



**Northern Biosecurity Group Inc.
Annual Report
Financial Year 2024/25**



CHAIR’S REPORT	3
WHERE WE OPERATE	4
WHY WE OPERATE	4
Objectives of the NBG	
HOW WE OPERATE	5
NBG Membership	
2024/25 membership	
Our team	
Aerial contractors	
FUNDING SOURCES 2024 - 2025	8
PROGRAMS 2024 - 2025	9
Wild Dogs	
Feral Pigs	
Other Animal Pests	
Declared Plants - Cacti	
Communication and Engagement	
Administration & Governance	
FINANCIAL REPORT	13
FUTURE CHALLENGES	15
Funding for Wild Dog control	
Expense of aerial cull programs	
Uncertainty of NBG’s future beyond June 2027	
Stakeholder engagement in pest control	



Chair's Report

Dear Members

As we approach the final round of confirmed funding for the 2026/2027 financial year, it is my hope that our feral pest management efforts are in a stronger position than when the Northern Biosecurity Group (NBG) was established seven years ago. Operations will continue as normal until the release of the new BAM Act, which will provide further guidance regarding future funding allocations.



The NBG has proactively sought legal counsel to ensure our policies and procedures for aerial culling are current, recognising the inherent risks associated with these activities. The acquisition of maps and landholder locations has presented ongoing challenges; however, steady progress is being made.

This year's aerial culling operations were the most comprehensive undertaken by the NBG to date. Special thanks are extended to Clare and Jay for their considerable dedication, as well as to participating landholders for their cooperation in completing documentation and providing essential mapping. The high numbers of feral pigs and deer culled were consistent with expectations.

The zone-based approach implemented by Clare, Jay and the Licensed Pest Management Technicians (LPMTs) has proven highly effective in fostering collaboration among neighbouring landholders. This coordinated strategy has enabled the NBG to collect valuable data and accurately identify pest hotspots. We intend to maintain this data-driven methodology in 2026, ensuring board decisions are informed by robust evidence.

Recent amendments to the Firearms Act have necessitated further legal review of LPMT contracts. As a result, LPMTs are now required to hold a professional shooter's licence to be employed by NBG. These legislative changes have also impacted landholders and recreational hunters, with the licensing portal presenting challenges for all firearm licence holders. It is hoped that most landholders have successfully retained their firearms, which remain essential tools for effective local pest management.

To support strategic development, the board has engaged AgriStart Pty Ltd to develop a five-year Strategic Plan. We are collaborating closely with Dr Natasha Teakle on this initiative, which is expected to streamline operations and provide Clare with greater clarity on board priorities for future funding.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to our NBG board members for their ongoing commitment and thoughtful input throughout the year. Their guidance has been invaluable in steering our group towards its objectives. Additionally, I extend a heartfelt thank you to our dedicated staff, whose hard work and professionalism have been instrumental in the success of our operations. The collective effort of both board and staff continues to underpin the achievements of the Northern Biosecurity Group.

Jason Batten
Chair



Where we operate

The Northern Biosecurity Group Inc. (NBG) designated area of management comprises freehold land properties, 100 hectares or more, located in the local government areas (LGAs) of:

- City of Greater of Geraldton,
- Shire of Chapman Valley, and
- Shire of Northampton.

Note: The Declared Pest Rate on Pastoral lands in the 3 LGAs is paid to the Rangelands Biosecurity Associations to the north and east.

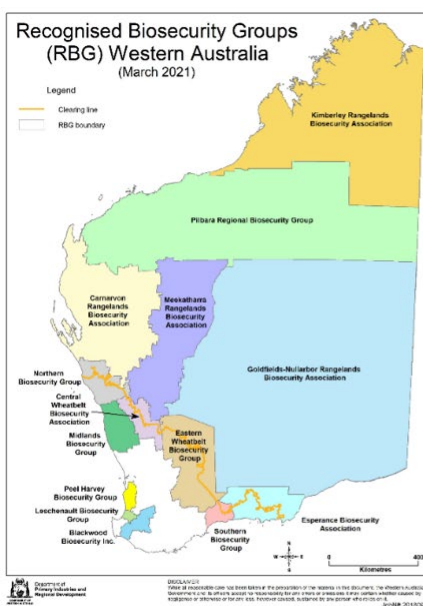


Figure 1. The NBG is one of 14 Recognised Biosecurity Groups in WA.

