

GOLDFIELDS NULLARBOR RANGELANDS BIOSECURITY ASSOCIATION INC.

ANNUAL REPORT

For 2019 - 2020 FINANCIAL YEAR

Prepared by

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GNRBA AGM Chairman's Report 2020

Welcome and thank you all for attending our 9th Annual General Meeting as the GNRBA.

The GNRBA continues to grow and evolve as an association which contributes to the organisation being recognised as a leader in our field of expertise. This is achieved with a small but dedicated team of individuals consisting of the Chief Executive Officer Michelle Donaldson, Financial Officer Ross Wood, Project Officer Erin Gorter, S7 and senior Licensed Pest Management Technician Teen Ryan and the GNRBA committee.

Additionally, our continued growth would not be possible without the Partnerships sought and nurtured throughout the year with the likes of Local and State Government Departments and numerous Consultants. We would not be as successful in our endeavours without the input from these people.

The fundamental challenges for the GNRBA are the area of responsibility (933,000 sq km), land tenure (Pastoral, mining, Native Title & UCL), the very different fundamental objectives of land and lease owners and finally, the limited funding available in which to implement effective pest management programs.

The majority of GNRBA funding is received through the set biosecurity rate which is matched by State Government, this is known as the 'Declared Pest Account'. In addition to this, funding from other sources include, but are not limited to, State and Local Governments, State NRM, Industry and Business and support from other like-minded individuals and groups.

The GNRBA has again had a very busy year with the large majority of our funding going into wild dog control, Large Feral Herbivores and cactus. I would also like to mention the time and financial contributions that many pastoralists put into the biosecurity efforts in the Rangelands. The GNRBA objective is to support pastoralists in the management of pests on Pastoral lands and it is acknowledged and appreciated the contribution many of our members make to ensuring to the best of our ability, our most notorious pests are kept at manageable levels.

All projects for the 2019-2020 year are on schedule and are at various stages of acquittal. For a comprehensive run down on all projects and activities undertaken by the GNRBA please refer to the Annual Report which will be available in hard copy at the AGM and will be emailed to all members by the end of November.

COVID-19 has not directly impacted greatly on the GNRBA or it's members day to day operations. Interestingly, due to the State Governments encouragement for the public to travel within and around Western Australia, members have reported a significant increase in camping and recreational prospecting on Pastoral country. This lack of appreciation and protocol from the general public in regards to accessing Pastoral country has increased the risks carried by Pastoralists around maintaining biosecurity controls and an increased vigilance required when undertaking daily operations.

Again I would like to thank all those that are present and all those that have assisted the GNRBA this year and in previous years to maintain the high standards that we and others have come to expect from a professional association.

Trevor Hodshon

Goldfields Nullarobr Rangelands Biosecurity Association (GNRBA) Inc.

CEO ANNUAL REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The Goldfields Nullarbor Rangelands Biosecurity Association Inc. (GNRBA) is a non-profit Incorporated Association. It trades as the GNRBA and operates using the Pest Rate, matching Government Funds and allocated Royalties for Regions (R4R) funds. Additionally, it continually attracts and acquits special purpose grants.

The GNRBA formally became operational on 1st July 2011. At this time, it took over the APB Zone 9 operations. Since then, the GNRBA has continued to evolve as an organisation and has learnt the necessity of flexibility to reflect the needs of its members.

The GNRBA is unique in rangeland management across Western Australia. It has a huge area to service and works hard to provide a quality service to ratepayers. It is now well recognised as being a leader amongst the Recognised Biosecurity Groups (RBG's) in WA.

The GNRBA is overseen by a Committee of Management (CoM) under the direction of the GNRBA Constitution. Committee meetings are held face to face or via phone hook- up every quarter.

