
2020/21

MIDLANDS BIOSECURITY GROUP

ANNUAL

REPORT

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CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

In our second full year of operation the MBG has expanded its areas of support and delivered significant support to the farming community within our area of operation.

This year has thrown up a few challenges with the changing political and bureaucratic landscape of the RBG world. The board will continue to look for ways to expand our engagement with the farming community as with every touch point we have an opportunity to learn of ways we can help them with the challenges they face from a biosecurity perspective.

I would like to thank and commend our Executive Officer, Chris O'Callaghan and the board who have worked hard to ensure we continued to deliver to the farmers.

“ Our increased activity to support pig control across the region has been just one area where we have been able to respond to an issue with significant support and achieve some great results. ”

I would also like to encourage anyone who would like to know more or to be involved to do so. By becoming an active member or should you wish, a board member, you will make significant contribution to the direction of the Group.

Thank you,

Charles Wass
Board Chairperson 2021

OVERVIEW

The decision to form a Recognised Biosecurity Group (RBG) in the Midlands region was made in December 2018 by local farmers and industry due to concerns around increasing numbers of wild dogs and feral pigs.

An interim board was established and had farmer representatives from throughout the region and regular meetings were held to start the RBG process and define the objectives of the group. The MBG was incorporated on the 19th of June, 2019, recognised by the Minister of Agriculture and Food on the 25th of October, 2019 and on the 6th of December 2019, the Midlands Biosecurity Group (MBG) members elected its first official Board of Management at its inaugural Annual General Meeting.

The primary aim of the group is to initiate, promote and foster the control of Declared Pests in the Midlands region. The MBG assists land owners and managers to adopt sound biosecurity practices and provides members with a forum to exchange information, advice and assistance. By ensuring clear communication between all relevant stakeholders, the MBG will raise awareness of issues and ensure a multi-faceted approach to pest control. This will include Landholders, Local Government Authorities, State and Federal agencies, the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Department of Biodiversity, Conservation & Attractions and relevant industry bodies.

The Midlands Biosecurity Group covers seven shires in the Midlands region being the Shires of Moora, Dandaragan, Coorow, Carnamah, Three Springs, Mingenew and Irwin. These shires have been chosen due to the geographical features that link all seven shires as well as having similar land-uses across the region.

The Midlands Biosecurity Group was formed with the administrative support of the West Midlands grower group. The West Midlands Group is a well-established grower group with a track record of managing project funding and reporting to funding bodies appropriately. This partnership between the two groups allowed for effective financial and project management as well as the ability to utilise already-established communication networks. As a result of this initial support, the Midlands Biosecurity Group is now a stand-alone organisation and fully functional recognised biosecurity group.

MBG OBJECTIVES

The objects and purposes of the Midlands Biosecurity Group as described in the group's constitution are to:

- initiate, promote and foster the control of Declared Pests under section 165 of the BAM act in the Designated Area;
- encourage landholders and other persons to adopt sound biosecurity practices throughout the Designated Area;
- foster the sustainable development of the Designated Area;
- encourage the control of pests other than Declared Pests in the Designated Area;
- identify direct or indirect funding sources that can be made available for the development of the objects and purposes of the Association;
- provide Members with a forum to exchange information, advice and assistance where appropriate; and
- undertake any activity that the Board of Management shall from time to time determine to be in furtherance of the objects of the Association

THE MBG TEAM

The following people make up the board of management of the Midlands Biosecurity Group.

Board Member	Term Expiry	Shire/s Farming
Callum Scott	Expires AGM 2021	Carnamah
Peter Summers	Expires AGM 2021	Irwin
Charles Wass	Expires AGM 2021	Coorow
Christine Brown	Expires AGM 2021	Moora, Dandaragan
Carl Forward	Expires AGM 2021	Irwin, Mingenew
Chris Patmore	Expires AGM 2021	Irwin, Three Springs
Will Browne	Expires AGM 2022	Coorow
Maria Griffiths	Expires AGM 2022	Mingenew, Dandaragan
Geoff Hortin	Expires AGM 2022	Three Springs, Carnamah, Coorow
Support Staff		
Chris O'Callaghan	Ex-officio Secretary/Treasurer	Coordinator (Non-Voting)
Kirra Holley	Communications Officer	Communications (Non-Voting)



THE MBG TEAM

The following personnel have been contracted by the MBG to deliver pest management services to the group.

Contractor/ Company	Days Worked	Summary of work completed 2020/21
Paul Pitaro Vertebrate Pest Management Australia	219	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mingenew/Morawa Feral Pig Program • Irwin Pig monitoring • Wild Dog Monitoring, Baiting and Trapping work – Coorow, Carnamah, Three Springs, Mingenew, Irwin Shires • Rabbit work - 1080 grain mix-ups and Calici release oversight - Coorow Shire
Andy Lockey WA Feral Animal Management	145	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Badgingarra Feral Pig Program • Arrowsmith Feral Pig Program • Wild Dog Monitoring Dandaragan, Moora Shires • Rabbit Calici Releases Dandaragan, Moora Shires
Andy Walker Midwest Professional Shooting and Pest Management	29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wild Dog Monitoring, Baiting, Trapping work Coorow, Dandaragan, Gingin shires • Rabbit 1080 grain mix-ups, calici release oversight Dandaragan, Coorow, Moora Shires.

2020-2021 DECLARED PEST RATE FUNDING

At the Group's inaugural Annual General Meeting, the MBG members endorsed the groups 2020/21 Operational plan, including a total budget of \$390,000, which included, \$167,000 of landholder rates, \$167,000 of government matching funds and \$56,000 funding from the Sheep & Goat Industry Funding Scheme.

The MBG Board of Management then moved to request the implementation of the regions first Declared Pest Rate as follows:

The Midlands Biosecurity Group request the Minister of Agriculture to approve an Ad Valorem declared pest rate for 2020/21 of \$167,000, on land in the local government areas of Irwin, Three Springs, Mingenew, Carnamah, Coorow, Moora and Dandaragan that is:

- a) freehold land,
- b) a minimum 100 hectares,
- c) with a minimum \$100 per VEN

This operational plan identified how the funds will be spent. This system provides our communities with guaranteed annual funds and sustainability to address priority declared pests using current best practice management techniques.

The MBG, as part of our consultation process posted letters to all landholders in the region, outlining the groups planned activities and request to implement a declared pest rate in the area. As this was the first declared pest rate to be raised in the Midlands region the Minister undertook official consultation, sending letters to all landholders in the Midlands region.

On the 24th of July, the MBG's operational planned was approved and a directions notice was issued outlining that rates will be raised from September 2020.

The money raised through the declared pest rate process must only be used to implement the MBG's operational plan in the prescribed local government districts of Irwin, Three Springs, Mingenew, Carnamah, Coorow, Moora and Dandaragan.

As of 30 June, 2021 96% of landholders had paid the declared pest rate, for a total amount of \$156,712. This is an exceptional result for the group's first year and testament to the landholders in the region for recognising the need and value of having an Biosecurity Group operating in the region.

The Midlands Biosecurity Group Board of Management have been very pleased with the on-going support of landholders within the region for the implementation of the declared pest rate and pest management programs. The declared pest rate allows for long term sustainability of funding to implement effective control programs for declared pests.

2020-2021 PROJECT FUNDING

In the 2020/21 financial year, the Midlands Biosecurity Group has attracted funding from a number of different sources, these are:



Sheep and Goat Industry Funding Scheme

Wild dog eradication Grant. \$168,000 over three years. The purpose of this grant is to ensure landholders are well-supported in their wild dog control efforts, through co-ordination with neighbouring landholders, and other stakeholders such as local government and the state departments of Biodiversity, Conservations and Attractions and Primary Industries and Regional Development. Finishes June 2022.



WA Wild Dog Action Plan Funding

Wild Dog Funding. \$25,000 over 12 months. Funding is a state government contribution to Wild Dog management in the Midlands Region. Funds LPMT time. Finishes June 2021.



Australian Wool Innovation

In December 2020, AWI committed \$38,000 to the group to complete landholder training activities for vertebrate pests. This is due to be complete in June 2022.



