

Operational Plan

2024 - 2025

Southern Biosecurity Group

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Pests and Weeds

Your environment · Your responsibility · Your legacy

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Introduction

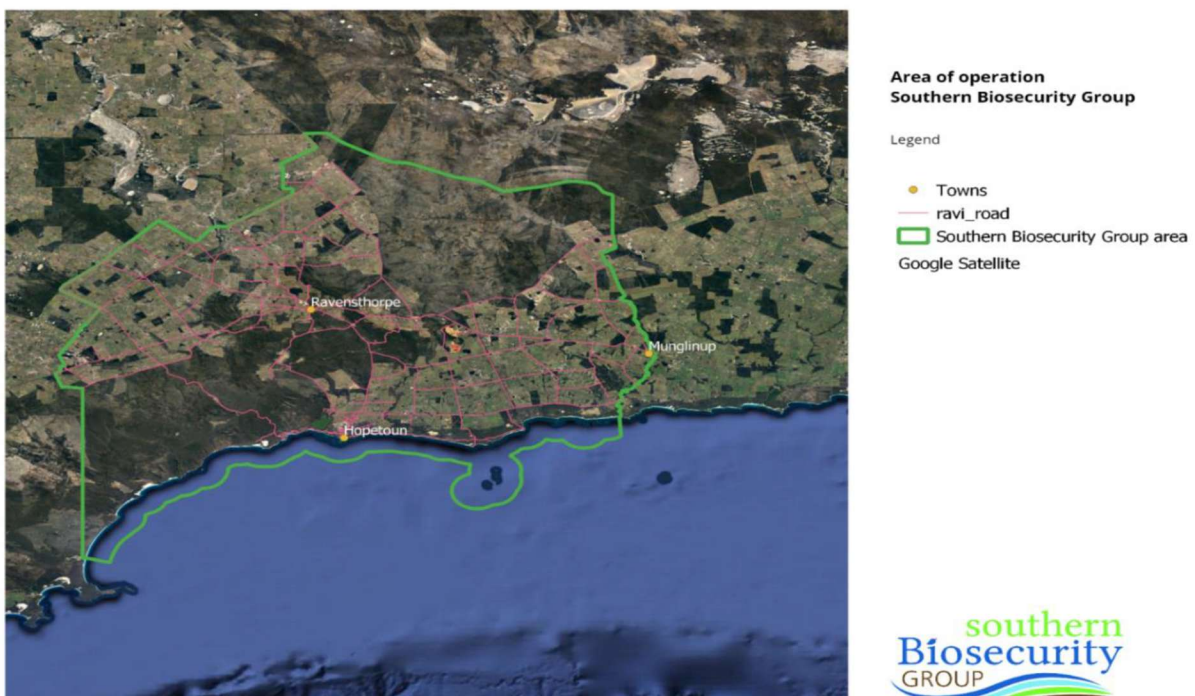
This plan sets out the program of activities for Southern Biosecurity Group (SBG) for the 2024–2025 financial year.

Activities identified in this plan are aimed at achieving strategic priorities set out in SBG’s Strategic Plan (2022-2025), the Biosecurity Management Strategy for the Ravensthorpe Shire with responses to the annual survey forwarded to landholders factored into the plan.

About us

Southern Biosecurity Group is a subcommittee of the Ravensthorpe Agricultural Initiative Network (RAIN). SBG mandate is to coordinate control of declared pest species in the Shire of Ravensthorpe. We first began operating in 2002 as the Ravensthorpe Declared Species Group. At that time, our role involved coordinating wild dog control in the shire. We achieve good control of wild dog numbers through a range of activities including dispersing of 1080 baits, trapping and shooting. We believe declared pests can be better managed by a coordinated approach between community, industry and government.

This belief has led to us becoming a Recognised Biosecurity Group through the *Biosecurity and Agricultural Management Act 2007* (BAM Act) which is currently in a review stage. This means that landholder funds raised through the Declared Pest Rate are matched dollar for dollar by the State Government enabling us to provide coordinated and targeted control of declared pests and plants within the shire. The area of operation is shown below.



Southern Biosecurity Group Management Committee Members:

As at the 2023 Annual General Meeting of RAIN

- Karyn Tuckett
- Gemma Walker
- Jennifer Chambers
- Reece Laycock

SBG will continue to collaborate with key stakeholders:

- Australian Wool Innovation Limited
- Biosecurity Council of WA
- Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions
- Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
- Industry Funding Scheme (Sheep and Goat) Committee
- Local communities within the Shire of Ravensthorpe
- Main Roads Western Australia
- Other Recognised Biosecurity Groups
- Ravensthorpe Agricultural Initiative Network
- Shire of Ravensthorpe
- South Coast NRM
- State Natural Resource Management
- Water Corporation Western Australia

Our Vision and purpose:

That the Southern Biosecurity Group is proactive in encouraging all stakeholders to adopt sound biosecurity practices.

Minimise the environmental, economic and social impacts of animal pests and weeds on agricultural industry, landscapes and biodiversity values within the Ravensthorpe Shire.

We will achieve this through coordinating a community-based approach to the management of animal pests and weeds.

