

WALGA Event: Pest Animal Biosecurity Management



Date: Thursday, 22 August 2019
Time: 8:45am – 3:15pm (registrations from 8:15am)
Venue: Aloft Hotel, 27 Rowe Avenue, The Springs, Rivervale

FORUM OVERVIEW

Please join us for this exciting opportunity to hear about the current biosecurity governance structures at the Commonwealth and State level, and the latest research and development in control methods to assist on-ground programs. Collaborative approaches to successfully manage pest animal species will be highlighted through case studies from Local Government, Recognised Biosecurity Groups and community organisations.

PROGRAM

- 8:45am** **Welcome and introduction**
Cr Lynne Craigie OAM, President, WALGA
- 8:55am** **Keynote address**
The Hon. Minister Alannah MacTiernan MLC
- 9:30am** **Is Left Right? Protecting WA from Impacts of Invasive Animals, Plants and Aquatic Organisms**
Victoria Aitken, Director Invasive Species, DPIRD
- 9:50am** **The Biosecurity Council of Western Australia: Its Role and Current Activities**
Simon McKirdy, Chair, Biosecurity Council
- 10:10am** **Protecting Western Australia's Unique Biodiversity: Prioritising and Managing Environmental Biosecurity**
Dr Margaret Byrne, Executive Director Biodiversity and Conservation Science, DBCA
- 10.30am** **Panel Question and Answer Session**
- 10:50am** **Morning Tea**
- 11.15am** **Improving Biodiversity Outcomes by Managing Feral Cats: A Working Group and Research Program for Western Australia**
Bruce Webber, Program Director, Ecosystem Processes and Threat Mitigation, WABSI
- 11.40am** **Introduced Corella Control in Bunbury: Learnings from a Decade of Management**
Ben Deeley, Team Leader Sustainability and Environmental Planning, City of Bunbury
- 12:05pm** **Broadscale pest control by a Recognised Biosecurity Group in the Central Wheatbelt**
Linda Vernon, Executive Officer, Central Wheatbelt Biosecurity Association
- 12:30pm** **Rabbits: New Approaches to Managing an Insidious Pest**
Dr Susan Campbell, Research Officer Invasive Species, DPIRD
- 1:00pm** **Lunch**
- 1.45pm** **Feral Animal Control in Cockburn – Striving Forward as a Team**
Sophia Wright and Adam Harris, Environmental Officers, City of Cockburn



- 2:15pm** **Community based Feral Pig control – Success through Patience, Persistence and Partnerships**
Mark Muir, Chair and Jo Wills, Project Secretary and Coordinator, Lake Muir Denbarker Community Feral Pig Eradication Group
- 2:45pm** **European Wasps in WA – An Ongoing Battle**
Marc Widmer, Entomologist, DPIRD
- 3:15pm** **Close of Event**

PRESENTATION OVERVIEWS

Victoria Aitken, Director Invasive Species, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) will discuss how established pests such as wild dogs, foxes, and many other pests yet to arrive, fit into the broader picture of managing pest animals within Western Australia. The Department is responsible for administering the *Biosecurity and Agricultural Management Act 2007* (BAM Act) and associated regulations. Victoria will outline the State framework for pest animal biosecurity and how this aligns with the national framework and related WA legislation and policy. Victoria will also discuss the Department's pest animal priorities and strategic direction for the coming years.

Simon McKirdy, Chair, Biosecurity Council will discuss the Council's role in providing specialist advice to the Minister and Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development on biosecurity. The Council is currently providing recommendations to government on a number of biosecurity matters, including ensuring a whole-of-government biosecurity response remains a top priority, a greater focus on environmental biosecurity, and adequate resource allocation. In addition, the Council will provide information on their independent review of biosecurity research and development in Western Australia.

Dr Margaret Byrne, Executive Director Biodiversity and Conservation Science, Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) will discuss the Department's role in protecting Western Australia's unique biodiversity through prioritising environmental biosecurity. The Department partners with other government agencies, Local Government and neighbours to minimise and manage the impacts of introduced species on our unique ecosystems. Through applied research over many years, DBCA scientists have developed fox and feral cat baits that are supporting broad scale management of these introduced predators through the *Western Shield* program, and protecting threatened mammals, birds and reptiles. Margaret will also discuss the potential application of gene drive technology, an emerging area of interest.