CWBA Feral Pig Project

Funding for a collaborative feral pig project covering the shires of Mingenew and Morawa. \$30,000 per year.

2020-2021 PEST PROGRAMS

Wild Dogs & Foxes

Vision: Through co-operative management prevent domestic stock losses and conserve biodiversity

The wild dog and fox program is guided by the MBG Board's Wild Dog Management plan which aims to encourage strategic, integrated wild dog management across all land tenures. The strategy focusses on monitoring for signs and symptoms of wild dog movement, such as scats, tracks, live sightings and howling as well as investigating all suspicious stock attacks/deaths for signs of wild dog predation. Field cameras are deployed to assist with monitoring which allows for shorter follow-up times on suspicious activity. In 2020/21 a total of 33 stock losses have been reported to the MBG as a result of wild dog predation.

Licensed Pest Management Technicians (LPMTs) support landholders by ground baiting in hotspot areas as well as providing landholders with meat baits for distribution throughout the year. Meats baits are made in a cost-effective manner by using 1080 concentrate (can only be handled by LPMT's), injected into cubes of fresh meat and then frozen on farms throughout the Midlands. Bait rack stations have been set up at Watheroo, Warradarge, Three Springs, Arrowsmith and Irwin, with one station still to be commissioned in the shire of Dandaragan. Each station contains a locked freezer that holds around 1600 baits in bags of 25 with safety tags and warning signs made available for farmers. Farmers taking baits are required to have a restricted chemical permit and sign a register.

Table 1. Meat bait registers at properties in the Midlands region.

Bait Freezer Location	Host Farmer	No. of baits removed by landholders
Watheroo	Kevin McLean	3500
Warradarge	Will Browne	1732
Three Springs	Adam Thomas	0*
Arrowsmith	Jeff Cockman	2175
Irwin	Paul Pitaro	0**
Dandaragan	TBC	0**
Total		7407

*Station commissioned August 2021.

** To be commissioned in 2021

LPMTs are also supporting farmers by implementing wild dog traps in areas warranting integrated control. In 2020/21 a total of 10 wild dog traps were set, however interference by non-targets (foxes), has made trapping conditions difficult and no wild dogs have been controlled using this method. Further emphasis on fox baiting is required in areas needing to utilise wild dog traps as a control tool.

Figure 1. Locations of LPMT activity and landholder reports of wild dog activity in the Midlands region.

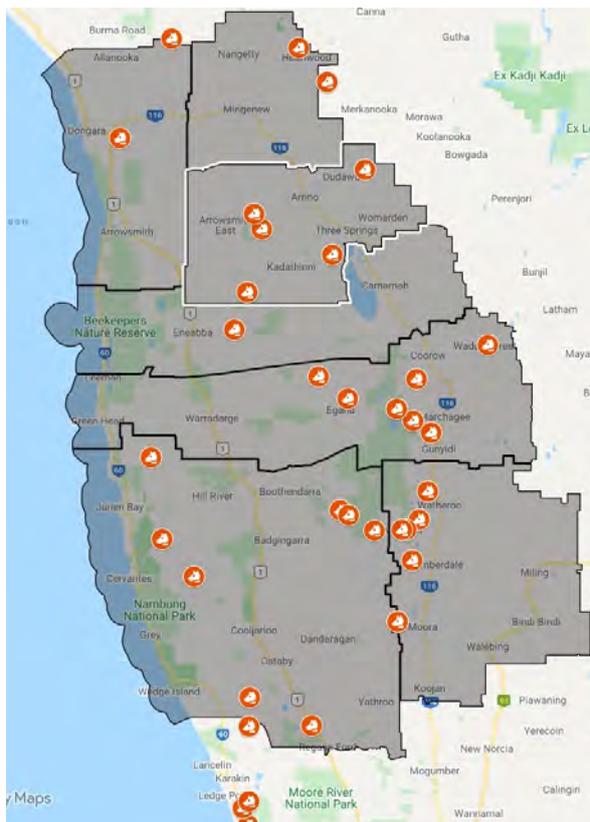


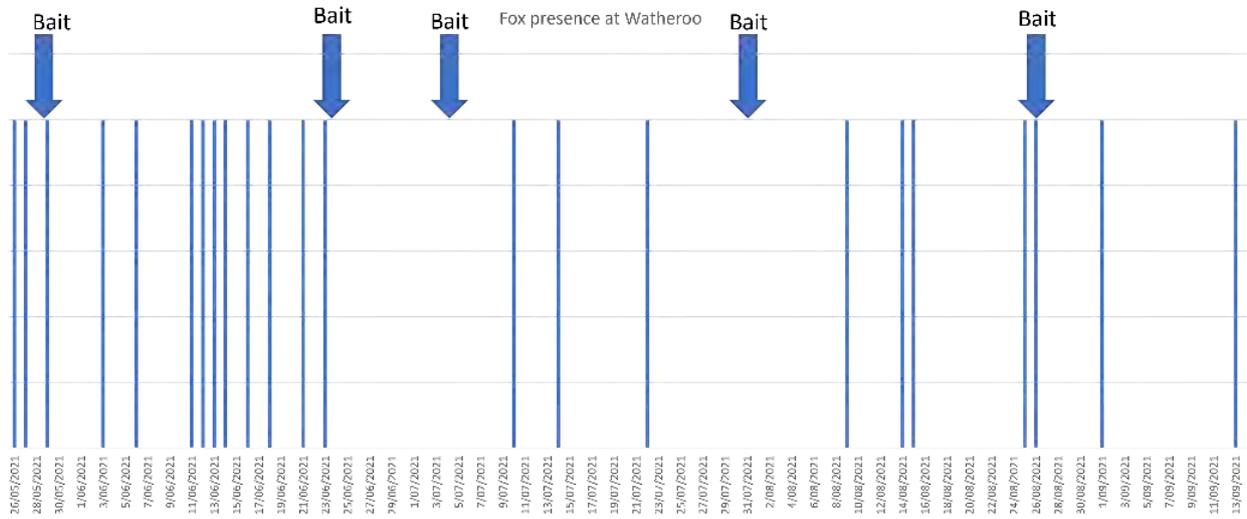
Figure 2. MBG LPMT's Andy Lockey and Paul Pitaro preparing fresh meat baits at Arrowsmith.



Figure 3. Bags of freshly prepared kangaroo meat baits in a bait station freezer ready for deployment.

Fox Presence Watheroo Site

MBG Camera trap data June – Sept 2021



Camera traps are playing an important role in monitoring feral pest number in hotspot areas. The diagram above shows the presence of foxes captured on camera at a site in Watheroo. The arrows point to the time that baiting product was introduced to the site. Less numbers were recorded after baits were introduced, although they have not disappeared completely.

With support from the Commonwealth, the Department of Primary Industries and regional development, in collaboration with the Northern and Midlands Biosecurity Group's and the Central Wheatbelt Biosecurity Association have begun a camera monitoring program through the Northern Agricultural region to support the groups activities. This program will utilise facial recognition technology and machine learning to identify target species and alert groups of their presence.



Figure 4. Stock death related to wild dog activity.



Figure 5. Fox captured on camera

Midlands Feral Pigs

Vision: Sustainable grains and livestock industries in the Mid West where risks to production from feral pigs are reduced and natural and built environments are protected.

Feral pigs have a destructive impact on landscapes. Pigs impact on soil and water quality, destroy native flora and fauna including threatened species, flatten crops and predate on lambs. The MBG instigated a feral pig program in 2020 as a result of reports from landholders of feral pig activity increasing throughout the Midlands region. The program is guided by the Midwest Feral Pig Management plan which has been developed by the Midlands, Northern and Central Wheatbelt Biosecurity Group's. This plan aims to achieve co-ordinated feral pig management in the Midwest region of Western Australia using effective and ethical control techniques. The management of feral pigs in the Midlands focusses on co-ordinating efforts between landholders around known hot-spot areas. Licensed Pest Management Technicians Andy Lockey and Paul Pitaro have been working with growers in Irwin, Arrowsmith and Badgingarra to control feral pigs using 1080 grain baiting. To complement grain baiting activities, the MBG through support from Australian Wool Innovation have purchased a remote-controlled feral pig trap gate (Matlock system) as well as Hoggone feral pig bait and bait boxes which are now available for farmers to utilise. Hoggone is a new schedule 6 baiting product that will have suitability where 1080 baiting is not an option such as areas close to towns and river systems.

