

**GOLDFIELDS NULLARBOR RANGELANDS
BIOSECURITY ASSOCIATION INC.**

ANNUAL REPORT

For 2017 – 2018 FINANCIAL YEAR

Prepared by

ROSS WOOD



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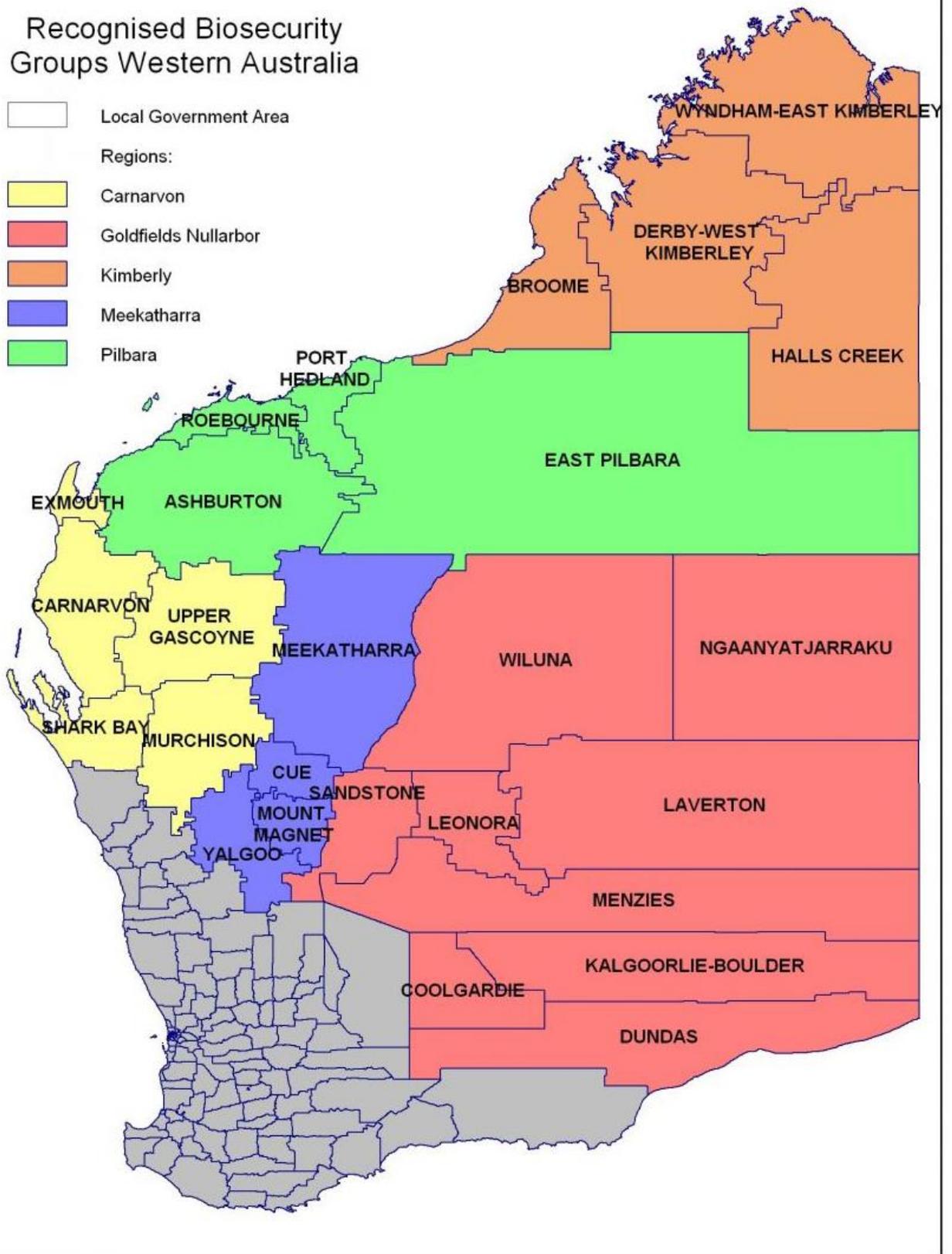
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Recognised Biosecurity Groups Western Australia

Local Government Area

Regions:

- Carnarvon
- Goldfields Nullarbor
- Kimberly
- Meekatharra
- Pilbara



1. INTRODUCTION

The Goldfields Nullarbor Rangelands Biosecurity Association Inc. (GNRBA) is unique in rangeland management across Western Australia. It has a huge area to service and is working hard to provide a top class service to ratepayers. It is now well recognised as being a leader in the RBG's in WA.