2019/20 Committee of Management:

Justin Stevens 3 year Term Hon. Treasurer/Secretary

Brett Day 3 year Term

Nigel Wessels 2 year Term Associate Member (DBCA)

Brendan Jones 2 year Term

Edmund Forrester 2 year Term

Trevor Hodshon 1 year term Chairman

Amanda Day 1 year term Associate Member (Elders)

The GNRBA is managed day to day by Michelle Donaldson as Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Ross Wood in a part time capacity as Financial Officer, Erin Gorter as Project Officer and Teen Ryan as the S7 licensee and Licensed Pest Management Technician (LPMT) and LPMT co-ordinator. Mike Hutson Accountants continues to oversee the Association's finances which, over time, have become more complicated with an increasing number of grant funding sources. The many and varied projects and activities the GNRBA co-ordinate and manage and the lack of administration support for the CEO currently leaves a gap in the on ground operations but this has been addressed and we look forward to the position being filled by the end of 2020.

The GNRBA is the formally recognised Biosecurity Group for this region and as such is authorised to set the pest rate applicable to pastoral leases. This rate is matched by State Government monies. This allows the GNRBA to effectively double pastoralist's rates to assist with pest control.

Importantly, the GNRBA partners with Shires and other organisations such as Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) and Rangelands Natural Resource Management (RNRM), to leverage funds and further increase its ability to provide services.

The GNRBA CEO sits on the board of the Industry Funding Scheme (Sheep and Goats) which provides additional insights into government funding structures and gives the ability to have input into industry on a broader scale and build networks. This is an important role for the GNRBA.

The role of the GNRBA is to assist pastoralists to control pests and weeds. It is not able to, nor are we here to, replace pastoralists' control efforts.

The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA), formally DPaW and DEC, is an Associate Member of the GNRBA. It is this responsibility of the State Government department to manage Wild Dogs and pests on Unallocated Crown Land (UCL) and DBCA estate. To achieve this, DBCA undertakes Wild Dog control in the region and additionally assists with funding for ground baiting programs on relevant country.

To complement DBCA's work within UCL, the GNRBA allocates funds for two part time doggers (LPMT's) to carry out Wild Dog control within and alongside private properties. This document reports on the GNRBA activities and will not detail the extent of DBCA Wild Dog control activities.

Importantly, the GNRBA continues to engage with Aboriginal owned Pastoral Lease holders 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, Ngadju and Matu people.

During the 2019/20 financial year \$93,750 funding through the Royalties for Regions program was again available to the group. This funding has been used to support aerial work and LPMT work on the Nullarbor. These funds can only be used for Wild Dog control alongside small stock properties. This funding has again been renewed for one more year, coming to a close at the end of the 2020/21 financial year. The GNRBA continues to correspond and apply for future replacement funding. It is anticipated future long term funding from State Government will become available to replace what was the R4R funding by early 2021.

The CEO has been working closely with the Goldfields Esperance Development Commission (GEDC) and the Goldfields Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils (GVROC), receiving much support with the development of a long term Camel Management Strategy. A Camel Forum initiative, inviting all possible known stakeholders, has been scheduled to be held in Kalgoorlie during August 2020.

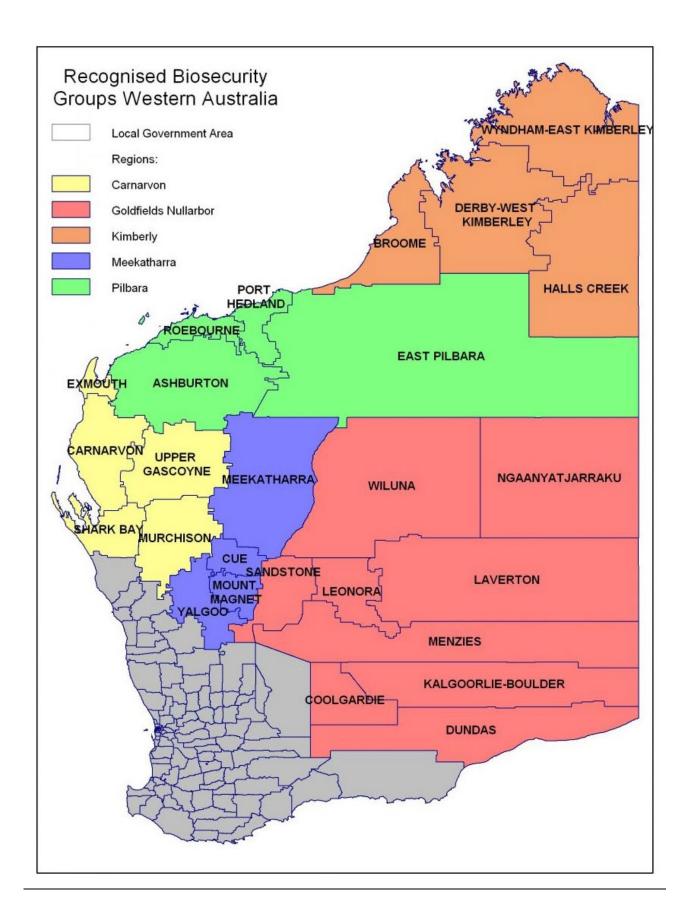
Additionally, the partnerships with local shires such as Menzies, Leonora, Coolgardie, Dundas, Laverton, City of Kalgoorlie/Boulder and Wiluna has continued this year with their ongoing support for cactus control work and LFH program planning.

