

**Meekatharra Rangelands Biosecurity Association Inc
Minutes of Committee of Management Meeting
Meekatharra Sports Complex
15th February 2022**

1. WELCOME AND OPENING

Chairman Liam Johns to opened the meeting at 9.35 am

2. RECORD OF ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

Attendance

Silvio Brenzi – Executive Officer
Ashley Dowden
Harvey Nicholls
Greg Watters
Chris Richards
Jarrod Blair
Mayne Jenour
Murray Pens
Liam Johns

Observers

Debbie Dowden

Apologies

Clyde Hall
Jorgan Jensen
Angus Nichols
Reg Seaman
Rob Lefroy
John M
Kath M.

**3. DISCLOSURE OF FINANCIAL AND NON-FINANCIAL MATERIAL
PERSONAL INTERESTS**

Nil.

4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING 12 October 2021 AND BUSINESS ARISING

Recommendation:

That the Minutes of the Committee of Management Meeting held on 12 October 2021 be accepted as a true and accurate record, and that the committee notes the business arising from this meeting. (Attachment 1)

It was noted that the previous minutes were adopted with the change to be made from C2 to C3 in relationship to dog classification in item 5 of business arising, below.

Moved - Ashley

SECONDED - Jarrod

CARRIED- Unanimous

Business Arising

BAM Act - Declaration Status of Wild Dogs within Vermin Fenced Areas

The Executive Officer has still not been advised that a response had not been received to the MRBA's letter to the Minister dated 12 April 2021 regarding the reclassification of wild dogs within vermin fence areas from C2 (control) to C3 (eradication).

5. UPDATE FROM THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The Executive Officer updated the Committee on the following points.

1. That \$3000.00 noted in the amended budget from Southern Rangelands is to utilised for training purposes this financial year. Expressions of interest will be requested shortly for anyone who may be available for this with some top up funds from the existing budget. There are 2 options, Ben Maslin or Jim Miller.
2. The letter of support for St Rob was tabled and a motion was moved by Ashley Dowden and seconded by Greg Watters that *The letter is supported and that St Rob are to be aware that no firearms can be brought onto a station without the prior permission of the station owner.* This was carried unanimously.
3. The EO is now having monthly RBG catch up meetings via zoom.
4. A query was made to the EO from a resident living in Mt Magnet townsite regarding cactus infestations on home properties. It was noted that townsite rates do not cover pest rate contributions and that the Local Shire should be informed. The EO will do this once the permanent CEO role is completed.

5. Rob Lefroy requested that DBCA confirm their policy on fence line clearances on their side. It was noted in discussion that this is not a MRBA matter although correspondence will be forwarded to DBCA in recognition of the question and that there was no DBCA members present at the meeting.

6. 2021/2022 BUDGET REVIEW

Due to the amended income from the rate corrections, DPIRD have required an amended budget to clearly reflect the changes in income. An out of session approval was requested prior to this meeting from each committee member some weeks ago. However, only three responses were received. Attachment 2 details and shows the additional income amounts along with the R4R income on the one document.

As of 31st January 2022, the cash balance in the DPA account was \$467,284.30

Recommendation: *That the 21/22 annual budget review be endorsed.*

MOVED - Murray

SECONDED-Jarrold

CARRIED- Unanimously

7. 2022/2023 DECLARED PEST ACCOUNT (DPA) BUDGET AND OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

The draft 2022/2023 Declared Pest Account Budget (attachment 3) advised that the rate income had been set so as to get back to the pre pastoral lease revaluation position.

It was acknowledged that this would involve a 30% rate increased from the 2021/2022 figure and it was up to DPIRD and the MRBA to explain to rate payers the reasons for such an increase.

The Department advised at the previous meeting, that it would do much more than the minimum required by Regulation to explain to pastoralists the need for such an increase. Meetings with DPIRD have indicated that this will commence in April 2022.

The Operational Activity Plan (attachment 4) was submitted by the previous EO as has been the case in prior years. Discussions have been held with the EO and DPIRD regarding the formatting of this report. Comments in regard to this

matter have been based on determining a set format for all RBG's developed by the Department.

Recommendation: *That the 2022/2023 Declared Pest Account Budget and Operational Activity Management Plan as tabled be approved.*

MOVED- Greg W.

SECONDED- Murray

CARRIED - Unanimously

8. POSSIBLE MERGER WITH THE MURCHISON REGIONAL VERMIN COUNCIL (MRVC)

Background

The Murchison Region Vermin Cell is now complete. Under the arrangements currently in place, there are now two separate organisations responsible for the operation of the vermin cell with respect to wild dog control and a return to small stock production. The two organisations are:

- The Murchison Regional Vermin Council (MRVC) with responsibility for maintaining the No 1 and No 2 Vermin Fences to a dog proof standard.
- The Meekatharra Rangelands Biosecurity Association (MRBA) with responsibility for wild dog control within the Vermin Cell.

The current situation involving the two separate organisations is as follows:

Murchison Regional Vermin Council

- A Regional Council operating under the requirements of the WA Local Government Act 1995 with a membership of the Shires of Yalgoo, Sandstone, Mount Magnet and Cue. Whilst not being a member council the Shire of Meekatharra provides financial support.
- **Income \$134,000** (Shire Precepts and Fence Rentals). **Expenditure \$142,000** (Administration \$67,000, Governance \$15,000, Fence Maintenance \$60,000). Note: Based on 2020/2021 operating budget with depreciation not included.

