

# Northern Biosecurity Group Inc.

## Operational Plan 2024-2025



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## INTRODUCTION

The Northern Biosecurity Group objectives are to take a proactive collaborative approach to the facilitation of declared pest management within its community, utilising a coordinated effort across the region and by working with landholders, government departments, industry groups and neighbouring biosecurity groups to ensure efficient and effective pest management on a regional scale or where appropriate.

The group formed in 2018 after a push from the State Government to establish as a Recognised Biosecurity Group, being the preferred partnership arrangement for the control of widespread and established declared pests.

The formal recognition of the Northern Biosecurity Group provided a framework to foster efficiency through community arrangements to make the best use of the skills, funds, capacities, incentives and regulations available.

Recognised Biosecurity Groups (RBGs) are the preferred model under the BAM Act (*Biosecurity and Agricultural Management Act 2007*). The BAM Act recognises that biosecurity is a shared responsibility and helps to enable landholders and land managers to develop a coordinated approach to control and manage declared pests in their prescribed area.

The NBG operates within the State Barrier Fence and covers the Shires of Northampton, Chapman Valley and the City of Greater Geraldton. The total area of the NBG is close to 30,000 km<sup>2</sup> with various land tenures identified. (See Appendix 1 – map).

The group has progressed significant community engagement processes to explain the concepts of community based declared pest management and the declared pest rate, and will continue to do so to show value-for-money by promoting sustainable and efficient biosecurity practices and combining local on-the-ground stakeholder knowledge and commitment.

Beside the collection of the declared pest rate, RBGs endeavour to seek and apply for external funds to support their pest control activities. To date, NBG has been successful in raising additional funding from other financial sources to add significant value to the DPR contributions provided by landholders and the WA State Government.

This Operational Plan provides details on the activities and the required budget needed to support declared pest management activities by the NBG during the 2023-2024 Financial Year.

*The Northern Biosecurity Group recommends that the Minister for Agriculture and Food WA(as per legislation) determines an ad-valorem rate of \$242,950 on the unimproved land value for land for Freehold Land in the local government districts of Northampton, Chapman Valley and City of Greater Geraldton for the financial year commencing 1 July 2024, that is;*

- *identified as freehold on the rural valuation roll maintained under the Valuation of Land Act 1978; and*
- *no less than 100 hectares in area; and*
- *a minimum of \$80.00 per VEN.*

## OBJECTIVES

The Northern Biosecurity Group's Strategic Plan identifies the goals and aspirations for the Group over the next two years. The plan acts as a guidance manual for the NBG Management Board to monitor activities and performance.

The NBG objectives include;

- Initiate, promote and foster the control of declared pests in the NBG region;
- Encourage landholders and community to adopt sound biosecurity practices in a strategic and effective manner;
- 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 control of declared species and research and development opportunities within the region;
- Build and enhance communication and cooperation between all stakeholders on the effective control of declared species within the region;
- Create and maintain clear communication between all stakeholders;
- Gather accurate data of production loss and environmental damage by using Feral Scan and other technologies to measure the effectiveness of control methods.

## BACKGROUND

The incorporation of the Northern Biosecurity Group (NBG) commenced from a workshop held in July 2016. It was formally established in May 2017 when six representatives from the Northern Agri Group, Yuna Farm Improvement Group, Mullewa Dryland Farming Initiative and the Northampton Feral Eradication Group, formed an interim committee to establish a biosecurity group for the northern half of the Northern Agricultural Region.

The NBG received Recognised Biosecurity Group (RBG) status by the Minister on the 30th of June 2018. This resulted in the entire length of the State Barrier Fence being serviced by RBGs both inside and outside the fence with LPMTs actively engaging in the control of wild dogs and other declared pests.

The NBG Constitution sets the requirements for the appointment of the Board of Management, which currently consists of six members. These members hold voluntary positions and are responsible for overseeing the affairs of the Association. The Board of Management consists of a Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, and no less than three members, but no more than eight other members.

During a Special Meeting in October 2019, the NBG members adopted a change in the Constitution to ensure all local government areas (LGA) have representation. The Board will have to include a minimum of two (2) representatives from each LGA.

The NBG held its 2023 Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 21st of September 2023 in Nabawa. Three Board Members were up for (re)election but no new nominations were received for 2024/25.

