNRBA Members	Pastoralist awareness
April	Trap training	GNRBA members	Pastoralist engagement & training
	Committee of Management (CoM) meeting	CoM	GNRBA CoM engagement & input
	Cactus & Cochineal monitoring & distribution	Landowner's, shires & stakeholders	Cactus management
	LPMT engagement as required	Pastoralist & LPMT	Wild dog management

June	Ground baiting made available for members on request	Pastoralists, media, shires & roadhouses (3-14 days prior)	Wild dog management
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ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE

Administration and Governance of the GNRBA consumes 32% of the budget, which includes a full time Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and a part time Executive Assistant which the GNRBA has found to be critical for success as it has evolved. One of the primary roles of the CEO is to source and secure external funding to supplement the DPA. (as per both of the budgets above).

The GNRBA will prepare an audited financial statement and annual report covering the implementation of its 2023/2024 Operational Plan and Budget by 31 October 2024.

LINKAGES/ALIGNMENTS

Links to Regional, State, and National management plans:

The GNRBA Operational Plan is aligned with:

Rangelands NRM Strategic Plan

National Wild Dog Action Plan (2020-2030)

WA Wild Dog Action Plan (2016-2024)

Rangelands Wild Dog Policy (2005)

Wild Dog Management Best Practice Manual (2006)

National Codes of Practice for species management

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) for ground and aerial shooting

Attachments:



GNRBA Wild Dog
Management Plan 20:
2020-2024



GNRBA LFH
Management Plan 20:
2020-2024