



**Pilbara Regional
Biosecurity Group Inc.**

**ANNUAL REPORT
2023 / 2024**

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1. INTRODUCTION

About the Pilbara Regional Biosecurity Group Inc.

The PRBG is a non-profit organisation established in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Act 2015. It specialises in delivering pest control services for land managers, with a primary focus on the pastoral zone. The association's main objective is to manage declared pests; utilising funding sourced from Declared Pest Rates paid by pastoral lease holders. These funds are then matched on a dollar-for-dollar basis by the Western Australian Government, recognising the public benefit of controlling declared pest animals and weeds.

The PRBG operates within the Shires of Ashburton and East Pilbara, the Town of Port Hedland, and the City of Karratha. It holds formal recognition from the Honourable Minister for Agriculture and Food as a Recognised Biosecurity Group (RBG).

The association is overseen by a committee of dedicated volunteers who invest a significant amount of their time during the year managing the operations and ensuring compliance with PRBG initiatives.

Committee of management members (as of 30 June 2024)

NAME	OFFICE HELD	EXPIRY DATE OF TERM	Region & Property Representing	NUMBER OF TERMS
Clint Thompson	Chairperson	8 December 2024	Ashburton Wyloo Station	3
Katrina Wier	Vice Chairperson	25 November 2025	Ashburton Minderoo Station	2
Kim Parsons	Treasurer/Secretary	8 December 2024	West Pilbara Coolawanyah Station	4
Haydn James	4. Full Member	1 December 2023	East Pilbara Hamersly Station	3
Doug Brownlie	5. Full Member	8 December 2024	East Pilbara Roy Hill Station	1
Dave Rutherford	6. Full Member	8 December 2024	West Pilbara Karratha Station	1
Dylan Corker	7. Full Member	25 November 2025	Ashburton Red Hill Station	1
Hamish Robertson	8. Associate Member	25 November 2025	West Pilbara DBCA	1
Ashleigh Kilgannon	9. Associate Member	25 November 2025	West Pilbara PMMC	1
Vacant	10. Associate/Full Member			
Vacant	11. Associate/Full Member			
Vacant	12. Associate/Full Member			
Tanya Argent	Executive Officer	30 June 2027	West Pilbara	

The PRBG works with local stakeholders who hold local knowledge on the region's problem pests. Utilising this local landscape understanding to form the basis of our annual operations each year.

Funding Summary

The PRBG main source of funding is from DPIRD under the Declared Pest Rates (DPR) paid by pastoral leases that are matched equally by the WA State Government, with the combined funds generally referred to as the Declared Pest Account (DPA) funds. The PRBG also partners with Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) to allow for extension activities to be undertaken across the PRBG region.

The PRBG also secures funding through key partnerships in the region. Rio Tinto has for many consecutive years contributed funding to the PRBG to enable programs to continue. Thank you to Rio Tinto for your ongoing support.

This is the second year FMG has contributed funding to our operations as part of a three-year agreement. Thank you to FMG for your contribution.

Roy Hill has contributed funding for the this year. Thank you for your support, Roy Hill.

The PRBG has specific obligations under the BAM Act regarding the transfer of funds from the Declared Pest Account, which are detailed in sections 170 of the BAM Act. When available the group also attracts funds from other sources such as Federal and State Government, although over recent years access to additional funding has become more difficult and harder to obtain, limiting some programs.

Through the RBG funding model local people are managing the states declared pests to the best of our ability within the funding constraints. This model leverages the work already undertaken by leaseholders in our region, although does not rate all property uses within the region.

2. AIM AND AREA OF OPERATIONS

Aim

The PRBG aims to:

- Foster the control of declared pests throughout the Area, via the formulation, implementation, and review of appropriate management plans and programs.
- Encourage integration, coordination, and general collaboration of all Area stakeholders in pest management matters.
- Promote the adoption of sound biosecurity practices throughout the Area.

Area of operation

The operational scope of the Pilbara Regional Biosecurity Group (PRBG) encompasses the Shires of Ashburton, East Pilbara, Port Hedland, and City of Karratha. Spanning over 65 pastoral leases, covering approximately 13.8 million hectares, and with the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation, and Attractions (DBCA) overseeing more than 30 million hectares of land, the PRBG area is substantial in size.

