

Declared Pest Rate – why it matters to you

The *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007* (BAM Act) allows Recognised Biosecurity Groups to receive a Declared Pest Rate to manage priority declared pests.

Managing declared pests in WA

Widespread and established declared pests such as wild dogs, foxes, rabbits and cotton bush, blackberry and mesquite can cause serious problems for agriculture, the environment, communities and safety.

The *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007* (BAM Act) allows for the formation of **Recognised Biosecurity Groups (RBGs)** to reduce the impact of such declared pests through landscape scale coordination.

RBGs provide advice and skills so that landholders can manage declared pests on their properties in coordination with others, to achieve better outcomes.

An RBG may have a rate raised, known as a Declared Pest Rate (DPR), to support their work. Under the BAM Act, the State Government matches rates dollar-for-dollar, doubling the funds available.

In 2020-21, \$5.992 million will be made available across 14 RBGs and their communities.

A budget for declared pests

RBGs adopt a long term strategic approach to making coordinated pest management an accepted part of good property management. The DPR provides the funding needed for this to occur.

Funds from rates are spent on activities detailed in each RBG's annual operational plan, which identifies priority pests and management strategies. **Landowners are encouraged to provide input into these plans, to have a say on how the DPR will be spent.**

Activities include building awareness, delivering training and information, hiring out equipment, and providing on-ground resources and other materials needed for pest management.

RBGs organise coordinated activities, such as community fox shoots, and build partnerships with other RBGs, industry and agencies to control pests such as feral animals requiring landscape scale approach.

Local people making decisions about local pest problems

RBGs are incorporated associations (not for profit), managed by volunteers and regional representatives. They are supported by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD), and provide the opportunity for **shared responsibility** and **community led control** of declared pests.

RBGs operate across a defined area and bring landowners, government and other stakeholders together to coordinate pest management at a community level and landscape scale. The goal is to engage landholders and make the best use of all skills, funds and resources.

Under the BAM Act, landowners are responsible for managing all declared pests on their land. RBGs provide landholders with knowledge, skills and landscape scale coordination.

The work of an RBG adds value to individual efforts – it does not replace it.

The work of an RBG also benefits landholders already controlling pests or those who currently don't have pests on their land. In addition, everyone benefits from reducing feral animals and invasive weeds across the landscape, reducing negative impacts on our environment and native species.

Consistent funding through Declared Pest Rates allows for declared pest management efforts to be sustained over the long term, to make long-lasting impacts on pest problems.

Declared Pest Rates are not new

Five RBGs in WA's pastoral regions have been collecting a Declared Pest Rate (DPR) since 2014. Prior to that, a similar rate was collected as the Agriculture Pest Rate under the *Agriculture and Related Resources Protection Act 1976*.

The RBG and DPR model has since been extended to the agricultural region in WA, so some areas will this year be paying rates for the first time.

There are currently 14 RBGs that have rates set in their areas for the 2020-21 financial year. Each group operates across different local government areas. In 2020-21, approximately 22,000 landowners from 65 local government areas will receive Declared Pest Rate notices.

How are the rates collected?

The Commissioner of State Revenue through RevenueWA is responsible for issuing and collecting Declared Pest Rate notices. Rate notices are usually issued in September to October each year.

The amount of rates to be collected are matched dollar-for-dollar with State Government funds and transferred to the Declared Pest Account (DPA), which is administered by DPIRD. Funds are then made available to each RBG based on the requirements of the operational plan.

Calculating rate contributions

Each RBG covers a different area of the State and is impacted by different pests, local

industry, land use, environmental factors, population demographics and size. **Therefore, RBGs have different pest control priorities, budgets and operations, and may have different rates.**

The process starts with RBGs and landholders working together to establish the group's annual operational plan, which forms the basis on which to calculate the DPR. DPIRD then approves the plan and advises the Minister what rate is required to deliver on the plans. The rate may be recommended as either the same amount for each property (a flat rate), or a rate based on the unimproved value of land as provided by the Valuer General (ad valorem rate).

Before the rates are determined, the Minister is required to consult affected landowners who are invited to provide comment on the proposed rates. Rates are advertised inviting submissions in the West Australian and regional newspapers. In areas where the rate is new or the rate changes by more than 5% letters are sent to landholders informing of the change.

Expenditure is detailed in RBG annual reports and audited financial statements, which are submitted to DPIRD, placed on the DPIRD website and tabled at the RBGs' Annual General Meetings. Meetings are open to the public.

Postponement for pensioners

Eligible pensioners can apply to RevenueWA to have their rate payments postponed, if they meet the requirements under section 136 of the BAM Act. Contact RevenueWA for more information.

New rates applied in 2020-2021

Midlands Biosecurity Group

Recognised in October 2019, the Midlands Biosecurity Group aims to initiate, promote, assist and foster the control of declared pests in the Midlands region covers the shires of Carnamah, Coorow, Dandaragan, Mingenew, Moora, Irwin and Three Springs.

The Group has recommended a rate of 0.0089 cents in the dollar on the unimproved value of freehold land in the local government districts of Carnamah, Coorow, Dandaragan, Mingenew, Moora, Irwin and Three Springs, that is no less than 100 hectares in area with a minimum rates payable amount of \$100.