The NBG Board of Management 2022-2023 includes:

<b>Board Member</b>	<b>Date of 1<sup>st</sup> Appointment</b>	<b>Position and LGA</b>	<b>Term Expiry</b>
Jason Batten	October 2018	Chairperson / SCV	2024
Scott Bridgeman	October 2018	Deputy Chairperson / NORTH	2024
Penny Walker*	October 2018	Secretary/Treasurer/	2025
Jeremy Brooks	October 2018	Committee Member /SCV	2026
Steve Rowe	October 2018	Committee Member /CGG	2024
Lloyd Cripps	October 2020	Committee Member /NORTH	2026
Darren Cobley	October 2020	Committee Member /CGG	2026
Mike Kerkmans	September 2021	Committee Member /CGG	2024

*\*non-voting member*

## STAKEHOLDERS

Key stakeholders and collaborators include;

- Landholders in the NBG region
- Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD)
- Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions (DBCA)
- Shire of Northampton
- Shire of Chapman Valley
- City of Greater Geraldton
- State Natural Resource Management Office
- Australian Wool Innovation Ltd (AWI)
- Meat and Livestock Australia
- Northern Agricultural Catchments Council
- Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Association
- Meekatharra Rangelands Biosecurity Association
- Central Wheatbelt Biosecurity Association
- Midlands Biosecurity Group
- Northern Agri Group
- Yuna Farm Improvement Group
- Mullewa Dryland Farming Initiative

- Bush Heritage Australia
- WALGA
- West Australian Feral Pig Advisory Group
- National Feral Pig Coordination Team
- Midwest Development Commission
- Yamatji Southern Regional Corporation

## FUNDING

The total operating budget to manage declared pests in the NBG area is **\$575,900** with the majority of funds received from the Declared Pest Account. In 2024/2025, the Declared Pest Rate (DPR) will be collected by the Office of State Revenue (OSR) from landholders who own >100ha with a minimum payment of \$80.00 per VEN, in the NBG prescribed area. The declared pest activities will focus on wild dog, feral pig, fox, rabbit and cactus controls. In 2024/25 the NBG will also be including emus in their Annual Operational Plan as this has been identified as a Declared Pest by landholders in the broadacre cropping areas of our region. Whilst the collection of the DPR will provide the main source of funds for these activities, other funding opportunities will continue to be pursued as they arise to further supplement activities.

As at the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2024 the NBG have included a list of unconfirmed other funding opportunities for the management and monitoring of declared pest within the Midwest Region.

## FORECAST BUDGET 2024-2025

### NBG BUDGET TEMPLATE (GST ex)

INCOME		DETAIL/NOTES	DPA 2024/25	Other Sources
Rate revenue		DPA 2024/25 (80% collection)	194,360	-
Govt matching			242,950	-
Additional DPA			90,000	-
Reserve fund		<b>DPA : \$? (est 450,000)</b>	-	-
Unspent				
Interest			-	-
		<b>Total DPA/DPR</b>	<b>527,310</b>	-
SNRMO		Confirmed	-	
WDAP2		Confirmed	-	62,500
DPA		Unconfirmed/Unspent		
NACC		Unconfirmed	-	-

Evorta	Unconfirmed		
Interest		-	-
<b>Total- Other sources</b>		-	62,500
<b>TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE</b>		<b>527,310</b>	
<b>plus Expected Carryover</b>		-	-

EXPENDITURE	DETAIL/NOTES	DPA/DPR	Other Sources
	<b>Program 1 - (Wild dogs)</b>		
	Aerial baiting (DPA)	35,000	
	Bait manufacture	10,000	
	Wild Dog LPMT training	-	
	Equipment	2,500	
	LPMT contract (320 days)	130,000	62,500
	<b>Total Program 1</b>	<b>177,500</b>	<b>62,500</b>
	<b>Program 2 - Feral Pigs</b>	-	
	Chemical / products	15,000	-
	Feral pigs aerial shoot	40,000	
	Equipment	4,000	
	LPMT contract	100,000	
	<b>Total Program 2</b>	<b>159,000</b>	-
	<b>Program 3 - Other pest animals</b>	-	
	Community baiting (rabbits, foxes, wild dogs, feral pigs, safety gear, truck hire)	2,400	-
	LPMT contract	6,000	
	Rabbits (OneShot)	25,000	
	Foxes	2,100	
	Other (Emus)	40,000	
	<b>Total Program 2</b>	<b>75,500</b>	-
	<b>Program 3 - Declared Plants</b>	-	
	Cactus	4,000	-
	Other	-	-
		-	-
	<b>Total Program 3</b>	<b>4,000</b>	