The population within the PRBG area stands at around 62,700, surging notably during the tourism season. Key population centres include Karratha, boasting around 17,000 residents, and Port Hedland, with approximately 15,000 residents. Numerous other towns, including Dampier, Marble Bar, Point Samson, Newman, Nullagine, Onslow, Pannawonica, Paraburdoo, Roebourne, Tom Price, and Wickham, contribute to the diverse landscape of the PRBG region.

The PRBG area features a diverse range of land use, including Karijini, Karlamayi, Millstream Chichester, and Murujuga National Parks, Cane River Conservation Park, Barlee Range, and Mungaroona Nature Reserves. It also encompasses various mining leases, Aboriginal Reserves, and communities. The region is marked by a vibrant mix of activities. With over 50 production mines, the landscape of land tenures is carefully overseen by the PRBG in collaboration with the DBCA regional office. This cooperative effort is designed to streamline access, manage evolving land use, and ensure effective pest control measures. The goal is to minimise any adverse effects on nearby pastoral properties while assisting DBCA in fulfilling its obligations under the BAM Act.

To the north, the PRBG shares its boundary with the Kimberly Rangelands Biosecurity Association (KRBA), while to the south, it interfaces with the Meekatharra Rangelands Biosecurity Association (MRBA), Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Association (CRBA), and Goldfields Nullarbor Regional Biosecurity Association (GNRBA).

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

As the Chairperson of the Pilbara Regional Biosecurity Group Inc., I am pleased to present the Annual Report for the year 2023/2024. This year has been marked by significant achievements and continued dedication to our mission of managing declared pests within the Pilbara region.

The PRBG has successfully implemented various pest control programs, focusing on both declared pest animals and weeds. Our efforts have been supported by funding from the Declared Pest Rates paid by pastoral leaseholders, matched by the Western Australian Government, and contributions from key partners such as DBCA, Rio Tinto, FMG, and Roy Hill.

Wild dogs continue to impact pastoral businesses in the region. The PRBG successfully completed the Aerial Baiting Program, distributing over 160,000 baits across 58 properties, including three new ones. The program ran from late August to mid-September, 54 of properties opting for aerial baiting and 4 opting for ground baits. Meat for the baits was sourced from the removal of 83 LFH across the Pilbara regions further contributing to pest control goals. Just shy of 80 DNA samples were acquired contributing to DPIRD research for Wild Dog purity and distribution locations.

Another highlight of the year was the Large Feral Herbivore (LFH) Control Program conducted in November 2023. This program, which involved aerial control operations, resulted in the removal of 753 LFH. The success of this program is a testament to the collaborative efforts of our team, landholders, and partners.

In addition to pest control, the PRBG has continued to foster strong relationships with local stakeholders and other biosecurity groups. Our area of operation spans over 65 pastoral leases and includes diverse land uses such as national parks, mining leases, and Aboriginal reserves. This collaborative approach ensures that we can effectively manage pest populations while minimizing the impact on the environment and local communities.

Looking ahead, the PRBG remains committed to enhancing our pest management strategies and securing additional funding to support our operations. We will continue to work closely with our partners and stakeholders to achieve our goals and uphold the biosecurity standards within the Pilbara region.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the PRBG Management Committee, our Executive Officer, Tanya Argent, and all volunteers and partners for their unwavering support and dedication throughout the year. Together, we have made significant strides in protecting our region from the threats posed by declared pests.

Thank you for your continued support.

Clint Thompson
Chairperson
Pilbara Regional Biosecurity Group Inc.

4. OPERATIONS OVERVIEW

The PRBG has a Declared Pest Account into which the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) is responsible, via the Office of State Revenue (OSR) to issue rates notices annually to all pastoral leases within the region. DPIRD then provide the PRBG with the Government's matching dollar for dollar contribution. One of the biggest benefits of the RBG model is that it is funded 50% by leaseholders and 50% by the State, recognising their obligation as landowners within the region.

There continues to be increasing demand on PRBG volunteer committee to meet the complexities of RBG operations. The PRBG committee rely heavily on the services provided by our Executive Officer to assist in meeting this day to day administrative and governance requirements. Our EO continues to spend considerable time dealing with the increasing pressure put on the volunteer committee by DPIRD and also spends considerable time trying to resolve many issues that arise throughout the year relating to things such as: Restricted Chemical Permits (RCPS), management of the Declared Pest Account funds and the monitoring and reporting requirements and most importantly planning and implementing PRBG Annual Operations.