The GNRBA also works with and supports Kalgoorlie Boulder Urban Landcare Group (KBULG) to encourage cactus eradication in the City of Kalgoorlie Boulder. These relationships greatly assist the GNRBA to 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.

The GNRBA continued to support the Wiluna TAFE in 2019/20 with the cactus control work the students undertake as part of their Cert II in Rural Operations. This has proven to be a very successful partnership, as students receive qualifications while undertaking meaningful work benefitting the town, its community and surrounding stations.



GNRBA 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

ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS 2019 – 2020

GNRBA purchased some 400,000 pre prepared wild dog baits from two suppliers at a cost of \$320,000.00. These were delivered to our Kalgoorlie freezer and/or direct to properties. A total of 780kg prepared fresh meat was supplied by a third supplier, giving pastoralists the option to inject their own baits. The GNRBA organised 3 sponsored ground baitings across the Goldfields/Nullarbor and one aerial baiting for the eastern Nullarbor on UCL utilising R4R funding. Very importantly, the GNRBA recognises the difficulties around making baits and delivering to stations. The Committee is mindful of its responsibilities and the limitations whilst facilitating the distribution of 1080 baits.

Teen Ryan, our S7 distributor is qualified to spray weeds such as cactus when out in the field. Due to funding requirements most of her work is undertaken on the Nullarbor. Teen has been instrumental in mentoring and supporting 4 new LPMT's for the region. Two of these are qualified and operating and the final two trainees will be fully qualified by the end of December 2020.

The GNRBA CEO continues to engage and support other RBG's and works to better understand the complexities of Native Title possession and engage with Traditional Owners (TO's) on issues such as camel control, weeds and baiting.

2019/2020 Grants and Projects

Ensure future capacity for the skilled management of Wild Dogs in W.A. Regions (Funding: Industry Funding Scheme Sheep and Goats

Independently sourced 3 year grant through the IFS which commenced on 1st July 2019. Four LPMT's have been trained by Ben Maslen, TAFE and have been guided and supported through the process of setting up as a small business as an independent contractor with the vision of supplying their services to our region. This project will be completed by December 2020.

Improving the animal welfare outcomes of Wild Dog management (Funding: DPIRD)

A 15-month grant which commenced 1st March 2019. The GNRBA requested funding to trial 4 Ezy2c 'foot hold' trap alert/monitoring units. DPIRD was impressed with the proposal and doubled the funding allowing the GNRBA to double the number of units to trial to 8. The animal ethics component of this grant application has been very time intensive.

Researching biological options for managing Bathurst Burr on the Nullarbor (Funding: State NRM)

A desktop study to identify the potential of biological control methods for Bathurst Burr in areas of similar climatic conditions to the Nullarbor. Outcomes of the study shows considerable promise for the potential use of a biological agent and the GNRBA hope to take part in initial trials. This project was an 8-month grant which was acquitted 31st March 2020. The report can be accessed on the GNRBA website.

Dry conditions LFH management (Funding: DPIRD)

Due to ongoing LFH pressure throughout the regions, the State Government again responded with financial support in the form of a second 'Dry Conditions Grant' in December 2019 to complement the funds distributed in April 2019. Dry Conditions Grant 1 is now complete and acquitted. Dry Conditions Grant 2 still has unspent funds which have been allocated to use over the summer of 2020/2021 in anticipation of increased LFH numbers.