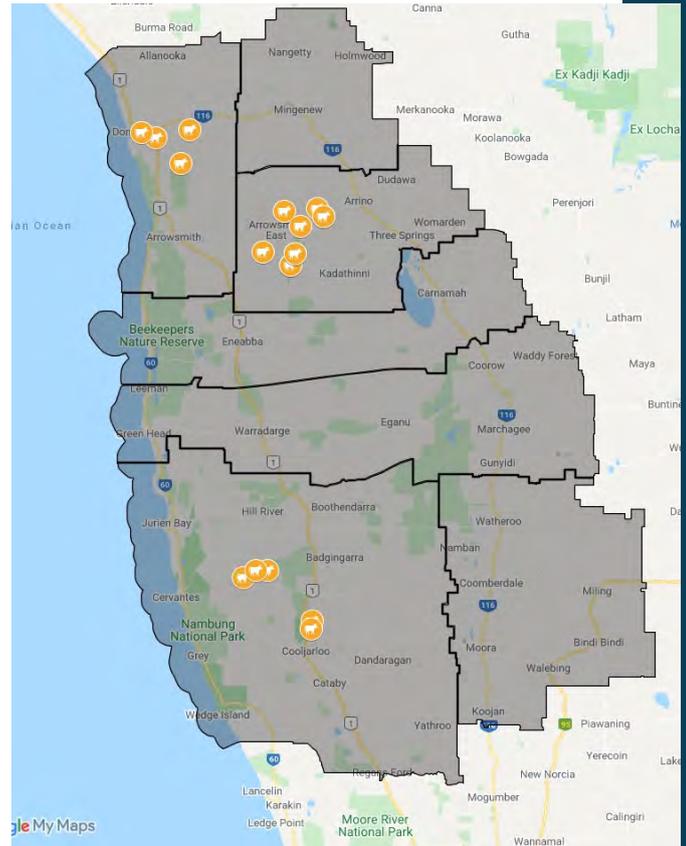


Figure 6. Location of Midlands Biosecurity Group Feral Pig work



Figure 7. Feral pigs in the shire of Dandaragan.

Mingenew-Morawa Pig Project

The establishment of Midlands Biosecurity Group has allowed for greater collaboration across the region in regard to controlling feral animals. The Mingenew-Morawa pig project has been instigated due to a need to consistently fund and work easily across RBG and local government boundaries. Farmers in this area have been managing feral pigs for a number of years with support coming from the Central Wheatbelt Biosecurity Association and the Mingenew-Irwin group.

This project aims to deliver a co-ordinated and collaborative response to the issues of feral pigs in the Central Wheatbelt Biosecurity Association (CWBA) and Midlands Biosecurity Group (MBG) region of Western Australia. The project will involve co-ordinated baiting, monitoring and education programs across land tenures.

The project contracted Paul Pitaro of Vertebrate Pest Management Australia for 100 days over an 11 month period, with each group committing to fund 50 days each of work in the area. The LPMT contract is held by the Midlands Biosecurity Group.

The project also involved an aerial cull in July 2020, organised by the Central Wheatbelt Biosecurity Association with assistance from MBG LPMT Paul Pitaro. The aerial cull involved 23.7 hours of flying with 466 pigs culled in that time. On closer inspection of the culled animals, most of the sows were pregnant, which would have led to a huge flush of new pigs if the shoot had not gone ahead.

Table 2. Midlands Biosecurity Group feral pig work 2020/21 including the Morawa-Mingenew Pig project. This table includes data from July 2021, which is outside this reporting period, however is important information in include within this report.

Location	Timeframe	No. of pigs destroyed	Control method
Badgingarra	June 2020	200	1080 Baiting
Badgingarra	Dec 20 - Mar 21	85	1080 Baiting
Arrowsmith	June 21 - Sept 21	305	1080 Baiting
Irwin	June 2021	86	1080 Baiting
Mingenew/Morawa	Feb 21 - June 21	297	1080 Baiting
Mingenew/Morawa	July 2021	466	Aerial Shooting
Total*		1439	

*As at 24 September 2021

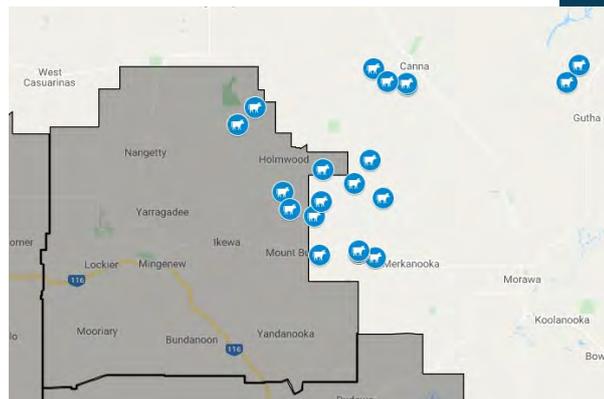


Figure 8. Location of work completed in Mingenew-Morawa Pig Project

“

I would estimate within three months had the aerial shoot not proceeded, we would have unravelled the entirety of the past 12 month's control efforts.

- Paul Pitaro (MBG LPMT) after the aerial cull.

”

Rabbits

In 2020 the Midlands Biosecurity Group instigated a control program for European Rabbits in the Midlands Region which focussed on landholder engagement and control methods using 1080 and RDHV1-K5 Calicivirus releases.

Farmers are required by law to utilise appropriately trained personnel (Licensed Pest Management Technicians) to mix grain baits for rabbit control. This is a significant benefit of having an RBG in the region.

A total of 206 packets of “one-shot” rabbit poison was mixed for Midlands Landholders in 2020/21. Further to this 11 sites were targeted for RHDV-K5 calicivirus release. Landholders are encouraged to utilise an integrated approach to Rabbit management that involved more than 1 control technique to achieve meaningful impact on rabbit numbers.

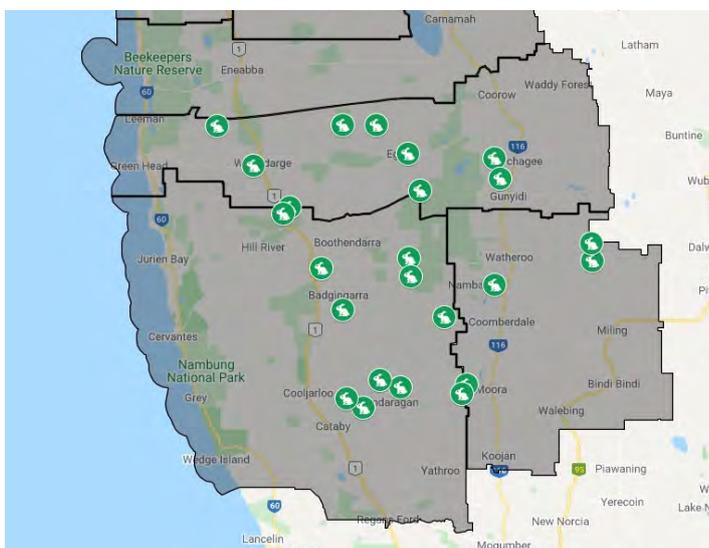


Figure 9. Rabbit 1080 baiting and RHDV-K5 release sites and monitoring sites in the Midlands region.

HDVK5

Rabbits are caught live and injected with the virus and released. Released rabbits then go back to their burrows and perish, spreading the virus through the population within their burrow and beyond. At best the Calicivirus will achieve control ~40% so follow up grain baiting and physical control techniques are encouraged to achieve best control.



Figure 10. Trapping rabbits for RHDV-K5 release.