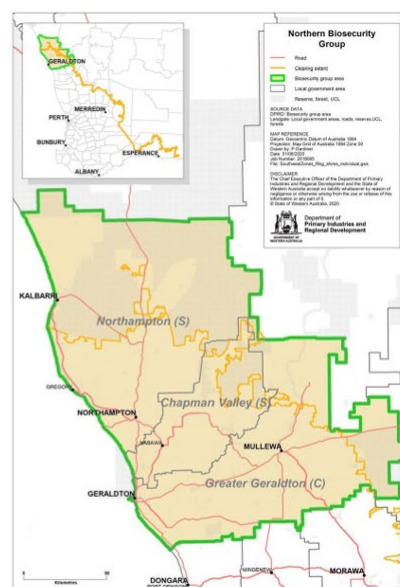


Figure 2. The Local Government Areas within the NBG designated area of management.

Why we operate

The purpose of the Northern Biosecurity Group (NBG) is to support landholders to meet their legal obligations under the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007* (BAM Act), that being to control declared pest animals and plants on private land.

In 2016, before it became a Recognised Biosecurity Group, the NBG formed to focus on the control of wild dogs inside the State Barrier Fence (SBF).

The group's board comprised 6 representatives from local agricultural groups:

- the Northern Agri Group (NAG),
- Yuna Farm Improvement Group (YFIG),
- Mullewa Dryland Farming Initiative (MDFI), and the
- Northampton Feral Eradication Group.

In 2018, the NBG was established as a Recognised Biosecurity Group (RBG). A RBG is the State Government's preferred partnership for the control of widespread and established declared pests.



The RBGs operate as a mechanism under the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007* (BAM Act) and are funded via the Declared Pest Rate (DPR), with matched funding (1:1) from the State Government. The funding may only be used for declared pest control in the NBG area, and only for activities outlined in an Operational Plan that has been approved by the State Government.

Since 2019, the NBG has focussed on the management of a number of declared pests identified by landholders as priority pests impacting biosecurity and agriculture in the region. The RBG model allows landholders and managers to develop a coordinated approach for declared pest control that addresses local needs and supports their individual efforts.

Objectives of the NBG

As detailed in the NBG Constitution, the Objects and Purposes of the group are to:

- Initiate, promote and foster the control of Declared Pests 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.

How we operate

The Board of Management represents landholders in the region and is responsible for governance, compliance, and strategic and financial oversight of the NBG. A team of administrators and licensed pest management technicians executes the Operational Plan for the NBG.

The group is an association under the *Associations Incorporation Act 2015*. Our Constitution stipulates a minimum of two representatives from each LGA must sit on the Association's board. This is to encourage stakeholder representation and landholder engagement across the NBG area of management. The Board of Management comprises:

- a Chairperson,
- a Deputy Chairperson,
- a Secretary*
- a Treasurer* and
- no less than three but no more than eight other members.

**The treasurer and secretary can be appointed as ex-officio*

2024/2025 Board of Management

Three new members joined the board at the commencement of FY24/25. Three board members' terms expire at the end of FY 24/25. Board members are volunteers and are full members of the NBG.



Table 1. The 2024/2025 NBG Board Members

Name	LGA	Term expiry (end of FY- at October AGM)
Jason Batten (Chair)	Chapman Valley	25/26 - 2026
Scott Bridgeman (Deputy Chair)	Northampton	25/26 - 2026
Ashley Eastough	Chapman Valley	25/26 - 2026
Mike Kerkmans	Greater Geraldton	24/25 - 2025
Anthony Hollins	Greater Geraldton	25/26 - 2026
Darren Cobley	Greater Geraldton	24/25 - 2025
Carlie Rowe	Greater Geraldton	25/26 - 2026
Lloyd Cripps	Northampton	24/25 - 2025
Penny Walker	Secretary and Treasurer	*ex officio

*no voting rights

NBG Membership

All membership to the NBG is free.

Full membership is available to any landholder who owns or occupies at least 100 hectares of freehold land within the NBG area of management, namely the LGAs of Northampton, Chapman Valley and City of Greater Geraldton.

Associate membership is available to any person, or representative of a public authority or other corporate body, that has an interest in Declared Pest Management within the NBG.

The NBG encourages landholders to become full members, allowing them more input into determining priority pests and activities of the NBG. The NBG cannot automatically make individuals a member, including where they pay a DPR, because privacy laws prevent the group from accessing landholder contact details.