	<b>Program 4 - Community Engagement</b>	-	
	Community activities	5,000	-
	Materials (signs)	2,400	-
	RCPs	2,500	-
	Consultion for operational plan (DPR)	2,500	-
		-	-
	<b>Total Program 4</b>	<b>12,400</b>	-
	<b>Program 5 -Governance &amp; Administration</b>	-	
	Executive Officer	40,000	
	Comms/Liaison Officer	15,000	
	Finance Officer	10,000	-
	Meeting costs	12,000	-
	Professional finance & audit	4,500	-
	Insurance	12,000	-
	Sundry	-	-
	<b>Total Program 5</b>	<b>93,500</b>	-
	Q1 25/26 forecast expenditure	54,000	-
	<b>TOTAL COST</b>	<b>521,900</b>	<b>62,500</b>
	<b>GRAND EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>575,900</b>	

## PLANNED ACTIVITIES 2024-2025

### Licensed Pest Management Technicians for Wild Dog control

The NBG has a great team of local Licensed Pest Management Technicians that have been contracted by the NBG for the majority of its operating years. The LPMT have been successful in addressing the increase of wild dog attacks in the northern part of our region. Their main duties are baiting and trapping in wild dog hotspots and be available to land managers who have wild dog (suspected) sightings/tracks, report stock attacks or would like some on-ground advice on how to protect their property from wild dog attacks.

The LPMT contract for Wild Dog Control is budgeted for 320 days of activity, based on previous Operational Budgets, FeralScan data, LPMT reports and other available funding. The



LPMTs are funded out of the Declared Pest Account (DPA) and Wild Dog Action Plan WA funding. The Group is hopeful the DPR income could be supplemented with access to external funding sources.

The LPMT contract for feral pig trapping during the previous three years was partially funded through the State NRM Stewardship Program – the three Midwest RBGs were successful in an application for feral pig control in the Mingenew/Mullewa/Morawa areas but at this stage no contract has been signed due to negotiations and approval from Traditional Owners groups.

### **Pest Control Activities**

The NBG organises community baiting days in Autumn and Spring for all landholders in the region who hold a current RCP. Wild dog, Feral Pig, Foxes and Rabbit baiting products will be available at different locations in the region. Other activities include research and monitoring of dog and feral pig activities. Costs include LPMT time, purchase of 1080 products and safety gear. Meat baits are manufactured on-site under LPMT instruction for community and scheduled baiting runs. An aerial baiting program will be considered for inaccessible areas if DPR or external funding sources permit.

The NBG is planning to continue its successful aerial feral pig culling program across three key project locations in our region. This will be funded through the NBG and with financial assistance from participating landholders.

**Planned pest control activities between June 2024 – July 2025**

Who	Action	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
All landholders	Landholders to submit RCP applications												
All landholders with RCP	Coordinated community baiting for Wild Dogs, Foxes, Rabbits and Feral Pigs												
LPMT	Professional wild dog trapping and reporting as per contract												
Landholders, Feral Pig LPMT	Coordinated Trapping and Baiting (DPA & SNRMO)												
Feral Pig Monitoring	Monitor camera and drone deployment (DPIRD and NBG)												
Aerial Feral Pig Shoot	Aerial cull in feral pig hot spot areas												

**Project Management:**

The NBG contracts an Executive Officer for approx. 15 hours per week alongside a Finance Officer. The NBG Board meets at least four per year and committee members are reimbursed for expenses e.g. travel.

The Financial Officer who works on a as-needed basis and will process all recommended and approved payments for our organisation.

**Community Engagement**

The budget item includes all engagement activities that are being organised to inform the community about Declared Pest Species and activities carried out by the NBG.

A quarterly E-Newsletter is distributed to members and stakeholders and a website is being developed for easy access to resources. Key messages are circulated frequently via the NBG face-book page.

The NBG has been covering the cost for Registered Pesticide Permit (RPP) applications submitted to DPIRD for this financial year. The NBG receives a 50% discount on RCP permit fees from DPIRD.

The NBG has received additional funding for three Community Engagement events but the majority of time and funding of the Community Engagement funding is used for consultation with landholders in regards to the priority pest information and on-ground activities as part of the Operational Plan.

**COMMUNITY CONSULTATION TIMELINE**

As part of the Operational Plan, the NBG will undertake a range of engagement activities aimed at informing participation, collaboration with landholders and key stakeholders within its community.

We have identified key community engagement activities for 2024-25 as identified in the table below

Organisation/Stakeholder	Type of Engagement	Type of communication activity	Materials/Resources needed	When	By Who
General Community including Landholders	Inform & Consult	Use Social Media to inform all stakeholders NBG Website Attend Field Days Media Releases E-Newsletter	Facebook + Twitter Flyer + Poster + Banner Articles  Using articles and links	Ongoing  April/ Sept 2024/25  Quarterly	EO Marieke Jansen
NBG Members	Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate and Empower	Newsletters AGM NBG Community Info Sessions	NBG Member mailing list	Quarterly	EO Marieke Jansen EO and NBG Board
NBG Board	Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate and Empower	Board meetings Board reports Sign off on NBG Policies and Procedures New LPMT contracts BAM Act presentation	Provision of EO reports and finances	Quarterly + AGM	EO Marieke Jansen NBG Board