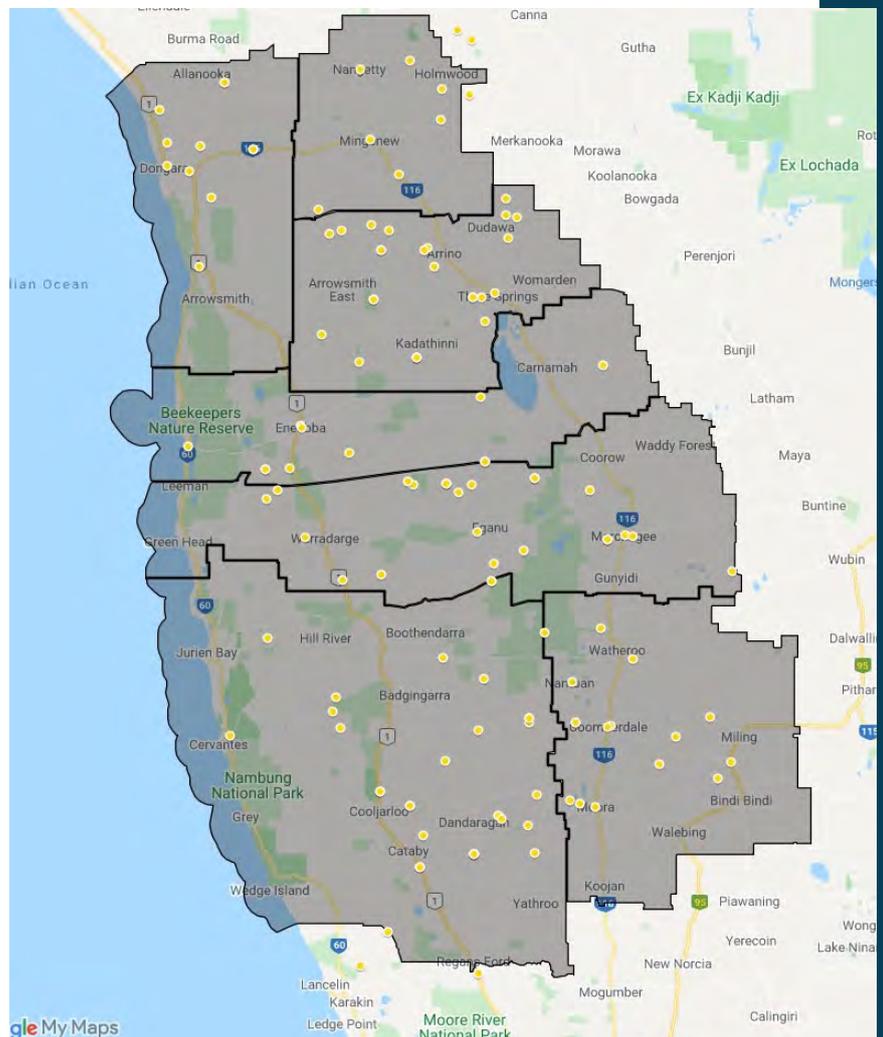
Restricted Chemical Permits

The MBG provides support to landholders to apply for restricted chemical permits for their properties.

The permit process has some complexity around what is required to meet the regulations set by the Department of Health for the use of schedule 7 poisons, (1080 and Strychnine) and the group can support farmers to ensure they comply with the law and are operating safely. The restricted chemical permit form acts a legal document in which the permit holder is taking full responsibility for the use of restricted products on their farms, which all persons using the approved products including MBG LPMT's. Therefore, it is crucial that applications are completed correctly and farmers understand their responsibilities.

The group encourages all farm businesses to put their workers through a 1080 accreditation course which will allow them to use products on their properties. Landholders are also encouraged to add "MBG Approved LPMT" to their permits to allow the MBG's LPMT's to supply and handle products on their properties. LPMT's are licensed with the Department of Health to do this and the MBG contracts practitioners that are experienced and knowledgeable in the use of these products. To date the MBG has completed 153 Restricted Chemical Permits with farmers covering approximately 320,000 hectares of farming land in the region.

Figure 11. Restricted Chemical Permits in the Midlands region.



Community Engagement

The community engagement program of the MBG is to ensure information about the group's activities are communicated regularly and landholders have regular opportunities to get involved with the group.

The activities related to this program are outlined below with the communication strategy located in Appendix 2. The communications strategy has been overseen and implemented by communications professional Kirra Holley, (West Midlands Group/Golden Hour Media).

In 2020, Covid-19 lead to the cancelling of key events that would otherwise be utilised as community engagement opportunities. This includes the Mingenew Expo and the West Midlands Group Spring Field Day. In 2021 these events were reinstated and the MBG had a presence at both.

In October 2020, the MBG gave a presentation at the West Midlands Group sheep day in Badgingarra to around 40 attendees.

The AGM also acts as the key forum for the year for members and the community to engage with the group and its activities.

In 2021 workshop have been held at Watheroo, Three Springs and Dongara with around 45 people attending in total.

The MBG has also worked to engage mining companies that active in the Midlands region, including Iluka, Tronox and Woodside, to make them aware of the groups activities and get them involved in the monitoring and control programs. Staff at both companies have completed 1080 accreditation training and moved to obtain restricted chemical permits for their operations in the shire of Dandaragan.



Figure 12. Iluka staff setting a camera trap

Every year a mail out is delivered to all landholders in the Midlands region providing information about the groups upcoming activities and opportunity to become a member of the group. The MBG's membership eligibility criteria is as follows:



Full Member

Open to individuals who own or occupy 100 hectares or more in the Midlands region



Associate Member

Open to any legal entity that controls, cares or manages land in the Midlands region, represented by an authorised nominee.

To date the MBG has 94 full members, 2 associate members as well as an additional 152 subscribers to the group's E-Newsletter . There is no charge to being a member of the MBG, with the key advantage of being an MBG member is that it gives people a say in the governance process of the group. Furthermore, the MBG cannot automatically make individuals members, due to privacy laws preventing the group from access to contact details of landholders in the region.

The MBG encourages landholders to become members as it allows them to have a greater level of engagement with the group. This is significant when it comes to declared pest management. Members are able to have their say on priority species, board members and the activities in the group's operational plan.

Table 3. MBG Community Engagement Schedule

Month	Planned Activity	Medium	Purpose
June 2020	Wild Dog/Fox Control Information DPR Information	Social Media, Local Papers, MBG e-news, Podcast.	Inform
July 2020	Wild Dog/Fox Control Information MBG Update	MBG e-news, Local Paper Press Release, Local News	Inform Inform
August 2020	Mingenew Expo (Cancelled in 2020 due to Covid-19) Dowerin Field Day (Cancelled) DPR Information	Presence, Brochures Presence, Brochures Local Papers	Consultation & Inform Consultation & Inform Inform
September 2020	Community Wild Dog/Fox Bait Rack Days Grower Group Spring Field Day's MBG Annual General Meeting	Local Papers, MBG e-news, Social Media Presence, Brochure, Demonstration Email to Members, Local Papers	Participation Inform Inform
October 2020	MBG Annual General Meeting Rabbit Control Information	Local Papers, MBG e-news, Social Media Local Papers	Consultation & Inform Inform
November 2020	Rabbit Control Information Feral Pig Control Information DPR Information	Local Papers Local Papers Local Papers	Inform Inform Inform
December 2020	Rabbit Control Information MBG Activities Update	Local Papers Local Papers	Inform Inform
February 2021	Community Rabbit Baiting Program	Local Papers, MBG e-news, Social Media	Participation
March 2021	Community Feral Pig Control Program MBG Update Local Paper Update Letter to Midlands Region Ratepayers (Operational Plan)	Local Papers, MBG e-news, Social Media Enews Local Papers Mail Out	Participation Inform Inform Inform
April 2021	Community Wild Dog Bait Rack program DPR Information	Local Papers, MBG e-news, Social Media Local Papers	Participation Consultation & Inform
June 2021	MBG Enews Update Local Paper Update	MBG e-news Local Papers	Participation Inform

Monitoring & Evaluation

The MBG has established a cloud-based database that acts as a store of all the groups activity in the region. The database is tailored for the MBG and allows the group to keep accurate records of work completed, pests destroyed, permits completed and membership information.