Contact your local RBG for information on operational plans and priority declared pests

Biosecurity group	Contact	Email	Phone
Blackwood Biosecurity Inc	Sheila Howat	projects@blackwoodbiosecurity.org.au	0418 509 314
Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Association	Krystie Bremer	crba_eo@iinet.net.au	0417 183 705
Central Wheatbelt Biosecurity Association	Linda Vernon	eocwba@outlook.com	0473 163 050
Goldfields-Nullarbor Rangelands Biosecurity Association	Michelle Donaldson	admin@gnrba.com.au	0439 363 263
Kimberley Rangelands Biosecurity Association	Dick Pasfield	krbg@westnet.com.au	0418 959 832
Meekatharra Rangelands Biosecurity Association	Geoff Brooks	gpbrooks2000@yahoo.com.au	0499 343 828
Pilbara Regional Biosecurity Group	Bill Currans	bill@billcurrans.com	0488 383 449
Southern Biosecurity Group	Kylie Fletcher	sbg.execofficer@gmail.com	0484 932 447
Peel Harvey Biosecurity Group	Jonelle Cleland	admin@phbg.org	0409 079 156
Esperance Biosecurity Association	Linda McCrea	eba.wilddog@outlook.com	0429 926 989
Eastern Wheatbelt Biosecurity Group	Lisa O'Neill	ewbg@outlook.com	0455 724 848
Leschenault Biosecurity Group Inc	Ange Pusey	exec@lbginc.org.au	0488 991 352
Northern Biosecurity Group	Marieke Jansen	nbg_eo@outlook.com	0460 409 344
Midlands Biosecurity Group	Chris O'Callaghan	eo@mbg.org.au	0429 446 515

More information

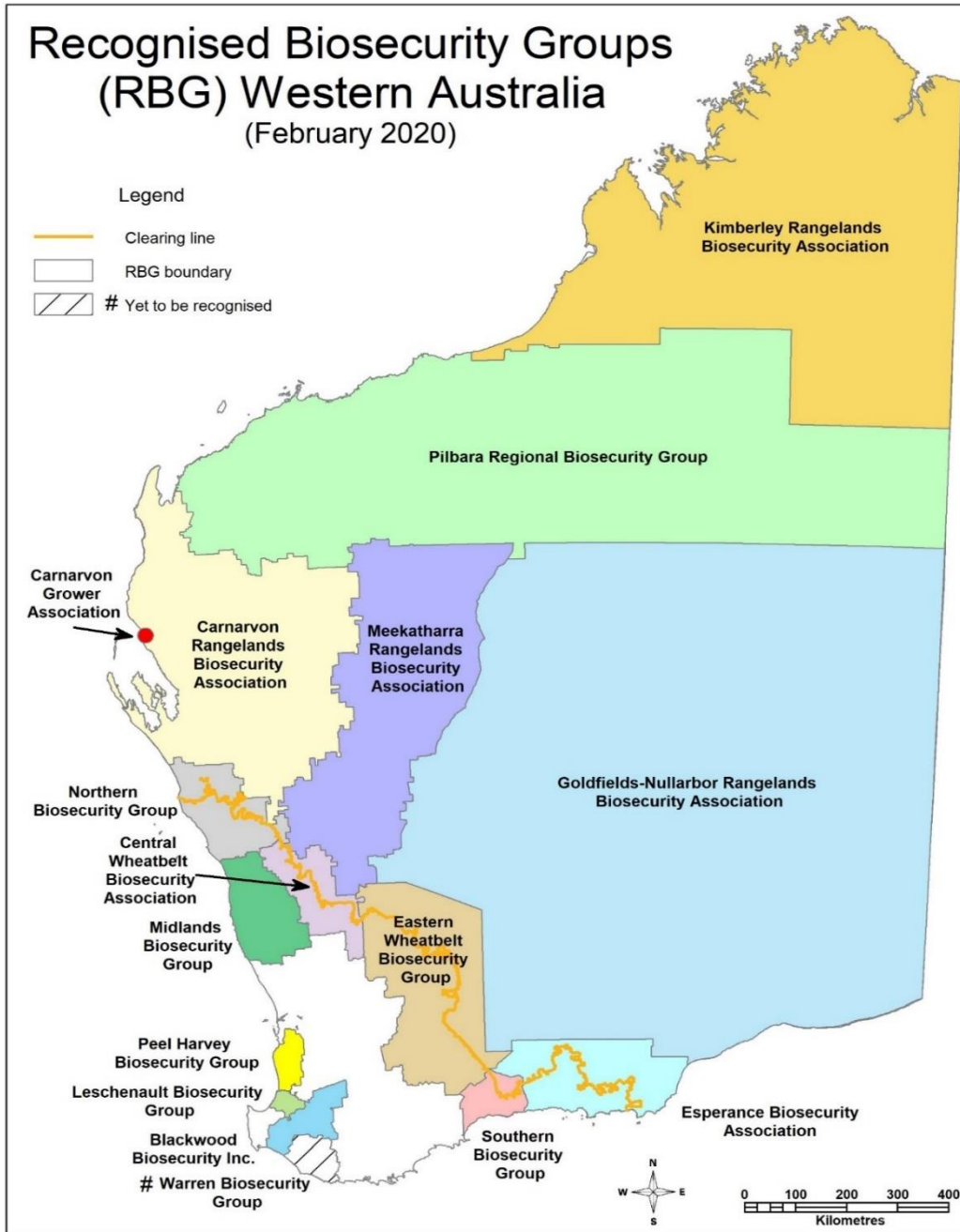
Declared pest rate process and calculation of rates

Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
dpr@dpird.wa.gov.au | agric.wa.gov.au/rbg
 1300 374 731

Payment and change of address enquiries only

RevenueWA
 web enquiry: osr.wa.gov.au/bama
 (08) 9262 1199
 Country callers 1300 368 364

Recognised Biosecurity Group operational areas



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