Large Feral Herbivore Control

The PRBG engages the services of the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) to undertake programs that target Large Feral Herbivores. After some delays and many cancellations of programs in FY21/22 and FY22/23, it is pleasing to report that a successful program was delivered in November 2023. It is pleasing to note that, as a result of the ongoing programs, one property has opted out for the FY23/24 program deeming the LFH to be considered as controlled at their property.

This program is funded through the groups DPA but also with significant funding received from key partners within our region. Those being the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA), Roy Hill and Rio Tinto. This funding is contingent on the large LFH program being delivered.

Note: The LFH report below from DPIRD was ratified by the PRBG Management Committee at scheduled Committee meeting on 16th May 2024.

POST ACTIVITY REPORT FROM DPIRD – PILBARA REGIONAL BIOSECURITY GROUP



Department of
Primary Industries and
Regional Development

POST ACTIVITY REPORT – PILBARA REGIONAL BIOSECURITY GROUP Large Feral Herbivore Control Program 01ST November – 09TH November 2023

Overview

In November 2023, the Pilbara Regional Biosecurity Group (PRBG) utilised the services of the Department of Primary Industries & Regional Development (DPIRD) to reduce Large Feral Herbivore (LFH) populations on their members pastoral leases via aerial control. Aerial operations provide access to otherwise inaccessible terrain and supplement ground shooting, mustering, trap yards and other landholder control methods.

The 9-day aerial activity began on Wednesday 01st November and concluded on Thursday 09th November 2023. Properties targeted were based on landholder permissions, known LFH locations, previous hotspots, topographical features & access to water. These factors, in correlation with local information provided by landowners, PRBG staff, DPIRD staff and licensed pest management technicians (LPMT's) yielded numbers consistent with previous operations.

Planning

Local planning including fuel dumps, property engagement, landholder authorisations and daily communications was coordinated by PRBG officers, Tanya Argent and Krystie Bremmer. DPIRD authorised biosecurity officers.

Objective

Minimise the financial and ecological impost of LFH on agricultural industries, the environment (threatened and endangered species) and waterways in addition to the associated microbiological threats to humans, domestic livestock and companion animals.

Analysis

In total **753** LFH were controlled over the 9-day operation encompassing 68 hours of aerial shooting. **11** LFH were controlled per hour of flight time. The highest concentrations of LFH were recorded on properties where the greatest timeframe between aerial control activities had elapsed.

Summary

The total number of LFH removed in 2023 is indicative of population reduction over time and sustained pressure. It is imperative that aerial control is maintained as there is good access to essentials for population replacement being food, water and habitat.

Declared Weed Control

The PRBG has a long-standing, well-established relationship with Pilbara Mesquite Management Committee (PMMC), where the PMMC receives contributions from the PRBG via the DPA funding to carry out operational programs to control declared weeds.

During 2023/2024 PRBG contributed a total of \$40,000 for chemical and operational control of declared weeds, throughout the region.

PMMC Funding Report



Annual Report for PMMC Spending

PREPARED BY ASHLEIGH KILGANNON
2023/2024 FINANCIAL YEAR

1. INTRODUCTION

The Pilbara Mesquite Management Committee Inc. (PMMC) is a non-profit organisation developed in the early 2000's to target the control of mesquite (*Prosopis* spp.) within the Pilbara region. As the organisation has evolved, we have expanded our focus to include other Weeds of National Significance (WoNS) such as parkinsonia (*Parkinsonia aculeata*), Noogoora burr (*Xanthium occidentale*) and bellyache bush (*Jatropha gossypifolia*). Annually, PMMC covers an average of nearly 750,000 ha across the region, supporting pastoralists, mining and resource companies and other landholders with effective and targeted projects for weed management.

To help PMMC in our goal of implementing best-practice weed management, Pilbara RBG has been contributing an allocation of \$40,000 annually to support on-ground projects, whether this be through procurement of resources such as chemical and equipment or enhancing the on-ground outcomes. PMMC is grateful for the ongoing partnership with Pilbara RBG, and a breakdown of the allocation of RBG funds for the 2023/2024 financial year is provided below.