The database has fully integrated workflows, allowing seamless information transfer from LPMT's in the field to the Executive Officer and the MBG Board. This system significantly cuts down administration costs associated with Monitoring and Evaluation of field activities and membership applications.

The MBG also utilise Feral Scan to report into national databases of declared pest management. Feral Scan has limitations to local operations, however can inform decision makers at a national level as to the significance and locations of different pest species.

Governance

The MBG is a not-for-profit association, governed by a board of Management, elected at the groups Annual General Meeting. The group also contracts experienced and professional people to ensure a high quality of work is completed.

The governance program allows for an Executive Officer to be contracted on a part-time basis to oversee the executive and regulatory requirements of running an association and recognised biosecurity group.

The Executive Officer completes the following tasks:

- Board Processes (meeting oversight, information gathering, administrative duties)
- LPMT Co-ordinator (Job planning, resource allocation)
- Bookkeeping (MYOB coding, invoicing, payments, BAS, Board reports, work with Auditor)
- Data Management (Database maintenance and reporting)
- Restricted Chemical Permits (Support and submit applications on behalf of farmers)
- Stakeholder Liaison (DBCA, DPIRD, Mining, Events & Workshops)
- Grant funding management & reporting

The governance program ensures the group has appropriate insurances and subscriptions to allow the group to run professionally and efficiently as well as coverage for administration costs such as printing, meeting room hire and catering where necessary.

The MBG includes a contingency amount of \$20,000 in the operational plan, to allow for non-payment of Declared Pest Rates. This contingency is important to ensure the costs of contracted personnel can be covered if full payment rates are not achieved.

SUMMARY & FUTURE CHALLENGES

The MBG has successfully seen the implementation of its first Operational plan and Declared Pest Rate in the 2020/21 financial year. This has been well supported by the community with a high payment rate (96%), good engagement with permits and on-ground activity and a steady increase in membership over the last 12 months.

The continuity of the MBG team and having a stable and engaged board of management as well as an experienced Executive Officer, Communications Officer and Licensed Pest Management Technicians has allowed for the group to progress and function seamlessly.

The groups LPMTs Paul Pitaro, Andrew Lockey and Andrew Walker are now quite familiar with the landscape and much of the farming community which allows for on ground work to be completed in a timely manner. It is expected in the upcoming 12 months, the MBG's engagement and works strategy will continue to improve as more landholders become aware and involved in the group.

Feral pig numbers in the region are concerning with nearly 1500 pigs culled in a period of less than 12 months. Given the significant breeding potential of feral pigs and a favourable growing season, these numbers may increase before they decline. As many have become aware of through the Covid-19 pandemic, keeping pressure on numbers to 'flatten the curve' is vitally important to get outbreaks under control. Concerning is new reports coming in of feral pigs being sighted in areas where they haven't been reported before such as Watheroo, Moora and Carnamah which will require vigilance on farmers and the MBG's behalf to ensure numbers don't build to problem levels in these areas.

As the group progresses and is able to more accurately assess pest numbers and control actions required, the relationship with the region's largest land manager – the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attraction (DBCA) is going to be vitally important. Currently, the group's LPMT's are issued with access permits (Reg 4) which allows them to conduct monitoring activities on government-managed land. The group then informs DBCA staff of the monitoring outcomes which allows DBCA to allocate resources to manage the issue. The challenge here is that DBCA are resource-poor and timely and effective control on public land has been difficult to achieve. The MBG are advocating for the introduction of a Memorandum of Understanding between the MBG and DBCA to allow MBG LPMT's to conduct more timely work on government managed land so that pest control programs can continue uncompromised into the future.

In 2021, the group has received numerous reports of problematic rabbit numbers in the region, with LPMTs responding where resources allow. To date, the group and its landholders have been quite reactive to rabbit problems as they appear, usually during the growing season, which is a less-effective time to be completing control. Furthermore, there is often a lag time between the MBG becoming aware of the problem and control being implemented, due to time required to complete permits and LPMT availability. The group is aiming to become more efficient with rabbit control programs as time goes on and with more farmers obtaining the appropriate permits, this will allow for grain mix-ups to occur early in the season, optimising the use of LPMT time.

Moving forward, recognised biosecurity groups (RBG) will be required to operate in an increasingly regulated environment, and groups will need to be proactive in keeping pace with regulatory changes. This includes changes to the Registered Pesticide regulations and codes of practice, as well as changes to workplace health and safety legislation. Furthermore, the Review of the Biosecurity and Agricultural Management Act, is underway which will create a level of uncertainty for RBG's in the coming years.

The group is a grass-roots organisation and relies on the community driving the activities and getting engaged with the programs. To date this has been very successful and is a testament to the commitment of the landholders who took the risk to establish the group and volunteer their time to achieving the outcomes. The group has much work to do and challenges to overcome, but is well on its way to achieving its goals of co-ordinated, nil tenure declared pest management.



Figure 13. MBG Licensed Pest Management Technician, Paul Pitaro with the team from Coral Coast Helicopters, about to embark on an Aerial feral pig cull in the shires of Mingenew and Morawa.

FINANCIAL YEAR 2021

Income & Expenditure Breakdown

MBG expenditure is focussed on on-ground support to land managers to monitoring and control declared pests. Figure 15. outlines the group's expenditure items highlighting major expenses as LPMT contracts, baiting product and Executive Officer contract.

The Midlands Biosecurity Group operates on a July-June Financial Year and accesses funding from a range of sources to support the group's activities.

Figure 14. breaks down the income sources for the MBG for the 2021 financial year, highlighting roughly a third of the groups activities is funding by landholder rates, a third matched state government funds and a third from grant funding.

Figure 14. Midlands Biosecurity Group income breakdown FY2021.



MBG expenditure is focussed on on-ground support to land managers to monitoring and control declared pests. Figure 13. outlines the groups expenditure items highlighting major expenses as LPMT contracts, baiting product and Executive Officer contract.

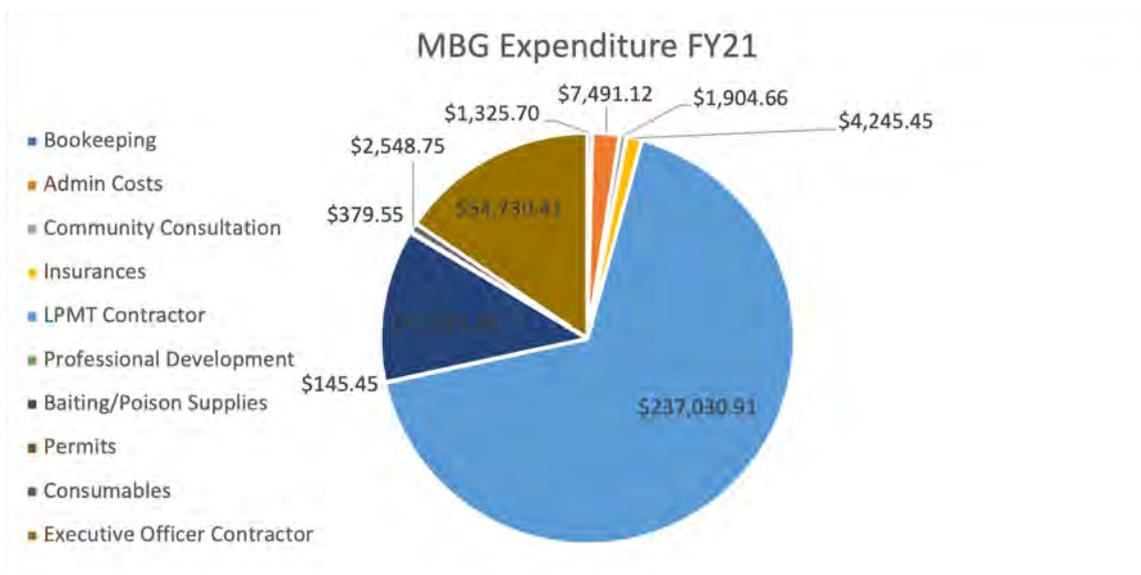


Figure 15. Midlands Biosecurity Group expenditure breakdown FY2021.