2024/25 membership

- The NBG had a 286% increase in membership in 2024/2025.
- At the end of FY 2024/25 the NBG had 114 Full Members and 15 Associate Members.
- An additional 25 membership applications, received after the 8 June 2025 meeting, await approval at the next board meeting.

Our team

The 24/25 Operations team comprised eight part-time contractors, including:

- an Executive Officer,
- Finance Officer
- a Landholder Liaison Officer, and
- Licensed Pest Management Technicians



Table 2. The NBG Operations team

Position	Contractor		Summary of responsibilities
Executive Officer		Clare Engelke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operations planning and management • LPMT coordination • Data management • Invoice/payment approval • Reporting to board, DPIRD & funding bodies • Stakeholder liaison & communications
Finance Officer Board Secretary & Treasurer (non-voting member)		Penny Walker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bookkeeping • Audit & insurances management • Board secretary
Landholder Liaison Officer		Jay Rayner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landholder engagement for RCP Permits and participation in pest control activities • Coordination of RCP training events & baiting days
Licensed Pest Management Technicians		Ray Hughes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of wild dogs and foxes in the east of the NBG region.
Total days: 578		Andrew O'Dwyer - Midwest Pest Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of wild dogs and foxes in the northeast of NBG region • Management of Opuntoid cacti in the NBG region.
		Josh Gould – JG's Feral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of wild dogs, feral pigs, foxes and rabbits in the NBG region • Preparation of bait for landholders • Rabbit baiting in specific locations
		Wayne Heal – Sort 'Em Out Pest Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of feral pigs, foxes and rabbits in the NBG region. • LPMT on ground during aerial culling program
		Andy Lockey – WA Feral Animal Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of feral pigs, foxes and rabbits in Zone 4 & 10 prior to aerial cull in June.

In 24/25, the LPMTs completed 578 days managing priority pests across the NBG region.

The NBG contracts Licensed Pest Management Technicians (LPMTs) to work alongside land managers across our region. Their main duties are baiting and trapping in areas impacted by wild dogs and feral pigs. As part of their contract, they also control rabbits and foxes and prepare bait for landholders on behalf of the NBG.

Aerial contractors

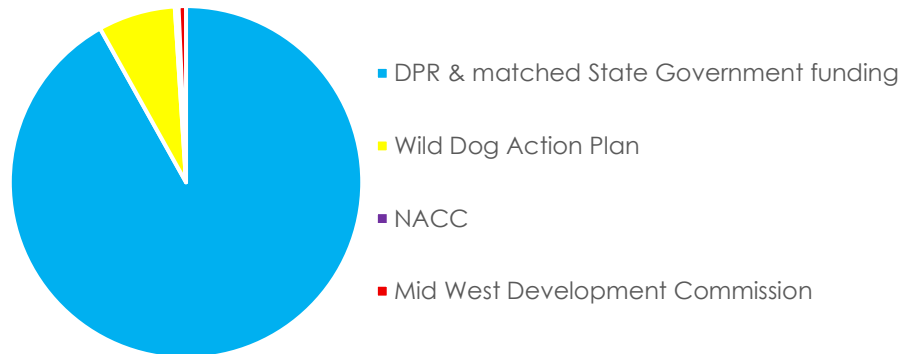
Three aerial contract teams completed work for the NBG in 24/25:

- JL Taylor and Outback Aviation – aerial baiting for wild dog management
- Vertebrate Pest Management Australia and Coral Coast Helicopters – aerial culls of emus and feral pigs
- DPIRD & Fortescue Aviation – aerial culls of feral pigs



Funding Sources 2024 - 2025

The primary source of funding for the NBG in 2024/25 was the Declared Pest Rate and State Government matched funding.



At the 2024 Annual General Meeting, the members endorsed the NBG's 2024/25 Operational Plan, with a total budget of \$575,186. This included income from:

- landholder Declared Pest Rate,
- matched State government funding,
- funds held in reserve,
- \$62,500 from the WA Wild Dog Action Plan 2,
- \$3000 NACC Protecting WA's Black Cockatoos Project
- \$4250 Drought Resilience Planning Program for the Mid West (MWDC).