The GNRBA Inc formally became operational on 1st July 2011. At this time it took over the APB Zone 9 operations.

GNRBA Management Committee

The GNRBA is managed day to day by Ross M Wood as Chief Executive Officer and Michelle Donaldson as Operations Manager.

Committee of Management (CoM) Meetings are held face to face or phone hook- up as required.

The Management committee for 2017/18 was comprised thus:

Trevor Hodshon	3 year term	Chairman
Amanda Day	3 year term	
Nigel Wessels	1year Term	Associate Member DPaW
Julian Jones	2 year Term	
Justin Stevens	2 year Term	Hon. Treasurer/Secretary
Brett Day	2 year Term	
Ross Wood	1 year Term	Chief Executive Officer
Brendan Jones	1year Term	
Jack Carmody	1 year Term appointed by CoM	
Edmund Forrester	1 year Term appointed by CoM	

Trevor Hodshon was elected as Chairman of GNRBA Inc by Committee of Management for 2017/18.

The GNRBA Inc. is the formally recognised Biosecurity Group and as such is authorised to set Pest rate applicable to pastoral leases.

This rate is matched by State Government. This allows the GNRBA to effectively double pastoralist's rates to assist with pest control.

Importantly the GNRBA partners with Shires and others like Rangelands NRM WA, to leverage funds and further increase its ability to provide services.

The role of the GNRBA Inc. is to assist pastoralists to control pests and weeds. It is unable to eliminate pastoralists control efforts.

The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions DBCA (formally DPaW and DEC) is an Associated Member. It is the responsible state government department for managing wild dogs and

pests on Unallocated Crown Land (UCL) and Department Of Parks And Wildlife estate. To achieve this DBCA undertakes wild dog control in the region and also assists in funding aerial baiting programs in the region.

To compliment Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions work the GNRBA Inc. allocates funds for two part time doggers (LPMT's) to carry out wild dog control alongside private properties. The majority of wild dog control work by GNRBA is required on UCL with the DBCA in coordinated effort. They also assist the GNRBA to undertake some wild dog control programs on the Nullarbor.

During the 2017/18 financial year, approx \$94,000 funding through the Royalties for Regions program was again available to the group. The GNRBA Inc needed to contract to supply before it could access these funds. This funding has been used to support aerial work hitherto not funded. This funding has been renewed for another 2 years. Like many Royalties for regions programs it is unlikely to be renewed past the current contract.

R4R funding is a very useful external funding source and is very much appreciated. It is for use in UCL alongside small stock properties and has been used well in aerial activities on the Nullarbor and increasingly in Kalgoorlie and Sandstone areas.

The GNRBA needs to plan to continue this work without this line of funding into the future.

This document reports on the GNRBA Inc. activities and will not detail the extent of Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions wild dog control activities.

Currently Associate members of the GNRBA are Dundas Shire, Leonora Shire, Wiluna Shire, Menzies Shire and Laverton Shire. It is hoped that the other Shires in the area can be encouraged to participate more fully.

Work to encourage such participation by engagement with the Goldfields Voluntary Organisation of Councils (GVROC) and individual shires by the Chief Executive Officer has been ongoing.

The Chief Executive Officer has been active in working with Menzies, Leonora, Coolgardie, Dundas, Laverton, City of Kalgoorlie/Boulder and Wiluna Shires particularly in relation to Invasive Cactus control.

Importantly the GNRBA continues to engage with Windidda, Pinjin and Adelong Stations to achieve more integrated pest programs. The GNRBA has also established a good working relationship with Aboriginal native title holders including Spinifex, Birriliburu and Ngadju.