FUNDING SOURCES BREAKDOWN

Declared Pest Rate Funding

The declared pest rate funding is provided through landholder rates and matching funds. The amount collected is determined by the MBG Operational Plan. The BAM Act legislation requires funds to be spent within the 12 month timeframe indicated in the operational plan ie July-June. This timeframe can be problematic from a cash flow perspective as DPIRD does not approve the operational plan until July, and first payments are not made until September/October. Essentially this means operations can not start at the planned time. As a result of this, in FY2021 the MBG carried over an amount of \$85,582 to allow for continuity of operations into FY2022. DPIRD advice on this matter at this point is that this amount will be deducted from the groups second payment in FY2022.

Declared Pest Rate Funding		
Income	Declared Pest Rate Income	313,999.11
Total		313,999.11
Cost of Sales	MBG Bookeeping	1,325.70
	MBG Admin Costs	7,491.12
	MBG Community Consultation	1,904.66
	MBG Insurances	4,245.45
	MBG LPMT Contractor	131,230.91
	MBG Professional Development	145.45
	MBG Baiting/Poison Supplies	34,060.97
	MBG Permits	379.55
	MBG Consumables	2,217.61
	MBG Executive Officer Contractor	45,415.50
Total		228,416.92
Operating Surplus		85,582.19

Australian Wool Innovation Training Project

This project began in December 2020 and is contracted until June 2022. To date this project has funded equipment to support baiting and control programs. This includes the purchase of remote Matlock feral pig trapping system (\$4940), 4g remote trail cameras with solar panels and batteries (\$3227.11), these are indicated as Baiting/Poison Supplies below.

Australian Wool Innovation Training Project		
Income	Project Income	38,571.43
Total		38,571.43
Cost of Sales	MBG - Baiting/Poison Supplies	8,167.11
Total		8,167.11
Operating surplus		30,404.32

Central Wheatbelt Mingenew/Morawa Pig Project

This project supports feral pig work across LGA and RBG boundaries, funding MBG LPMT Paul Pitaro to complete Feral Pig co-ordination, monitoring and control in the Morawa shire. As at 30 June 2021, 39 of 50 days had been completed in this project, with the remaining days worked in July.

Central Wheatbelt Mingenew/Morawa Pig Project		
Income	Project Income	30,000.00
Total		30,000.00
Cost of Sales	MBG - LPMT Contractor	23,400.00
Total		23,400.00
Operating surplus		6,600.00

Sheep & Goat Industry Funding Scheme Project

The Sheep & Goat industry funding scheme support wild dog monitoring through the Midlands region and neighbouring shires, not covered by an RBG, including Gingin, Vic Plains and Lower Chittering. This project provides funds for 80 days of LPMT work per year for 3 years and support for Executive services to administer the project. Financial year 2022 will be the final year of this project.

Sheep & Goat Industry Funding Scheme Project		
Income	Project Income	56,000.00
Total		56,000.00
Cost of Sales	MBG - LMPT Contractor	48,000.00
	MBG - Executive Officer Contractor	5,584.00
Total		53,584.00
Operating surplus		2,416.00

WA Wild Dog Action Plan Funding

This project is funded by the WA government, through the WA Wild Dog action plan and supports the work of an LPMT in the Midlands region and surrounding areas not covered by an RBG. This project is funded on an annual basis. The program has been continued in FY2022 at the same funding level.

WA Wild Dog Action Plan Funding		
Income	Project Income	25,000.00
Total		25,000.00
Cost of Sales	MBG - LPMT Contractor	24,800.00
Total		24,800.00
Operating surplus		200.00

APPENDIX 1 – Operational Plan Details

Program 1 Wild Dogs & Foxes			
<i>Actions</i>	<i>Input</i>	<i>Measurement</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
Bait Rack Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LPMT Time - Dried Meat Baits - RCP's - 1080 - Strychnine - Signage - Traps 	2 Bait Rack activities per year in Hotspot areas of the Midlands.	<p>70 unique job numbers associated with wild dogs.</p> <p>Bait freezers established at 5 locations and rack events held to fill freezers.</p> <p>7407 baits distributed.</p> <p>10 Wild Dog traps set.</p>
LPMT Contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Licensed Pest Management Technician Contract 	200 Contract days worked (total including 80 Days funded through the Sheep & Goat Industry Funding Scheme).	<p>LPMT's contracted: Vertebrate Pest Management Australia</p> <p>WA Feral Animal Management</p> <p>Midwest Shooting and Pest Management</p>
TOTAL		\$149,000	

Program 2 Feral Pigs			
<i>Action</i>	<i>Input</i>	<i>Measurement</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>
Co-ordinated Integrated Feral Pig Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Licensed Pest Management Technician Time - Grain - Poison - Cameras - Signs - RCPs - Aerial Shoot 	<p>No of participating landholders.</p> <p>No of pigs poisoned</p> <p>Landholder Feedback</p>	<p>37 unique feral pig job numbers across Midlands region.</p> <p>50 Restricted Chemical Permits targeting feral pigs covering approximately 139,000 hectares.</p> <p>676 Feral pigs destroyed through this program.</p>

Co-ordination	- Co-ordination costs for feral pig control.		Morawa-Mingenew Collaborative Pig Project instigated 27 Unique feral pig job numbers as part of this project. 758 Feral Pigs destroyed through this project.
TOTAL		\$117,000	

Program 3 Rabbits			
<i>Action</i>	<i>Input</i>	<i>Measurement</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
Community Rabbit Baiting Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LPMT Time - Grain - Poison - Baiting Trailer - RCP's - LPMT time 	No. of landholder participating. No of KM baited.	28 unique job numbers targeting rabbits. 127 Restricted chemical permits targeting rabbits covering an estimated 265,000 hectares. 206 Packets 1080 "one shot" prepared for farmers. 11 RDHV1-K5 Release sites.
TOTAL		\$13,000	

Program 4 Community Engagement			
<i>Action</i>	<i>Input</i>	<i>Measurement</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
Community Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meeting and Field Day attendance - Surveying - Brochure - Workshops - Social Media - Print Media - Website - Newspapers 	DPR is supported across all shires. No. of people engaged in workshops Feedback received.	Communications plan executed. Presentation at Badgingarra sheep day October 2020. Annual General Meeting held and