Rangelands NRM WA

RNRM continue to support and provide valuable funding for GNRBA through activities such as the AGM and Annual Field Days 2019 on the strength of the 2018 event.

Bullseye

The Bullseye program is now complete. Members were given the opportunity to be supported by Bullseye to run trials, participate in a beef supply chain tour and treated to a number of heavily subsidised Nutrition Edge Workshops in their region. Feedback from each of these events was very positive and it proved most effective for the GNRBA to take part and assist with the roll out and logistics of this program.

Shire Collaborations

Menzies The GNRBA has done considerable cactus work in conjunction with the Menzies Shire to control the further spread of one of the worst known cacti in the region, white spined Hudson pear. The Shire recognising how damaging the white spined Hudson Pear and the impact it potentially has on their community engaged with the GNRBA and have been very supportive of the program. The program is now into its second year with ongoing monitoring. Biological control work has also commenced at Mt Ida with the identification and introduction of a cochineal biotype for the cactus *Opuntia Stricta* which has become very prevalent in the area.

<u>Leonora</u> The Leonora Shire continues to work with GNRBA to deal with cactus and camels in the area. Work with the Shire in biological control of coral cactus in several locations is ongoing. The impact cochineal has had at Tarmoola HS, Gwalia, Clover Downs, Sawpit Well and Mertondale is significant and the insect continues to spread and cause mass destruction to coral cactus in the area.

<u>Wiluna</u> The Wiluna Shire continues to supply financial support to the GNRBA for the aerial camel control program traditionally held in November each year. Additionally, Mac Jensen through his involvement with Wiluna School and old TAFE facilities continues to do outstanding work 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. The program is mutually beneficial as the meaningful work contributes towards their earning of the Certificate II in Rural Operations while Wiluna town and neighbouring stations are cleaned up. The GNRBA again contributed to this program in 2019/20.

West Australian Wild Dog Action Plan and R4R Funding

The Western Australia Wild Dog Action Plan is currently under review and the existing R4R funding will conclude June 30th 2021. DPIRD has approached all Rangeland RBG's to lodge a funding proposal for Wild Dog management with the understanding of R4R funding coming to an end. This was lodged with DPIRD in August 2019. Due to COVID-19 and a delayed budget we now hope to receive a response to the application by the end of 2020.

A variation has been obtained to allow the GNRBA to utilise the R4R funding for aerial baiting operations in addition to the traditional LPMT operations. The replacement of data loggers by Feral Scan has been problematic but the organisation continues to work towards a workable result.

Kalgoorlie Pastoral Alliance - Cell Fence

The GNRBA continues to support and participate in discussions to monitor the KPA project.

Recognised Biosecurity Groups

Relationships between the GNRBA and the other Pastoral RBG's is strong and the sharing of information and ideas continues to support and assist Pastoral RBG's to evolve and improve their overall efficiencies. GNRBA is an active participant in meetings and communications between all groups in the Rangelands region.

Restricted Chemical Permits

The GNRBA continues to supply and assist pastoralists with their Restricted Chemical Permit applications and amendments. This is done through financial support and assisting in the lodging process. This is an enormous task but greatly assists members to maintain compliance.

Wild Dog Baiting Operations

The GNRBA Wild Dog Management Plan review is now complete. During the review, a survey was undertaken which showed significant support for both the GNRBA baiting programs and the demand for LPMT's on the ground.

Three ground baitings and two aerial baitings were conducted over the 2019-2020 period. There has been significant focus on encouraging Pastoralists to become more strategic in their bait laying, baiting either known dog areas or where evidence is present. The aim of this approach is to be able to invest more funds into LPMT's on the ground while still able to supply baits in both the co-ordinated programs and when individuals find dog numbers prevalent

outside of these times.



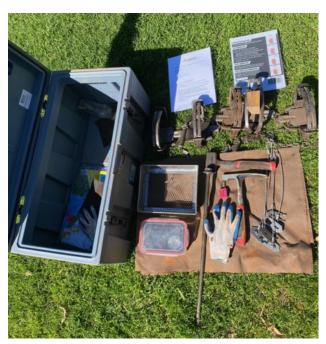
The bait manufacturing is currently predominantly done by Andrew Parker and Brett Day. This efficient process is producing good quality baits and reduced the logistical nightmare of bait racks to a workable operation that the GNRBA co-ordinate.