The GNRBA also works with and supports Kalgoorlie Boulder Urban Landcare Group (KBULG) to encourage cactus eradication in City Kalgoorlie Boulder. These relationships are really assisting GNRBA achieve more credibility and recognition.

A continuing partnership with Rangelands NRM WA to secure funding has been an important addition to the GNRBA influence in the region.

The GNRBA works closely with and alongside the DPIRD Invasive Species team and acknowledges the considerable help and advice provided by the Department in all facets of our operation. This has been of great mutual benefit to both organisations.

2. GNRBA Inc AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- Initiate, promote and foster the control of declared animal and plant pests
- Encourage all persons to adopt sound biosecurity practices
- Prevent land and biodiversity degradation to protect our resources
- Foster sustainable development & production
- Act as the “Voice” for landholders (pastoralists and others) in the region

3. ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS 2017– 2018

GNRBA Inc purchased about 350,000 fresh meat baits from a number of suppliers at a cost of \$300,000. This was mostly injected with “1080” and delivered to our Kalgoorlie Freezer and/or direct to properties. The GNRBA organised four sponsored ground baitings and several aerial baitings including one for eastern Nullarbor on Unmanaged Crown Land using R4R funding.

Very importantly the GNRBA recognises the difficulties around making baits for pastoralists and has this last year had Teen Ryan, Andrew Parker and Brett Day produce readymade baits for distribution.

Good accountability systems continue to be implemented. Mike Hutson accountant based in Kalgoorlie oversees the Association finances which are now complicated with so many grant funding sources. We achieved a great deal of Independence from DPIRD by moving into our own Office with our group accountant Mike Hutson. This Office is located at 29 Charlotte St. Kalgoorlie where we have good facilities, office space and enjoy a cheaper rental.

This has been a good result for the GNRBA.

Alongside the above move a special grant has enabled the GNRBA to employ Michelle Donaldson as Executive Assistant.

This has been a great step forward to have the CEO have permanent operational ability in Kalgoorlie.

Michelle along with an Operational workload has achieved great results by dealing with the enormous number of S7 Permits which means that pastoralists have not been burdened with the renewal process and reduced Teen Ryan’s workload so she can concentrate on ground dog control activities.

Michelle has also put an enormous effort into making the required changes to Constitution that ALL Associations have to deal with this year. These changes have been reviewed by CoM, endorsed and adopted. The Constitution will be posted to all members for their information. The Changes relate mostly to accountability of CoM.

K Mader and Teen Ryan are the Association's LPMT's (doggers) operating in the Sandstone, Kalgoorlie, Laverton and Nullarbor areas primarily.

Each year we continue to upgrade our S7 facilities. Teen Ryan is our S7 distributor. The GNRBA independence from DPIRD in this area is now complete. Two years ago the GNRBA also undertook to train LPMT Teen Ryan in weed control. This better utilizes her abilities whilst travelling around properties. She can now spray weeds and cactus at remote sites along Transline such as Forrest and further East at Reid.

The GNRBA also been partnering with the Shires where possible to achieve cactus, Large Feral Herbivore and wild dog control.

The GNRBA CEO continues to engage and support other RBG's and also worked to better understand the complexities of Native title possession and engage at some level with Spinifex traditional owners on issues such as camel control, weeds and baiting. Previously we have engaged with Birriliburru and encouraged cactus control projects at Wiluna.

The GNRBA is an incorporated body. Rules of Association are followed. The Goldfields Nullarbor Rangelands Biosecurity Association Inc Inc (GNRBA) trading as the GNRBA operates using the Pest Rate, matching Government Funds and allocated R4R funds.

It also attracts and acquits special purpose grants.

2017/18 Grants and Projects

- **Menzies** The GNRBA has continued to work with Menzies Shire to continue work at Menzies Tip and Kookynie. Currently we are working to establish a small greenhouse at Menzies to bulk up a new imported cochineal bug specific to the Hudson Pear Cactus at this site. This should if successful negate the need for further spraying. The important issue here is that the GNRBA has encouraged the active participation of the shire in managing this problem.
- **Leonora** The Leonora Shire continues to work with GNRBA to deal with cactus in the area. The Leonora Shire assisted with a \$20,000 grant. We are currently working with Leonora Shire to complete our work in Leonora Shire areas such as Gwalia. The Rangelands NRM WA grant to further spread cochineal from Tarmoola HS site to all known coral cactus sites in shire is complete and we hope to see a significant improvement in the Clover Downs Station area where the cactus was spreading down toward Lake Raeside. The impact of this cactus moving down into the Nullarbor along this vector would be frightening.