2. EXPENDITURE

Across the 2023 and 2024 seasons, PMMC undertook and supported several projects across the region, focusing on a variety of species. Table 2.1. provides a list of the projects undertaken in 2024. The list of 2023 projects can be found in the preceding proposal document.

Due to ambiguity in previous agreements between PMMC and Pilbara RBG, 2023 funding was spent operationally, covering administrative, staffing, chemical purchases and other organisational costs. Table 2.2. provides a rough breakdown of these costs.



Table 2.1: Projects undertaken and/or supported by Pilbara Mesquite Management Committee in 2024

Catchment	Property/Area	Target species
Ashburton River	Minderoo Station*, Urala Station*	Mesquite, parkinsonia
De Grey River	Warrawagine Station (including Carawine Gorge), Yarrie Station, Muccan Station, De Grey River Rest Area	Noogoora burr, parkinsonia, bellyache bush
Harding River	City of Karratha tenure, Roebourne	Parkinsonia
Maitland River	Karratha Station, Ex-Karratha Station (DBCA Conservation Estate)	Mesquite, parkinsonia, calotropis
Fortescue River (Lower)	Yalleen Station, Pannawonica, Mardie Salt and Potash	Mesquite, parkinsonia, bellyache bush
Fortescue River (Upper)	Roy Hill Station (including Roy Hill Iron Ore Tenure and Roy Hill Station tenure), Fortescue Marsh (proposed National Park/Conservation Estate)	Parkinsonia
Robe River	Yarraloola Station, Peedamulla Station*	Mesquite, parkinsonia, opuntoid cactus
Shaw River	Hillside Station	Parkinsonia

* denotes works supported but not directly managed by PMMC

Table 2.2: Allocation of Pilbara Regional Biosecurity Group funding by PMMC (2023/2024 FY)

Funds	Allocation
Administration	\$5,000
Staffing	\$20,000
Chemical	\$10,000
Equipment	\$5,000
Total	\$40,000

3. OUTCOMES

The allocation of funds to administration and staffing costs ensured that the role of Program Manager was supported to maintain the continuity of the organisation, as did administration. The procurement of some chemical with the funding allowed on-ground crews to continue working to support pastoralists across the region.

Upon request, chemical was also supplied to pastoral stations as contributors to the RBG levy. In the 23/24 financial year, Minderoo Station requested chemical for spraying of mesquite.

In light of discussions at the previous Pilbara RBG committee meeting, an MOU will be developed between PMMC and Pilbara RBG to ensure that both organisations have clarity in how funds provided by the RBG will



be utilised by PMMC. It was verbally agreed that these funds should be used for purchase of necessary chemicals and equipment, and/or allocated to strengthening on-ground projects.

4. CONCLUSION

Pilbara RBG's contribution to PMMC is gratefully received, as we can use this funding to increase our capacity for on-ground works, be it through chemical purchases or extra man-days on ground. With the establishment of the new PMMC Program Manager, we will continue to develop projects and utilise RBG funds in such a way as is consistent with the goals and requirements of the Pilbara RBG.

CONTACT

PMMC looks forward to continuing to collaborate with Pilbara Regional Biosecurity Group. For further information, please contact the PMMC Program Manager.

Ashleigh Kilgannon

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Wild Dog Control

Wild dogs continue to be an issue in the region and have the biggest impact on pastoral businesses and other people operating across this vast landscape.

The PRBG Committee is pleased to report that the 2023 Pilbara Aerial Baiting Program was completed successfully.

Over 160,000 baits were distributed across the PRBG service area. A total of 58 Properties participated in the program with three new properties compared to 2022. The program ran from the end of August to mid-September. 54 of these properties participated in the Aerial Baiting program, with the remaining 4 opting for ground baits.

The Bait Meat Supplier sourced meat from LFH across the Pilbara and Gascoyne regions. The Pilbara LFH numbers controlled are **83**.

The PRBG ran its first year of an incentive-based program to control Wild Dogs. The goal for this program is the gathering of data and locations across the regions. A valuable requirement for Landholders to participate in this program is to capture DNA for DPIRD to be able to carry out research.