Bruce Webber, Program Director, Ecosystem Processes and Threat Mitigation, WA Biodiversity Science Institute (WABSI) will discuss the implications feral cats have on Western Australia's native biodiversity, with over 160 Australian mammal species directly under threat. One of the biggest challenges with prioritising existing and emerging control options, is the lack of knowledge on the impacts of their implementation. Bruce will discuss the recent progress being made towards improving biodiversity outcomes through the Western Australia Feral Cat Working Group and a program of research to address the critical knowledge gaps that will improve on ground outcomes for collaborative management programs.

Ben Deeley, Team Leader Sustainability and Environmental Planning, City of Bunbury will discuss how introduced corellas are becoming an increasing problem on the lower Swan Coastal Plain, including the Bunbury area, due to noise at roosting sites, fouling and damage to infrastructure and trees. The City has participated in a number of different management partnerships over the past nine years, and adopted a Corella Management Strategy in 2018. Recently, the new *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* and associated Regulations resulted in changes to the way the City implements its corella control program. The City is also trialling different bird scaring techniques to determine whether dispersal is an effective management option. Ben will discuss the City's journey so far, the successes and challenges associated with key management constraints, and the future going forward.



Linda Vernon, Executive Officer, Central Wheatbelt Biosecurity Association (CWBA) will discuss how this recognised biosecurity group (RBG) brings landholders, Local Government and adjacent biosecurity groups together to provide a broad scale, coordinated approach for effective pest control. Encompassing an area of nearly 22,000 km² across the towns of Koorda, Perenjori, Dalwallinu and Morawa, the CWBA focuses on wild dog control, together with foxes, rabbits and more recently the emerging problem of feral pigs. Linda will discuss the formation of this coordinated community approach, the transition to an incorporated group in 2017, and the issue of the first declared pest rate in 2018/19. Linda will outline how the group prioritises and implements declared pest control in the region to ensure efficient control across agricultural land and remnant native vegetation. The CWBA prides itself on a strong commitment to landholder engagement, and Linda will outline how the group successfully increases the participation of communities in surveillance and control programs.

Dr Susan Campbell, Research Officer Invasive Species, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) will discuss the ongoing 'arms race' scientists and land managers have entered into in a bid to minimise the environmental and agricultural damage rabbits inflict. Two years ago, scientists released the rabbit haemorrhagic disease (RHDV1) K5 virus through a national, community-driven monitoring and release program. However, the unplanned arrival of RHDV2, a highly virulent strain of the virus, influenced the efficiency of K5. Susan will discuss the results of the K5 release, and also highlight the importance of using traditional control methods in combination with biological control for the successful management of rabbits across all environments.

Sophia Wright and Adam Harris, Environmental Officers, City of Cockburn will discuss the City's feral animal control program, which targets a number of invasive species including foxes, cats, rabbits, bees and corellas within City managed conservation reserves. Sophia and Adam will talk about the trials and tribulations of the program, and discuss the importance of working with the community as well as building partnerships with adjacent stakeholders and other agencies to achieve better outcomes.

Mark Muir, Chair, and Jo Wills, Project Secretary and Coordinator, Lake Muir Denbarker Community Feral Pig Eradication Group have undertaken feral pig control in the Shires of Plantagenet, Manjimup, Denmark and Cranbrook for nearly two decades. Widely recognised as leaders in community-led pig control, the group has removed more than 2700 pigs from the project area and provided protection to agricultural and environmental resources from these damaging pests. Mark and Jo will discuss how the group strategically targets control programs to cover large reserves systems, some of which contain wetlands and sensitive peat systems of international importance. More recently, the group has focused on transferring knowledge and expertise by mentoring establishing groups. Mark and Jo will discuss the importance of partnerships and collaboration, and what have been the key factors in the group's success.

Marc Widmer, Entomologist, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) will discuss the Department's battle to prevent European wasp establishment and spread in WA, with record numbers of the pest found in WA over the recent summer period. Marc will highlight the foreseeable impacts of the pest and why it should be on your radar, even if it's not yet on your doorstep. Despite the 2018-19 surveillance season being the worst on record, there were successes throughout the response. Can WA uphold its legacy and will you be part of that future?