- **Wiluna** Mac Jensen through his involvement with Wiluna School and old TAFE facilities has done an outstanding job at identifying legacy cactus sites in the area and utilizing his students to mark with survey pegs individual juvenile cactus so that the older students can spray alongside indigenous rangers. Michelle Donaldson and I inspected with him these sites recently and we were absolutely enthused about his and the students work. They have engaged with Lake Way station where cactus was moving along a cattle pad out from the old Mission site into the Station.

- **R4R Wild Dog Project**

This is an ongoing R4R “dogger” program which funds the GNRBA to use funds primarily for bait purchase and aerial baiting in UCL alongside small stock properties. There is a significant inequity in overall program which the CEO attempted to correct whilst he was within the WA Wild Dog Alliance but was unsuccessful. The MRBA receives some 2.5 times per annum our allocation, and Carnarvon 2.0 times our allocation. It has been recently renewed for another two years and funds of approx \$90K per annum are available. The GNRBA partners in this grant last financial year to continue the aerial baiting program. New requirements of this grant are that the “Feral Scan” app will need to be used rather than traditional data loggers. This has been problematic and we need to transfer data to Feral scan from data loggers. The CEO needs to report to DPIRD on grant.

- **Tarmoola** The original Rangelands NRM WA grant has been acquitted and report submitted. More work on this site is yet to be done. The GNRBA initially released the cochineal bug at Tarmoola and whilst the initial results seemed disappointing I can confirm that the CoM Cacti tour to Menzies and Leonora was very pleased to see the cochineal was working so well that the Cactus once rampant, is under pressure to survive. As detailed above we have had Steve Javonovich both spray and distribute the cochineal to all known coral cactus sites in Leonora/Sandstone areas..

This is a good news story that we hope shows light at the end of the Tunnel. Work is now being done to introduce other bio controls for Cacti to the region. The next likely project will be at the Mt. Ida /Copperfield Riverina Pear infestation and later to the Hudson Pear infestations at Menzies and Kangaroo Hills Coolgardie.

- **R4R Research Cacti Grant** This is a \$158,000 R4R Grant over 3 years was to establish potential to utilize drones to identify and map known cacti infestations to assist control. This work has now been completed and Erin Gorter has prepared the final report. Early evidence suggests that during the period of grant technology progressed rapidly and it is now possible to use such technology to assist weed and predator control. Further work to utilize this information is being pursued.

- **Railroading the Cactus** This \$30,000 State NRM grant was to deal with Legacy Cactus from Transline settlements. This work commenced in Sept 2015. It is now completed and acquitted. Follow up work has been done by Teen Ryan working on Transline infestation clean-ups. Disappointingly we have seen regrowth at Rawlinna. This follow up work will best be done as plants gain height in maturity.
- **DAFWA Capability Grant** This \$130,000 Grant has assisted the GNRBA with getting into our own office and employing Michelle Donaldson as Executive Assistant to commence developing the succession capacity of the organisation.

Launch our GNRBA website and email capacity, upgrade our filing systems, purchase a bait trailer, organise an automated aerial flight plan, spray African boxthorn at Eucla and several field trips such as the Menzies/Leonora Cacti Tour for CoM

This has been acquitted.

- **CELL FENCE Business Cases**

The GNRBA received funding through DAFWA to employ “AgKnowledge” as a contractor to develop Cell Fence Business cases for Kalgoorlie Pastoral Alliance Cluster Fence Cell and one in Carnarvon near Meedo Station. These business cases can be adapted for other cells. This work has been completed. The State Government has also developed a Rangelands Cell Fencing Program. The Kalgoorlie Pastoral Alliance has been able as a result to get partial funding for their project.