Almost 80 samples have been submitted to DPIRD across the region contributing to data sets from extreme hard to reach remote locations. From the data supplied to DPIRD, we can see that there are at least three kin groups on one property. One of these kin groups is related to dogs at a neighbouring property. There is another property that has two kin groups on their property. From this we can assume those packs are moving between certain locations on the stations.

The PRBG relies heavily on pastoral lease holders playing active roles in the management of declared pests and plants on their own stations. The group continues to rely on its members and key stake holders to participate in preparing wild dog control.

Pastoralists within the PRBG continue to contribute more than through the payment of their declared pest rates with landholders in the region providing meat for baits, making/distributing baits on their properties, undertaking other controls, paying bounties for control of wild dogs on their properties and even contracting LPMTs privately to undertake additional controls.

Community Engagement

The PRBG covers a vast region with a large range of stakeholders. During 2023/2024 the PRBG committee has:

- Delivered 2 regional updates electronically.
- Held 3 face to face meetings, including an AGM, two committee meetings. Meetings have been held at the DBCA Offices and online via MS Teams.
- Landholder surveys; and
- Several newsletters.

Partnership Summary

The PRBG continues to work with DBCA Pilbara to control the regions declared pests on their land tenures.

PRBG appreciates the ongoing financial support the group receives from FMG. We look forward to being able to deliver the LFH program in Q2 2024/2025 in the PRBG service areas.

PRBG appreciates the ongoing support the group receives from Roy Hill Station. In addition to the financial support, Roy Hill Station also provide in kind accommodation services and AVGAS supplies to the Contractors who deliver the programs for us. We look forward to being able to deliver the LFH program again in Q2 2024/2025 in the PRBG service areas.

PRBG appreciates the ongoing support the group receives from Rio Tinto. In addition to the financial support, Rio Tinto also provides in kind accommodation services and AVGAS supplies to the Contractors who deliver the programs for us. We look forward to being able to deliver the LFH program in Q2 2024/2025 in the PRBG service areas.

It is crucial to acknowledge the in-kind services in the form of accommodation, use of equipment at the property and/or AVGAS supplies provided by the landholders at the following properties; Warrawagine Station, Yarrie Station, Karratha Station, Wyloo Station, DeGrey Station & Maillina Station.

These partnerships are key to continue to support the Pilbara regional as a whole and ensure that the burden of declared pests isn't held only by pastoral leaseholders.

5. FY23/24 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Financial Report

1. PRBG Westpac Bank Balances as at 30 June 2024

Debit Card - 241801	Main Account – 270303
Used for direct debit and small transactions	All PRBG funding
\$ 1,740	\$ 416,705

2. Declared Pest Account (DPA) Balance

DPIRD hold paid Declared Pest Rates (DPR) from pastoral lease properties and matched WA government funds in the DPIRD Declared Pest Account. State Government funds are paid into the DPA once DPR invoices are raised and sent by the Office of State Revenue. Funds are paid to the PRBG via bi-annual invoices that match the approved annual Operating Plan, providing funds are available in the DPA.

Opening balance was \$214,168

Closing Balance was \$324,392

Rates % paid is 89.05% which is 4.05% higher than the budgeted 85%.

Year	Quarter	Opening Cash Balance	Matching CF Appropriation	Rates Income Received	Adjustment for funds received by ratepayers	Interest Received	Other Trans.	Funds released	Closing Cash Balance	Value of unpaid rates	% of rates paid total
2023/2024	Q1 (N/A) They are combined with Q2										89.05%
	Q2	214,168	240,790	201,237				360,790	295,405	69,518	
	Q3										
	Resent as a whole Year										
	Q4	214,168	240,790	214,414		15,810		360,790	324,392	55,321	
2024/2025	Q1	324,392									#DIV/0!
	Q2										
	Q3										

The PRBG committee continues to work within the budget to ensure that the impact of increased governance/administration pressures have a limited impact on the groups on ground operations. This is a task that gets more difficult each year.

3.0 Audited Financial Report

Supplied by Westwood Accountants and Verified by the PRBG Committee.

Any retained earnings are to be discussed with the relevant Funding Partners and will be reallocated according to the Funding Partners individual terms with the PRBG in the Financial Year Y24/25.