For the 24/25 budget, the Minister approved an ad valorem rate of 0.028 cents in the dollar on the unimproved value of freehold land in the local government districts of Chapman Valley, Greater Geraldton and Northampton, on holdings with a minimum of 100 hectares and a minimum rate payable of \$80.

Modelling completed by DPIRD in January 2024, based on the 0.028 cents, was estimated to raise \$239,548. However, the DPR raised an additional \$126,163 because of increases in land values. The additional DPR revenue was matched by the State Government, thus a surplus of \$252,326 was collected into the NBG reserve account. This account is administered by the DPIRD.

In December 2024, the NBG Board determined a change of approach, and increase, to feral pig management was warranted. This was in response to a survey of landholders, review of NBG data, and the promising results from a zone approach implemented by the Midlands and Central Wheatbelt Biosecurity Groups.

To fund the increase in activities, a budget variation request for an additional \$297,500 was submitted to the DPIRD, to use reserve funds held in the NBG reserve account. The funding allowed expanded ground control and aerial culling across more of the region, directly responding to landholder reports of feral pig activity and damage.

The final budget for FY24/25 was \$881,686. A total of \$359,141 remains in the NBG reserve fund, as indicated on the Quarter 4 statement provided by the DPIRD in July 2025.



Programs 2024 - 2025

Wild Dogs

Total expenditure	\$169,070
Baits by aerial baiting	5000
Baits by ground baiting	4250
Average number of traps set per month	50-90 (weather dependent)
Dogs trapped/shot	42
Dogs reported by landholders (sighting, attack or control)	12
Stock attacks reported	55 small stock killed: 79 mauled

Aerial baiting

In October 2024, Jamie Taylor, of JL Taylor, completed an aerial baiting program for wild dogs for the Eastern Wheatbelt Biosecurity Association (EWBA), Central Wheatbelt Biosecurity Association (CWBA) and the NBG. Josh Gould assisted with laying the baits in the NBG area.

A total of 5000 baits were distributed across locations identified as inaccessible by vehicle. The program covered Ex Barnong Pastoral Lease, Gabyon Station, Wandina Station, Yuin/Twin Peaks/Narloo, Yuin Station, Carlaminda and Talling; map of flight tracks below in purple, black and pink.

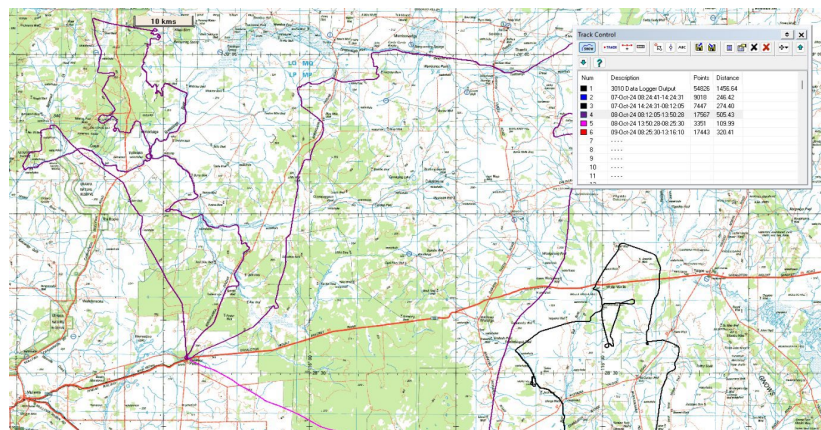


Figure 3. Flight paths for aerial baiting for wild dog control, October 2024.



Feral Pigs

Total expenditure	\$551,682*
Pigs culled by groundwork (trapping/baiting)	2179
Pigs culled by aerial work	10,282
Pig damage/sightings control reported by landholders	15 sighting/damage reports; 794 pigs controlled