- **DPIRD Capability Grant** A \$60,000 grant over two years for assisting CEO succession. Michelle Donaldson has done a fantastic job of dealing with a backlog of “S7 Permits” and is right up to date with only a handful to do this next year. She is handling the operational matters and quickly picking up all matters.
- **Rangelands NRM WA Grant** \$15,000 each to run this AGM/Innovation Conference on the strength of last year’s event. Rangelands NRM WA has also assisted us financially to run this event this year. Waratah and Elders are supporting our Annual Dinner, Gallagher has sponsored our lunch today and we have other sponsors for our Dinner event

- **WA Wild Dog Alliance**

The CEO was an active member within the now suspended WA Wild Dog Alliance which was a recommendation of the WA Wild Dog Action Plan. Much valuable work was done in this forum we are disappointed that the State Government has largely dismissed the concept of coordinated effort.

Projects in progress

- Our **bait manufacturing** is now mostly done by Andrew Parker and Brett Day.

This efficient process is producing good quality baits and reduced the logistical nightmare of bait racks to a workable operation that Michelle Donaldson is coordinating.

Andrew Parker is developing our Cryovac bait capability. I personally believe that this will be a great breakthrough in efficiency.

Wild Dog Baiting Operations

Aerial baiting was conducted within the GNRBA area of operations this financial year and wide spread ground baiting was carried out by pastoralists, DBCA, and GNRBA Doggers.

Once procured, fresh meat and baits are stored in a large freezer for use by pastoralists and our LPMT's.

The GNRBA has purchased some shelf ready 1080 baits to use this summer where bungarra activity seems to diminish the effectiveness of fresh meat baiting.

DPIRD coordinates an on-line training program to allow all pastoralists to be able to lay "1080". This will allow more flexibility but Pastoralists should ensure good 1080 protocols are maintained.

The GNRBA is concerned that any failure to adhere to protocols may lead to the loss of "1080" as a management tool. As such the GNRBA is maintaining a public awareness campaign by media and public notices and encourages pastoralists to be vigilant toward advising neighbours of baiting activities and sticking to the rules of using "1080", including appropriate signage.

Increasingly the CoM has been aware that our focus on massive baitings at great cost needs review.

We have been working on a cryvac bait product for more strategic baiting and this is proving popular. There is a need to get the product both fresh and dry enough to retain all 1080. We are getting there and are further looking at provision of locked freezers to properties as an opportunity.

Further to better enhance our overall capacity we have developed a trap box which is lockable and safe. It includes all requirements for setting five permanent traps and will be demonstrated by Teen Ryan at our field days. We hope that this box valued at \$1,000 will become the cornerstone of our wild dog effort and better engage pastoralists with visible progress. We are hoping to fund this with grants and our wild dog bait budget.



Teen Ryan, James Wood and Benny Khurt at Rawlinna Station learning to trap with one of our new trap boxes.

Aerial Baiting

The GNRBA coordinated aerial baitings in December 2017 on Nullarbor, Kalgoorlie and Northern Goldfields and in June 2018 on the Eastern Nullarbor, Laverton, Wiluna, Leonora and Sandstone areas.

The December aerial baiting was incorporated with December Ground baiting and the June baiting was paid for by GNRBA DPA and R4R funding to distribute baits.

I have advised the CoM that we should aim this year for a Nullarbor Aerial June/Dec Bait and a June Northern Goldfields aerial baiting to conserve resources. R4R has allowed us to do a second Nullarbor run. Bungarra's eating baits in the summer months is not an issue on Nullarbor.

A GNRBA sponsored pastoral aerial baiting for June 2019 has been budgeted for and will be coordinated by GNRBA.

If suitable contractors can be sourced and baits can be delivered cost effectively then aerial baiting is an important tool that can be used to target areas that are inaccessible to ground based staff. In

conjunction with DPIRD the GNRBA will continue to plan and budget for aerial baiting operations throughout the effected landscape.

Increasingly these aerial baitings require more and more effort to ensure good results.

Feral Herbivore Control

The GNRBA again conducted successful and economical aerial Large Herbivore shoot jointly funded and in partnership with the Wiluna Shire and GNRBA using the DAFWA Shoot team.