	- Mail Out		open to the community.
TOTAL		\$6000	

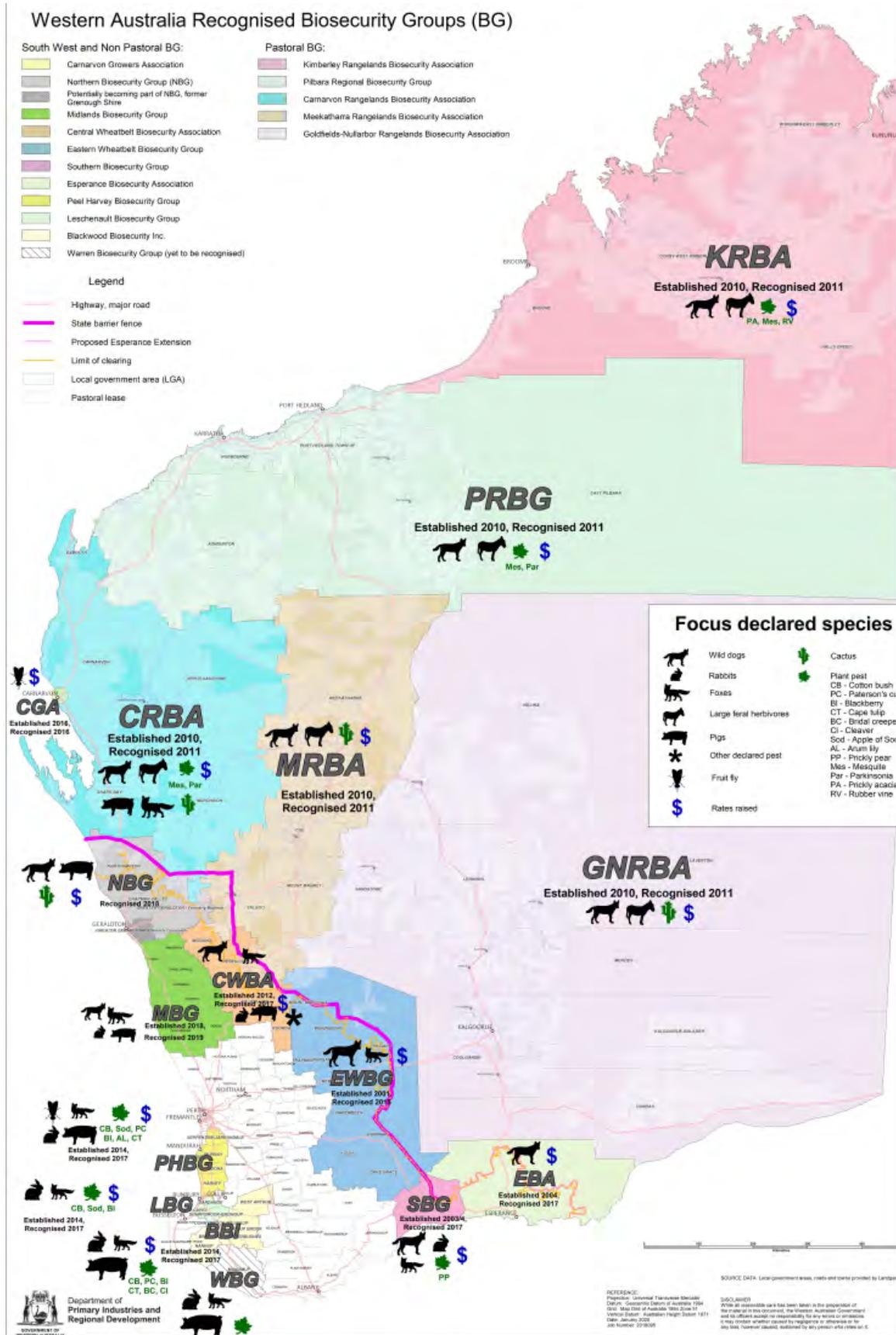
Program 5 Governance & Administration			
<i>Activity</i>	<i>Input</i>	<i>Measurement</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
Staff	- Executive Officer Contract	Part Time Executive Officer employed.	Chris O'Callaghan contracted to complete Executive officer and bookkeeping services.
Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IT - Insurance - Travel - Office Space - Bookkeeper - Data Management - Reporting & Auditing Costs - Admin/Comms - Meeting costs - Staff Professional Development 		<p>Leading monitoring and evaluation database developed to automate numerous administration tasks.</p> <p>MBG Board met 3 times a year plus Annual General Meeting.</p>
Contingency	Contingency for Non-Payment of DPR. ~\$20,000		
TOTAL		105,000	

APPENDIX 2 – Communications Strategy

Goal	Timing	Detail
Regular column in local papers/e-news	July, September, October, February, March, June	<p>Papers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Badgingarra Sandpaper • Dandaragan Redgum • Coorow Squawk • Northern Valleys News • On the Mat Carnamah and Eneabba • Craytales Jurien Bay • Leeman/Greenhead Snag Island News • Three Springs Yakabout • Moora Herald • Mingenew Matters • Dongara-Denison Local Rag • Watheroo Wag Tails
Regular E-News Update	July, September, October, February, March, June	<p>Local paper content to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Baiting Day information • Activities updates • Restricted Chemical Permits • Latest Information/Research • Declared Pest Rate
Mail Out	March	Operational Plan, group update and membership form mailed to ~800 mailboxes in the Midlands region.
MBG card		Business cards for field days.
Twitter Handle	Regular Posts with latest information & activities	See @midlands_group

Facebook Page	Regular Posts with latest information & activities	Search Midlands Biosecurity Group
Presentations to Local Government as required/requested	As requested	Provision of updates and progress of the group.
Community Baiting Day(s)	February, March, April September	Conducted at known feral pest hotspots as needed.
MBG Website update	Regularly	Content added as received. DPR information, operational plans, contact details etc.
Board Members Communication	Ongoing	Board member are key communicators in the designated area. Inform the community of group activities
Landholder Training	As requested	Training to complete RCPs, improve control strategies, governance, provide feedback to researchers. Workshops conducted in Watheroo, Three Springs and Dongara in August/September 2021. Covid-19 restrictions, prevented workshops being run in early 2020.
Brochure	August	Update MBG brochure annually to ensure information stays relevant and catchy
Flyer	September	Flyer developed for community notice boards as necessary.
Identification of Key Stakeholders	On going	Identify and inform key stakeholders of group activities. Collaborate where appropriate with other groups including Mingenew-Irwin group, Liebe Group, NACC, DBCA, WA Police.
Attend relevant field days and events	On going	MBG EO, LPMTs and/or Board members to attend events were appropriate. Presentation given at Badgingarra field day in October 2021. Attended Mingenew Expo and West Midlands Group Spring Field Day in 2021.

APPENDIX 3 – RBG’s Area of operation



AUDITORS CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

In my opinion, the attached Final Report of the DPIRD funding for the **Declared Pest Rate Funding** is, in all material respects, in compliance with the terms and conditions of the Agreement.

The Financial Information contained in the Final Report is based on proper accounts and presents fairly, in all material respects, the cash Receipts and Payments for the Project in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards.

QUALIFICATIONS

Accounting Entries - Allocation of Expenses

The acquittal of grant funding includes an allocation of expenses of the entity. The entity is often concurrently involved with a number of services. It is not practical or cost efficient for the audit to determine whether the allocation of costs over the projects is reasonable. Our examination of the records has not addressed this issue. Accordingly the management allocates expenses to individual services on a basis of subjective approximation.

Dated: 2 November 2021



DANIEL PAPAPHOTIS
Registered Company Auditor
#410503
Francis A Jones Pty Ltd
154 High Street
FREMANTLE WA 6160



Midlands Biosecurity Group

Midlands Biosecurity Group

ABN: 11 513 539 345

Financial report for the year ended 30 June 2021

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Balance sheet

30 Jun 2021

	Total
Assets	
MBG Bank Account	130,190
Declared Pest Trust Account - DPIRD	7,016
Total Assets	137,206
Liabilities	
GST Balance	(14,857)
Total Liabilities	(14,857)
Net Assets	152,064
Equity	
Current Year Earnings	152,064
Total Equity	152,064

Profit & loss

Accrual mode

01 Jul 2020 - 30 Jun 2021

	Total
Income	
Project Income	169,571
Declared Pest Rate Income	313,999
Declared Pest Trust Account Income	6,865
Interest Received - Declared Pest Account	151
Total Income	490,587
Cost Of Sales	
MBG- Bookeeping	1,326
MBG - Admin Costs	7,491
MBG - Community Consultation	1,905
MBG - Insurances	4,245
MBG - LPMT Contractor	227,431
MBG - Professional Development	145
MBG - Baiting/Poison Supplies	42,383
MBG- Permits	380
MBG - Consumables	2,218
MBG - Executive Officer Contractor	51,000
Total Cost Of Sales	338,523
Gross Profit	152,064
Expenses	0
Operating Profit	152,064
Other Income	0
Other Expenses	0
Net Profit	152,064

Cash movement

Accrual mode

01 Jul 2020 - 30 Jun 2021

	Total
Income	
Project Income	169,571
Declared Pest Rate Income	313,999
Declared Pest Trust Account Income	6,865
Interest Received - Declared Pest Account	151
Total Income	490,587
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MBG - Baiting/Poison Supplies	42,383
MBG- Permits	380
MBG - Consumables	2,218
MBG - Executive Officer Contractor	51,000
Total Cost Of Sales	338,523
Gross Profit	152,064
Expenses	0
Operating Profit	152,064
Other Income	0
Other Expenses	0
Net Profit	152,064
Assets	0
Liabilities	0
Equity	0
GST Movement	
GST Balance	(14,857)
Total GST Movement	(14,857)
Net Cash Movement in (Out)	137,206
Opening Balance	0
Cash Movement	
MBG Bank Account	130,190
Declared Pest Trust Account - DPIRD	7,016
Total Cash Movement	137,206
Closing Balance	137,206

Statement of cash flow summary

01 Jul 2020 - 30 Jun 2021

Classification	Net cash flow (\$)
Cash flow from operating activities	137,206
Cash flow from investing activities	0
Cash flow from financing activities	0
Net increase/decrease for the period	137,206
Cash at the beginning of the period	0
Cash at the end of the period	137,206

MIDLANDS BIOSECURITY GROUP
ABN: 11 513 539 345
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

NOTE 1: STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

This financial report is a special purpose financial report prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act 2015 (WA). The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity.