More and more members are moving towards the cryovac bait product. The quality is consistent, the packaging is convenient and the product fresher. All that is required is a freezer to store the product until needed. This then supplies the convenience of access to pre prepared baits all year round. Online training for the safe handling of 1080 is available through DPIRD's website

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

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 through media and public notices and encourages pastoralists to be vigilant regarding advising neighbours of baiting activities and adhering to the rules of 1080 usage, including appropriate signage.

Trap training and trap boxes supplied by the GNRBA and rolled out by Teen Ryan has again been well received. Members who have adopted the trap box and increased their active trapping activities alongside more strategic ground bait placement, have supplied good feedback with positive results in wild dog kills. This training and the trap boxes are an ongoing service available to members at the once off sacrifice of 5 bags of baits. Unfortunately, the GNRBA were unsuccessful in obtaining funding for the program. Online training for the safe handling of strychnine is available through DPIRD's website.



The GNRBA did not receive any positive reports regarding Canid Pest Ejectors (CPE's). DPIRD has done some work in response to this and has found the need for a more attractive lure. For more information contact the GNRBA CEO.

Aerial Baiting

The GNRBA is working with DPIRD to collate a workable mapping program for the aerial baiting pilot to reduce the need of navigators during aerial baiting. An aerial baiting program was conducted across the Nullarbor during December 2019 and a program is planned for across the Goldfields and Nullarbor during the month of July 2020.

Aerial baiting is an integral part of the GNRBA baiting process and an important tool that is to 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 affected landscape. Increasingly, these aerial baiting's require more and more effort to ensure good results.

Large Feral Herbivore (LFH) Control

The Large Feral Herbivore (LFH) Management Plan is currently under review. The GNRBA is working collaboratively with Shires, DPIRD, DBCA, GEDC and Pastoralists to discuss and design strategies to support a viable long term LFH Management Plan. The GNRBA is working closely with the GEDC and GVROC to work out the best way to bring all relevant stakeholders together to start the conversation. Progress will be reported on in the GNRBA Newsletters.

There have been two ground shoots utilising aerial support for spotting and mustering during the 2019-2020 year both proving to be viable and effective (Table 1).

Table 1. LFH 2019/20 Ground Shoots Summary

Year	Month	Method	Location	Number	Numbers/hr	Cost/head
2019/20	May	Ground/aerial support	Nullarbor	780 LFH	N/A	\$24/LFH
2019/20	August	Ground/aerial support	Nullarbor	1019 LFH	N/A	\$24/LFH

The total LFH culled in the GNRBA area over the last 5 years has been 8,606.

A review of the aerial program in the North is underway. The GNRBA hopes to see a program deployed no later than March 2021.

An Ammunition Allowance of up to \$500/per property is available for those properties on UCL interface facing extreme hardship. For more information contact the GNRBA CEO.

Mining Company Support

The GNRBA Inc has been garnering support from Mining companies in the area. Their willingness to become involved in pest control programs is increasing. Not only will their involvement greatly assist the GNRBA in providing a more comprehensive service, it will also support their OH&S protocols and provide a safer recreational space for their employees. Additionally, weed control and quarantine issues from earthmoving plant and equipment are issues the GNRBA considers very important. It is a focus of the CEO to continue to work hard on the development of such partnerships in 2020/2021.

WILD DOG ACTIVITY

Wild Dogs continued to impact on pastoral activities across the Goldfields Nullarbor region during 2019/2020. During this period, reported stock deaths from Wild Dog attacks have continued to effect confidence in the GNRBA effort and pastoralist enterprises. Reported Wild Dog activity in 2019/20 occurred across the entire GNRBA area.

There has been no re-entry into small stock production by Pastoralists due to a lack of confidence in the ability for the region to consistently control Wild Dogs and eagles. Except for some parts of the Nullarbor with appropriate Wild Dog fencing, Pastoralists maintain cattle enterprises in response to the Wild Dog impact. Clearly exclusion fencing is essential for the survival of small stock in the region.