1,246 LFH Oct 2014	31 LFH/hr @\$37/animal
1,858 LFH April 2015	37 LFH/hr @\$36/animal
1,162 LFH October 2015	25LFH/hr @\$54/animal
882 LFH October 2016	20.5 LFH @\$50/animal
740 LFH Nov 2017	20.5 LFH @ \$61/animal

In Nov 2012 The Australian Feral Camel Project also shot 1,591 LFH in this area

Total LFH culled in this area in 4 years has been 7,419.

It is estimated 1,500 LFH ground shot by pastoralists in this period in addition to the above.

Planning is again well underway for the next aerial shoot in Nov /Dec 2019

Dependent upon results it may be sensible to suspend shooting for a year. It is more economical to shoot higher densities by air and low density by ground.

It is also true that it is becoming increasingly difficult to get appropriate shooting team, and comply with requirements.

An Ammunition Allowance of up to \$500/per property for those properties on UCL interface facing extreme hardship from Large Feral Herbivores is available by discussing with Chief Executive Officer.

There is increasingly a need to operate a shoot on the Nullarbor to clean up a significant LFH issue with Camels and horses. The CEO has been engaging with the Native holders in the area and a group called "10 Deserts" to find an economic solution.

On the 18th October 2018, DPIRD is conducting a LFH workshop at Tower hotel which will further allow a better plan to develop in this area. Michelle and I will attend and participate.

Mining Company Support

It is hoped that GNRBA Inc will garner support from Mining companies in the area. Their involvement will greatly assist the GNRBA provide a more comprehensive service. Wild dog, Weed control and quarantine issues for earthmoving plant are issues the GNRBA Inc. considers very important.

In 2017 Michelle Donaldson addressed the Laverton Mining Liaison meeting at Laverton Shire. This was a good forum to get our messages across. It is hoped that this can be repeated. The CEO was invited this year but was unable to attend. She also attended and addressed the GVROC meeting in Esperance.

4. WILD DOG ACTIVITY and REPORTED STOCK LOSSES

Wild dogs continued to impact on pastoral activities across the Goldfields Nullarbor region during 2017/2018. During this period reported stock deaths from Wild Dog attacks have continued to affect confidence in the GNRBA effort and pastoralist enterprises.

Reported wild dog activity in 2017/18 occurred across the entire GNRBA area.

Except for the Nullarbor, Kalgoorlie and Sandstone area small stock activity has ceased largely as a result of an inability to consistently control wild dogs and eagles. Clearly exclusion fencing is so important in this scenario.

5. NON TARGET DEATHS

Several non-target deaths have been reported this year. These are investigated by DPIRD, DBCA and Health to ensure protocols have been adhered to. It is essential that "1080" is used carefully. These investigations are an enormous waste of very limited resources and the GNRBA wishes to ensure that "1080" Signage is obvious. It is a requirement that all public entrances to properties must be adequately signed. The GNRBA have had stencils made up to assist in the process. Stickers are available from Teen Ryan/Michelle Donaldson to freshen up signage.

We must all realise that there are many in the community that simply do not care or acknowledge that we need 1080. It is one of the few remaining tools to deal with wild dogs.

We all must ensure that we are cognisant of this fact and ensure we treat 1080 with respect and within the Code of practice.

6. WEED CONTROL

As reported last year (2016/17), the GNRBA has begun producing a weed management plan for GNRBA Groups area. This is essential when applying for funding and assistance. We are continuing to find a way to get a good plan built for our area. We are of course working hard and kicking goals on the Cacti front.

We have previously had Bathurst Burr meetings in Kalgoorlie and at Rawlinna. It is anticipated that when complete the management plan will give pastoralists guidance on how to deal with weeds issues and compliance.

The GNRBA has continued to manage many cactus projects in the region and brought on board many partners in the process. This has assisted us to gain credibility in the community.

The GNRBA manages a weed chemical subsidy process that reimburses pastoralists up to \$500/property for dealing with declared weeds such as Bathurst Burr.

To apply for this assistance please contact Chief Executive Officer.