The financial report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act (WA) and the following Australian Accounting Standards:

AASB 112	Income Taxes
AASB 110	Events after the Balance Sheet Date

No other applicable Accounting Standards, Australian Accounting Interpretations or other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board have been applied.

The financial report has been prepared on an accrual basis.

The following material accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless otherwise stated, have been adopted in the preparation of this financial report.

a) Income Tax

The Association is a non-profit organisation and thus exempted from income tax liability by virtue of section 23(3) of the Income Tax Assessment Act.

b) Goods & Services Tax (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office. In these circumstances, the GST is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of the asset or as part of an item of the expense. Receivables and payables in the balance sheet are shown inclusive of GST.

NOTE 2: PROJECT INCOME

Australian Wool Innovation Funding

In January 2021 the MBG received grant monies from AWI for a wild dog and feral pig monitoring and landholder training program. Funds were paid upfront (\$38,571.43), and will be expended over the life of the project, which finishes 30 June 2022.

Commonwealth Drought Funding

In July 2020, the Midlands Biosecurity Group completed community engagement activities on behalf of the West Midlands Group for the commonwealth drought funding project managed by the West Midlands Group. The fee for this service was charged at \$20,000

WA Wild Dog Action Plan Funding

1 year grant totalling \$25,000.

Sheep & Goat Industry Funding Scheme Funding

3 year project with income totalling \$56,000 per year.

Central Wheatbelt Biosecurity Group Feral Pig Collaboration

In July 2020 a collaborative feral pig program was launched by the Midlands Biosecurity Group and Central Wheatbelt Biosecurity Association to manage a feral pig population in the shires of Mingenew and Morawa. The Central Wheatbelt Biosecurity Association contributed \$30,000 towards this project, with the Midlands Biosecurity Group taking on the administration role. This money was used to contract a Licensed Pest Management Technician to co-ordinate the control program.

NOTE 3. DECLARED PEST RATE INCOME

\$313,548.20 was drawn from the state government Declared Pest Account. A reimbursement amount of \$450.91 was paid by the Northern Biosecurity Group for RHDV Rabbit Virus supplied by the Midlands Biosecurity Group to the Northern Biosecurity Group

NOTE 4.

The included balance sheet also acts as a statement of equity as no assets or liabilities, have a market value different from the book values.

STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

In the opinion of the committee the financial report:

1. Presents a true and fair view of the financial position of the Midlands Biosecurity Group as at 30 June 2021 and its performance for the year ended on that date.
2. At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that Midlands Biosecurity Group will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Committee and is signed for and on behalf of the Committee by:



Charles Wass
Chairperson



Chris O'Callaghan
Treasurer

Dated this 22nd Day of September, 2021

INDEPENDENT ASSURANCE PRACTITIONER'S REPORT

To the members of the Midlands Biosecurity Group

Report on the Midlands Biosecurity Group Financial Records

Agribusiness
Business Structures
Tax Planning
Self Managed Superannuation
Succession Planning

We have reviewed the accompanying 2021 financial records of the **Midlands Biosecurity Group**, dated 22nd September 2021 which comprises of:-

- Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2021
- Profit and Loss for period 1 July to 30 June 2021
- Cash Movement for period 1 July to 30 June 2021
- Statement of Cash Flow Summary for period 1 July to 30 June 2021
- Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2021
- Statement by members of the committee

The Committee of the Midlands Biosecurity Group responsibility for the 2021 Financial Records

The Committee of the Midlands Biosecurity Group is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the 2021 financial report in accordance with the Constitution and the Associations Incorporation Act 1987 (WA). This responsibility includes establishing and maintaining internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the 30 June 2021 financial records that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies; and making accounting estimates that are reasonable for the circumstances.

Assurance Practitioner's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express a conclusion on the 30 June 2021 financial records based on our review. We conducted our review in accordance with the Standard on Review Engagements ASRE2400 *Review of a Financial Report Performed by an Assurance Practitioner Who is Not the Auditor of the Entity*, in order to state whether, on the basis of the procedures described, anything has come to our attention that causes us to believe that the financial records are not presented fairly, in all material respects, in accordance with the Constitution and the Associations Incorporation Act 1987 (WA). ASRE 2400 requires us to comply with the requirements of the applicable code of professional conduct of a Professional Accounting Body.

A review of financial records consists of making enquires, primarily of persons responsible for financial and accounting matters, and applying analytical and other review procedures. A review is substantially less in scope than an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards and consequently does not enable us to obtain assurance that we would become aware of all significant matters that might be identified in an audit. Accordingly, we do not express an audit opinion.

Independence

In conducting our review, we have complied with the independence requirements of the Australian Professional Accounting bodies.

Reporting Compliance - Associations Incorporation Act 1987 (WA).

As the Midlands Biosecurity Group has turnover between \$250,000 and \$1,000,000, it is considered a Tier 2 association. As such, they are required to prepare financial statements for presentations to members that give a true and fair view of the financial position of the association and comply with Australian Accounting Standards.

Pursuant to the accounting standards, the financial statements must include:

- a statement of financial position (i.e. a balance sheet);
- a statement of comprehensive income (i.e. income statement/profit & loss);
- a statement of changes in equity; and
- a statement of cash flows for the period.

Tier 2 associations must have their financial reports reviewed.

These reports provided for this review satisfy the above. Note 5. to the financials covers the changes in equity – no asset or liability has a market value that is not listed per the book value in the supplied Balance Sheet.

As such, we believe Midlands Biosecurity Group has complied with applicable reporting obligations.

Reporting Compliance – Constitution Version 1.00 adopted 04/04/2019

The Midlands Biosecurity Group abides by “25.3 Financial Records, Financials Statements, Reports and Audit” via the provision of the reports discussed above and reporting to the Department as required.

Solvency

The Income/Expense report shows a surplus of \$152,064 in 2021 financial year with cash reserves of \$137,206.

There is unspent money for projects as detailed in NOTE 2: PROJECT INCOME of \$38,571.43, well below cash reserves.

The accounts presented do not give concern regarding solvency.

Sample Transactions

We tested a number of transactions:-

- Bank statements and banking reports extracts supported bank account balances per “MGB Bank Account” - As of 30/06/2021.
- Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development declared pest trust account matches closing balance per “Declared Pest Trust Account – DPIRD” – As at 30/06/2021.
- Sample income invoices matched bank statements, MYOB Essentials data entry and were broken down into specific income categories.
- Sample expense invoices matched bank statements, MYOB Essentials data entry and were broken down into specific expense categories.
- All transfers between Bendigo Bank and Regional Development declared pest trust account were sighted. Noted that transfers recorded in declared pest trust account were recorded GST exclusive.

Conclusion

Based on our review, which is not an audit, we believe that the 30 June 2021 financial records of The Midlands Biosecurity Group give a true and fair view of, in all material respects, the financial position of The Midlands Biosecurity Group as at 30 June 2021 and of its financial performance and its cash flows for the year ended on that date, in accordance with the Constitution and the Associations Incorporation Act 1987 (WA).

Dated this 24th September 2021



.....
Paul David Watson

Pascoe Partners Accountants