Organisation/Stakeholder	Type of Engagement	Type of communication activity	Materials/Resources needed	When	By Who
Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD)	Inform, Consult, Involve and Collaborate	Invite to attend/present at workshops/events SNRMO Feral Pig Monitoring project Collaboration with DPIRD Research and Regional Biosecurity Officers	E-Newsletter articles RCP permit information Report on baits distributed (in EO report) Reporting Template	Declared Pest Community Events  2x p/yr (and updates at Farming Group Field Days)	Office of RBG Local Biosecurity Officers (e.g. Mike Jones) Invasive Species Development Officers (e.g. Pete Adams, Stuart Dawson, Tracey Kreplins) State Barrier Fence – Craig Robbins Wild Dog Action Plan – Tim Thompson Minister of Agriculture
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA)	Inform, Consult, Involve and Collaborate	Collaborate and Coordinate baiting programs	Inform which landholders are participating in what program	Spring and Autumn each year  Attending Round Table session at board meetings	DBCA Senior Operations Officer Michael Raykos

Organisation/Stakeholder	Type of Engagement	Type of communication activity	Materials/Resources needed	When	By Who
Other RBGs in SW Land Division	Inform, Consult, Involve and Collaborate	Attend RBG Coordinators meeting	Collaborate on common issues and opportunities.	2x p/yr?	NBG Executive Officer Other RBG EOs & Chairs
Organisation/Stakeholder	Type of Engagement	Type of communication activity	Materials/Resources needed	When	By Who
RBGs in Rangelands	Inform, Consult, Involve and Collaborate	Teleconference on pastoral properties within the NBG region (inside SBF)	Maps, FeralScan records and group reports  Collaborate on common issues and opportunities.	Ongoing	NBG Chair and EO CRBA EO, Dogger Coordinator and Chair MRBA EO, Dogger Coordinator and Chair
Northern Agricultural Catchment Council (NACC)	Inform, Consult, Involve and Collaborate	Collaborate on rabbit/fox/feral pig baiting for Malleefowl protection	Landholder details for fencing, revegetating or baiting in Malleefowl areas	As per contract (pending)	NACC Biodiversity Coordinator
Grower Groups Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Northern Agri Group</li> <li>Mullewa Dryland Initiative</li> <li>Yuna Farm Improvement</li> </ul>	Inform	Attend meetings and field days  Membership of GGA	Flyers, Banners, Posters, Presentation, RCP Permits	September 2023	EO and Board members from Grower Group

Organisation/Stakeholder	Type of Engagement	Type of communication activity	Materials/Resources needed	When	By Who
Group					
Local Government Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shire of Northampton</li> <li>• Shire of Chapman Valley</li> <li>• City of Greater Geraldton</li> <li>• WALGA</li> </ul>		Mail outs + Updates at Council meetings	Info for Shire Officers with NBG info and explanation of DPR		
Organisation/Stakeholder	Type of Engagement	Type of communication activity	Materials/Resources needed	When	By Who
Minister for Agriculture and Food	Inform	Media releases	Photos	As opportunity arises	Minister for Agriculture and Food
Biosecurity Council	Inform	Email / Meetings/Presentations	Reports	As opportunity arises	Carolyn Edwards (DPIRD)
Industry Funding Schemes	Consult & Collaborate	Funding opportunities	Funding application to fill gaps inside of the fence of UCL/Reserves and Pastoral properties not included in NBG DPR.		Rebecca Heath
Stock agents- Suppliers	Inform	Flyer / handout	FeralScan + Flyer to encourage to report stock damage		Elders & Nutrien + West Coast Wool

Organisation/Stakeholder	Type of Engagement	Type of communication activity	Materials/Resources needed	When	By Who
AWI + MLA	Inform, Consult & Collaborate	Additional funding for Wild Dog and Feral Pig Control  Sheep data to estimate wild dog impact on sheep production	FeralScan Reports + EO reports at NBG Meetings + Invite to NBG Meeting		FeralScan Reports NBG Newsletter
Yamatji Southern Regional Corporation	<b>Consult &amp; Collaborate &amp; Inform</b>	Face to face TO meetings		When available	Peter Batt (DBCA) Joint Management Team
Midwest Development Commission	Inform & Consult & Collaborate	Discuss funding and training opportunities for Declared Pest Management for Aboriginal Stakeholders in NBG (Yamatji) region		Ongoing	Hayley Smyth (DPIRD)



Appendix 1: NBG Prescribed Area Map (December 2023).