7. FINANCES

The GNRBA has managed funding and expenditure of \$1,004,434.77 this financial year using its traditional rate base and matched funding to leverage R4R funding, grants and Shire contributions.

These arrangements are managed day to day by the Chief Executive Officer, overseen by the Treasurer. The GNRBA uses accountant Mike Hutson to manage accounting, cross check banking and Pat Leighton FCA for Audits.

The 2017/2018 Financial statements are being Audited and I am confident they will be found to be correct and in order.

The GNRBA continues to press for a Biosecurity Levy on all Shire rates to better fund its work into the future. This way Pastoralists will not be the only ones paying for everyone's usage of the rangelands.

Grants have been a tool for assisting the GNRBA to achieve credibility and runs on the board.

We need now I believe to focus somewhat on being an effective service provider to ensure our funding delivers what we need.

This is a far better business plan than working with grants.

8. CONCLUSION

The 2017 -2018 year has seen the group continue to complete its financial and operational independence process and has positioned itself to secure some extra funding through the R4R project, Rangelands NRM WA and other Federal Government Grants.

The Association contracts a private consultant Erin Gorter to assist in funding, development and acquittal of projects. Erin is well connected and a great help to CEO in management of projects. Her help organising today is evidence of the quality of both Michelle's and her work.

We have our Office in Charlotte St Kalgoorlie and employed Michelle Donaldson to take up the Operational role and administration. This has allowed the Board and CEO to better plan for CEO succession planned for Dec. 2018

The GNRBA Committee of Management adopts a proactive approach to securing funding to assist pastoralists and land managers in the region.

There are still processes regarding provision of Operational Plans that the GNRBA has to comply with to access the matched government funding.

Wild Dog activity over the area continues to have a serious impact and more resources need to be made available to help in bring the impacts of wild dogs to a manageable level in the Associations' area of operations.

The Association's Committee of Management is mindful that it does not become complacent and that the level of involvement from all parties is maintained across the whole landscape.

Resource levels need to be increased; relationships built on and clear management and business plans developed.

The GNRBA continues to deliver quality results to the livestock industry within the Goldfields Nullarbor. These include;

- Continual development of a 3 year management plan.
- Encouragement of members to participate on Management committee and to use their abilities to build the GNRBA Inc. effectiveness.

The GNRBA recognises the need to actively engage Department of Biosecurity Conservation and Attractions and having Nigel Wessels DBCA Regional manager on the CoM is essential to have him play an active role in this partnership.

The GNRBA Inc. has had a positive effect upon wild dog predation during the 2017-2018 financial year. The GNRBA Inc has worked hard to reduce the impact of wild dogs, camels and weeds on pastoral enterprises; it has secured substantial funding until 2019.

Increasingly the GNRBA needs to find ways to address the issue of large herbivores (camels and horses).It has been endeavouring to affect control programs in the interface between UCL and pastoral properties by working together with the Wiluna Shire and pastoralists.

This year we have better engaged with Native Title holders in Wiluna area.

Native Title determinations do have an impact on our abilities to operate in UCL

The GNRBA continues to expand its operations into the control of Invasive cactus in GNRBA area and has applied for several grants to assist in this work.

DPIRD continues to be in a time of change and our reliance on the department has diminished. We are probably better placed than some areas as our RBG development has been more advanced.

Finally.

Succession. I have been leading the GNRBA for a very long time. I advised the CoM that I wished to step down from this role several years ago as I feel there is a need for reenergizing the GNRBA.

As part of this process, Michelle Donaldson has been learning the ropes and her remuneration has been supported by special purposed grants.

The GNRBA CoM this year allowed me to take a retreat and manage Rawlinna station for some months, alongside my responsibilities within the GNRBA. This has been a very useful arrangement and has allowed Michelle to take more control.

Sadly this year has also been a difficult year personally for me and I thank the Committee and indeed our membership for their help and understanding at this time.

I am considering along with the CoM if there is a role in managing the Finances of GNRBA into the future until this role can be further delegated. I consider that the CEO role is quite extensive and splitting roles will be helpful.

Ross Wood

CEO GNRBA Inc.

14th Oct 2018