**this value includes the June DPIRD aerial cull, for which the invoice was received & paid July 25*

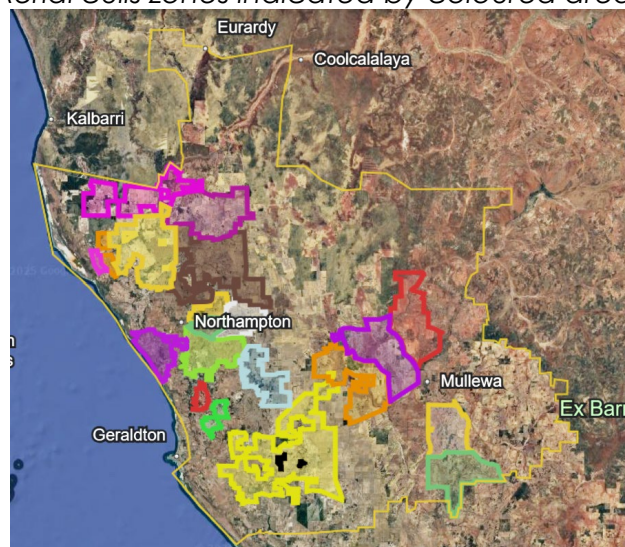
In December 2025, the NBG Board approved the adoption of a zoned approach for feral pig control. The landscape was divided into zones based on historical data and landholder reports. The preferred work plan of the zone approach is the completion of groundwork in each zone every 3-4 months to prevent pig populations increasing, with aerial culls as required.

In 2024/25, a survey of landholders determined a wider spread and greater interest in feral pig control than anticipated. Therefore, there was not time to execute all groundwork before the break of season; thus, aerial culls were completed over some new areas without the preliminary groundwork. The NBG took this as an opportunity to gather an understanding of feral pig populations.

Four aerial cull programs, 200 cull hours, were completed between March and June 2025 over 5476 square kilometres. For many of the zones, pigs were culled at an average of 1 per minute.

The maps below indicate the zones (areas) covered by aerial cull; zones are indicated by coloured areas, where landholder consent was provided. The yellow outer boundary approximate boundary of freehold agricultural land across the three LGAs, Northampton, Chapman Valley and Greater Geraldton. There were significant areas of remnant vegetation that the NBG were not permitted to access. Remnant vegetation is the preferred habitat of feral pigs; future access to such areas is important for improvement in the management of feral pigs in the region.

Aerial culls zones indicated by coloured areas.





Other Animal Pests

Total expenditure	\$32,592
Emus (aerial cull in November 2024)	847
Rabbits	Baiting completed at specific locations; bait supplied to landowners
Foxes	Culled as part of LPMT operations; baits laid and provided to landholders up on request
Cats	Culled as part of LPMT operations
Deer*	69 – culled by the DPIRD team during pig aerial work

Declared Plants - Cacti

Total expenditure	\$4,155
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Survey and control of Opuntoid cacti was completed in the northeast of the region, on properties near Wandana and Dartmoor.



Communication and Engagement

Month	Activity	Target audience	Purpose
September 24	Aerial baiting & baiting notification	Landholders and general public	Wild dog control and public notification
October 24	Annual General Meeting	Members	Consultation and inform
November 24	Informal phone surveys	Full members & landholders in the region	Consultation – to understand priority pests & problem areas
December 24	Website update	All stakeholders	Move membership application and reporting tool online and update website.
January 24	Biannual newsletter 1	Members and other stakeholders	Inform
	Letter of Support for NACC project submission	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry/NACC	Support for the recognition of a weed species that affects our members
	Discussion with affected landholders for input into	Members (and government –	To provide input into the



	review of Wild Dog Action Plan funding	information compiled in letter to DPIRD)	government's review of Wild Dog Action Plan funding
February 25	Community baiting day notification (website, social media and messages) & event & Community Baiting Day	Landholders	Awareness and participation. Limited success with 2 baiting days cancelled
	Landholder briefing on Feral Pig Control, Northampton	Landholders	Awareness and participation
March 25	Phone and email campaign for upcoming aerial culls	Members & other interested landholders	Participation and consultation
	Landholder Briefing on Feral Pig Control, Walkaway	Landholders	Participation
April 25	Letter of support for funding applications by YFIG and Wheatbelt NRM (Red card for foxes and rabbits)	Funding bodies	Support of projects that would provide positive impacts to our members
May 25	Phone surveys of landholders in area to engage in feral pig control	Landholders in the region	Participation
June 25	Biannual newsletter (distributed early July)		Inform
	Provided updates to National Feral Pig Action Plan – for the Mid West Demonstration Site web page		Inform

Administration & Governance

Total Expenditure	\$122,214
Board meetings and events	AGM October 2024, 3 additional board meetings – December, March & June
Operating systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New management system adopted for NBG records for monitoring and evaluation, LPMT information and membership application. • Feral Scan continues to be used for Wild Dog reporting • EVORTA network for dog and pig monitoring • Field cameras at all trap and bait sites for feral pig control • Web based forms for membership and landholder reporting
Risk management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk identification, assessment and control • Legal advice on contracts and new firearms legislation