Meekatharra Rangelands Biosecurity Association

- An Association set up under the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007 operating in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Act 2015 with a membership of pastoralists in the Shires of Yalgoo, Mount Magnet, Cue and Meekatharra.
- **Income \$699,000** (Pastoralist Rates \$213,000, Government Contribution Matching Rates \$236,000, Royalties for Regions \$234,000). **Expenditure \$698,000** (Wild Dog Control \$638,000, Administration \$60,000). Note: Based on 2020/2021 Declared Pest Account budget with no assets, hence depreciation not applicable.

Merging of both organisations into an RBG, with an amended constitution that would bring in the fence maintenance function, would result in significant cost savings for compliance and administration currently being incurred by the MRVC. Further it would centralise the decision-making process to a single entity.

Current Situation

At the MRBA Committee Meeting held on 16 February 2021 it was resolved as follows:

- *That the Committee agrees in principle to a merger of the MRBA and Murchison Regional Vermin Council (MRVC) and authorises the Chairman, Deputy Chairman and Executive Officer to enter into discussions with the MRVC.*

In supporting this resolution Committee Members stipulated that for such a merger to occur it would be essential to formalise the ongoing financial support of MRVC member shire councils at the current level. This is proposed to be achieved by way of a legally binding Deed of Contribution from the MRVC Member Shires in favour of the MRBA.

At the MRVC Ordinary Meeting on 16 June 2021 Council resolved as follows:

- *The CEO to prepare a draft constitution for consideration at the August Ordinary Meeting.*
- *Legal advice be obtained on appropriate legal documentation to secure a long-term funding commitment from member councils and the Shire of Meekatharra.*
- *The Minister for Regional Development; Agriculture and Food; Hydrogen Industry, in her capacity as Minister responsible for Recognised Biosecurity Groups, be formally advised of the proposed merger.*
- *The Minister for Housing and Local Government be formally advised of the merger proposal.*

The draft MRBA amended constitution was endorsed at the October 2021 and would require acceptance by MRBA Members at an AGM or Special General Meeting by way of a Special Resolution.

At the Ordinary Meeting of the MRVC on 13 October a draft Deed of Contribution, as prepared by Council's legal advisor, will be tabled and if approved forwarded to MRVC member councils for consideration and endorsement.

The MRVC are meeting to further discuss this matter as a unanimous vote is required and is supported by the Minister in principle on the 16th Feb 2022.

The CEO has requested that the EO and the Chairman attend the following MRVC meeting in 3 months to present any preferred options or comments.

Recommendation:

That the MRBA Committee of Management endorses that the EO and Chairman attend the MRVC second meeting of the year to present any comments and represent the MRBA in this matter.

MOVED – Ashley

SECONDED- Murray

CARRIED- Unanimously

9. DPIRD UPDATE

No members present or report tabled.

10. RANGELANDS NRM UPDATE

No members present or report tabled.

11. DOGGER COORDINATOR REPORTS

ACTIVITY SINCE OCTOBER 2021				
CONTRACTOR	DAYS	#DOGS	#BAITS	OTHER
Greg Scott	84	53T-4S	7820	3C-1F
Reg Seaman	38	17T	1000	2C
Kris Pascoe	23	10T -2S	-	4C- 2D
John Heir	52	33T	180	1C-76D
John Darling	61	12T-6S	1000	-
Wayne Glasson	60	27T	241	-

Murry presented his report and Ashley in conjunction with a written report from Jorgen.

With the expiration of contracts at the end of June, the committee also discussed calling for expressions of interest to test the market of current doggers available to carry out the current contracts.

It was also moved by Greg W. and seconded by Murray P. that- *The 200 day contract currently in place with John Heir be modified to a split contract of 130 days and a 70 day contract. The stations responsible for each contract are to be determined with the each contractor and detailed in the new contracts after the expressions of interest have been reviewed.*

This was carried unanimously.

12. INDICATIVE BAIT RACK DATES 2022

2022 - Spring Dates

Pullagaroo Thursday 15th September.

Challa Wednesday 21st September.

Melangata Friday 23th September.

Killara Tuesday 20th September.

Yarraquin Wednesday 31st August.

Yarlarweelor Saturday/Sunday 8th and 9th October.

Illgararie Thursday/Friday 15th and 16th September.

These are indicative dates subject to change by Rack Coordinators. Meat has been pre ordered through the normal supplier and these dates have been forwarded to them for preparation.

13.

The Killara date was changed from the 7th to the 20th Sept.

14. GENERAL BUSINESS

Available traps are to be checked with Jorgen Jenson. Any funding available to purchase new ones to suit new split in 200 day contract.

Murray indicated that rack maintenance is required at Yarlarweelor and most of the materials are there. A list of any additional items are to be sent to the EO for approval of funds then costs will be re-imbursed.

Debbie highlighted that there is the opportunity to work towards gaining some funding from the CIFS. Debbie will raise this with her committee prior to MRBA asking any questions.

SRPA is also available for some possible funding to work towards a feral cat program that may be done in conjunction with other dogging programs. It was noted that doggers are removing feral cats during the program currently 'free of charge'.

15. CLOSE AND NEXT MEETING DATE.

The Chairman thanked all present for their attendance and wished everyone a safe trip home.

The next Committee of Management Meeting and AGM is scheduled for Tuesday 11 October 2022 in Meekatharra commencing at 9.30am.

The Chairman closed the meeting at : 12:23pm