NON-TARGET DEATHS

Several non-target deaths have been reported this year. Procedures have been introduced by the GNRBA in response to these reports to ensure the incidents are not repeated. Where necessary, incidents are investigated by DPIRD, DBCA and Dept of Health to ensure protocols have been adhered to. It is essential that 1080 handling procedures are carefully adhered to. These investigations are an enormous burden and cost on a very limited resource and the GNRBA wishes to ensure that 1080 protocols are followed. It is a requirement that all public entrances to properties are adequately signed. The GNRBA have had stencils and signs made up and are available upon request.

It must be realised 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 and must be used wisely and within guidelines.

WEED CONTROL

As reported last year (2018/19), the GNRBA continues to gather information regarding weeds in an effort to develop a workable weed management plan. 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.

The GNRBA continues to manage a number of cactus projects bringing in a number of partners in the process. Projects are run across pastoral, DBCA and Shire tenures on various declared species. All this has gained us significant credibility and exposure within the community.

The Bathurst Burr desktop study is now complete and the final report summarising the findings is available on the GNRBA website.

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 the CEO.

FINANCES

The GNRBA has managed funding and expenditure of \$940,777 this financial year using its traditional rate base and matched funding to leverage R4R funding, grants and Shire contributions.

Finance arrangements are managed day to day by the Finance Officer, Ross Wood and overseen by the Treasurer, Justin Stevens. The GNRBA uses Mike Hutson Accounting to manage accounting and cross check banking, and W.F. Dawson and Associates for Auditing purposes

The 2019/20 Financial statements have been audited and will, as usual, be used to acquit GNRBA funding.

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 to continue to focus on being an effective service provider to ensure our funding delivers what pastoralists need. This is a far better business plan than working with grants which are administratively costly and not necessarily benefitting.

CONCLUSION

The 2019-2020 year has seen the group continue to evolve and maintain its financial and operational independence. The GNRBA Committee of Management adopts a proactive approach to securing funding to assist pastoralists and land managers in the region. This has resulted in securing additional funding through R4R project, Rangelands NRM WA and other State Government Grants.

Although at this point the organisation has not been heavily impacted by COVID-19, the management team is aware that available future funding could be impacted as a result of the pandemic.

The Association continues to contract Erin Gorter to assist in funding, development and acquittal of projects. Erin is well connected and a significant asset to both the CEO and the organisation in the management of projects.

As a result of succession, there is currently a gap in both administration and operational support. This is currently being addressed by the CEO and it is anticipated the position will be filled by the end of 2020.

The GNRBA is very conscious of the administrative costs involved in operating an organisation such as this and works hard to use funds available as efficiently as possible. There are still, and will continue to be, processes regarding provision of Operational Plans, Annual Reports such as this, a successful external audit and much governance that the GNRBA has to comply with to access the matched government funding.

Wild Dog activity over the region continues to have a serious impact and the GNRBA is working harder than ever to bring more resources to the table to help bring Wild Dog numbers to a manageable level in the Association's area of operations.

Native Title determinations continue to have a significant impact on the GNRBA's abilities to operate in UCL. We continue to engage and develop our relationships with Native Title holders in all areas. This is a timely and expensive process, however it is important for continued effective Biosecurity management in this region.

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 and does so through the:

- Continual development of the following GNRBA Plans:
 - 5 year Management Plan.
 - Wild Dog Management Plan
 - > Large Feral Herbivore Management Plan
- Encouragement of members to participate on the CoM and to use their abilities and networks to build the GNRBA effectiveness.

Very good results continue to be realised using biological control methods on various cactus species in the Shires of Leonora, Menzies and Laverton.

In conjunction with the annual LFH aerial shoot program, the GNRBA is working with relevant stakeholders to develop a long-term camel management strategy.

The GNRBA recognises the benefits resulting from actively engaging with the Department of Biosecurity Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) and having Nigel Wessels (DBCA Regional manager) on the CoM is essential to maximise these benefits.

I would like to thank the Committee of Management for their support and leadership over the year and I would like to recognise the value and time they provide this organisation on behalf of all members.

The GNRBA continues to evolve and proves to be a strong leader in the RBG space.

Michelle Donaldson Chief Executive Officer

11th November 2020



Ronalda