Financial Report



TREASURER'S REPORT

Northern Biosecurity Group Inc

AGM – Thursday 9th October 2025

Financial Statement 1st July 2024 to 30th June 2025

Financial Summary for this period

Opening Bank Balance

Bendigo Working Account	\$47,141.07
Bendigo Savings Account	\$ 0.15
Bendigo Executive Officer Exp Acct	\$ 6,666.28
Total Opening Bank Balance	\$53,807.50

Income

DPIRD Grant funding	\$ 62,500.00
Declared Pest Rate Account funds	\$818,686.00
Interest	\$ 92.04
Total Income Received	\$881,278.04

Expenses

Admin/Governance	\$112,979.81
Wild Dogs	\$169,070.47
Feral Pigs	\$436,729.80
Other Pest Animals	\$ 35,592.38
Declared Plants	\$ 4,155.00
Community Engagement	\$ 24,214.83
Total expenses	\$792,726.18

Balance of Bendigo Bank Accounts as at 30th June 2025

Working Account	\$130,470.10
Savings Account	\$ 0.15
Executive Officer Expenditure Account	\$ 74.42

Closing Bank Balance **\$130,544.67**

Outstanding Payables

Total Outstanding Payables

\$0.00

Outstanding Receivables

ATO **\$26,919.00**



The financial software used is MYOB, where all our financial reports are issued for every Board of Management meeting along with copies of the Bank Statements.

At a minimum, two of the Board along with the Board Treasurer sign for all transactions to the account which is managed online after approval for payment by the Executive Officer.

AMD Accountants Geraldton office oversee the lodgement of the BAS and end of year adjustments.

Our group have been audited annually since inception by AMD Bunbury, who are a registered company auditor, this is conducted in accordance with ASIC, Corporations Act and other relevant legislative requirements.

They undertake the audit process providing independent, information risk management and objective assurance advice designed to add value and improve our operation while understanding the critical nature of our Board for effective governance.

Audited financials have not been received to date, they are being produced by AMD Chartered Accountants and to be motioned by the Board on receipt. We expect to receipt this in the next week and do not expect to have any negative findings.

Recommendation

That the draft financial reports including Balance Sheet, Profit & Loss and statement of Cash Flow as presented and subject to appropriate Accountant adjustments be adopted and approved by the board, and when the audited financials are received that they are circulated for final motion.

Penny Walker

Penny Walker
Contract Board Treasurer



Future Challenges

Funding for Wild Dog control

The funding for the Wild Dog Action Plan 2 finishes in June 2026. The NBG seeks input from landholders, to plan for the possibility that the funding will not be renewed and to determine how best to manage the impact of wild dogs on small stock into the future.

Expense of aerial cull programs

We removed many feral pigs from the landscape between January to June 2025, but we are certain many are still there. Aerial culls are effective when populations are high, however they become increasingly expensive (per head) if pig populations decline. Furthermore, reliance on aerial culling alone is unlikely to be sustainable; pigs can become 'helicopter wise', thus aerial culling may be a less effective method long term.

This year (24/25), and for the next year (25/26), the group had reserve funds available to increase feral pig management in the region. However, we require landholder input to understand how members would like DPR funds spent on a coordinated approach to feral pig control into the future. Reliance on aerial culling long term will likely require increases to the DPR, or additional landholder contributions, in order to fund future aerial programs if they are to remain as extensive as 24/25.

Uncertainty of NBG's future beyond June 2027

In 2022, the Minister announced a review into the BAM Act, the legislation that enables the RBGs to access a consistent source of funding for local pest management. The review is still in progress, and the pending outcome is yet to be released. The RBGs were advised no changes would occur until at least July 2027. However, we have entered the planning phase for FY 26/27, and the uncertainty beyond July 2027 limits our capacity to plan long term programs for effective pest management.

Stakeholder engagement in pest control

The NBG is a grass roots organisation and relies on input from landholders and land managers. Our engagement with landholders is improving but there remains a significant number of landholders that we have not reached, reflected in our membership numbers and engagement in landscape scale control of declared pests.

One of our 25/26 goals is to engage with more landholders in the region and encourage greater participation in landscape scale, best practice management of declared pests. We aim for our members and all landholders in the region to benefit from improved management of declared pests in the region.