Declared Pest Rate (DPR) for the Southern Biosecurity Group area of operation:

Funds raised by the DPR and the State Government co-contribution will support the commercial, environmental and social values of the Shire of Ravensthorpe community through:

- Improved animal welfare by preventing wild dog attacks on livestock and native animals;
- Add to land values by improving the viability of current and new livestock enterprises;
- Strengthen economic return when selling or leasing land suitable for the running of livestock;
- Safety of locals and tourists walking, sightseeing and horse riding in bushland areas;
- Reduce fox numbers by uptake of baits via wild dog baiting programs;
- Impact on fox and rabbit numbers as part of a collaborative control program, including coordination of an annual shoot and release of RHDV rabbit virus and warren destruction;
- Provision of equipment to trap pests impacting on urban areas;
- Support endangered species conservation, (e.g. numbats and mallee fowl); and

- Prevent the establishment of wild dog populations within national parks, reserves and urban residential areas.

The rate for the 2024/25 financial year will remain unchanged from the previous year, with the following rates to be applied to urban farming or urban residential or urban vacant or urban miscellaneous, on the non-rural valuation roll and rural freehold on the rural valuation roll maintained under the Valuation of Land Act 1978.

Hectare range	Flat rate (\$)
50ha or less	\$24
>50 – 200	\$39
>200 – 500	\$75
>500 – 1000	\$141
>1000 – 2000	\$200
>2000 – 3500	\$377
>3500 – 5000	\$528
>5000 – 7500	\$698
>7500 – 9000	\$848
>9000	\$1107

Disbursement Financial Year 24/25:

We are basing this amount on the previous year. For 2023/24, we have been advised by Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development it is estimated that \$94,944 (excluding GST) will be raised through the determination of rates in the Southern Biosecurity Group’s prescribed area. The total amount raised is matched by State Government funding. This means it is forecasted that an amount of \$189,888 will be available to SBG for the 2024/25 year. The Declared Pest Rate current hectare range and rate will be maintained in 2024/25.

Please note, the figure raised through the determination may be lower than the estimated figure and may vary due to a number of factors, including but not limited to, property subdivisions, changes in unimproved land values, pensioner postponements under the BAM Act or any other applicable exemptions, as determined on a case-by-case basis by the Commissioner of Revenue WA.

Suggested payment schedule as follows:

1st quarter	2nd quarter	3rd quarter	4th quarter
July – Sept 2024 \$94,944 WA Government matching funds	Oct – Dec 2024 \$Nil	Jan – March 2025 \$50,000 (or funds collected)	April – June 2025 Remainder of DPR received or available in DPA

Proposed budget for 2024 – 2025 financial year:

INCOME	Detail notes	2024/25
		Budget
Rate revenue	<i>less 20% unpaid rate allowed</i>	75,955
Govt matching	<i>directions notice advice figure @ Sept 2022</i>	94,944
Interest DPA account	<i>(3rd quarter statement figure 2023) July 2023 – June 2024</i>	2,135
Unavailable funds		
	TOTAL INCOME DPA/DPR	173,034
Unspent funds previous yr		
Additional drawdown DPA	<i>20% unpaid allowance 22/23 yr held in DPA utilised</i>	19,202
	FUNDS AVAILABLE	192,236
EXPENDITURE		
	Administration	
	Contract Executive Officer	69,000
	Office, phone, internet	600
	RAIN finance administration	5,000
	RP application fee	800
	Stationary-postage (excl annual letter)	100
	Subscriptions-memberships	300
	Professional Development	1,000
	Travel-accommodation allowance	4,350
	Total Administration	81,150
	Communication	
	Advertising	1,000
	Annual newsletter landholders(incl post,print)	3,885
	Biosecurity event/awareness incl market day	3,120
	Promotional(brochures,booklets,stands,banner)	800
	Website	1,500
	Total Communications	10,305
	Governance	
	Accountant-audit-Legal fees	3,500
	Committee honorarium-expenses	1,300
	Insurance (SBG pub liab(dogging), trailer)	1,600
	Insurance workers compensation EO etc	3,500
	Insurance RAIN 1/3rd share various	1,100
	Teleconference/zoom meeting costs	300
	Total Governance	11,300
	Declared animal species	
	wild dogs	31,000
	foxes	15,861
	rabbits	9,200
	feral cats	1,920
	baits, poison, biocontrol etc	8,000
	signage	1,000
	Total Declared animal species	66,981
	Declared plant species	
	cactus	11,000
	apple sodom	4,500
	bridal creeper	5,000
		-
		-
	materials-herbicide, biological control	-
	Total Declared plant species	20,500
	Operations	
	Equipment purchase-replacement	2,000
	Total Operations	2,000
	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	192,236

Key action areas for SBG for 2024-2025:

Actively manage impacts of declared animal species in the Shire of Ravensthorpe. Management to benefit landholders, general public, natural environment, threatened species.

Goal	Target	Actions	Measures	Date Activity
Implement actions outlined in the Biosecurity Management Strategy for the Ravensthorpe Shire and the Southern Biosecurity Group Strategic Plan for:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wild dogs 	Continue to coordinate wild dog management activities (e.g. baiting, shooting, trapping, camera monitoring (when required))	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage Licensed Pest Management Technician for minimum of 50 days Comply with State and National Wild Dog Action Plans Use of Feral Scan Continue to promote wild dogs as a state-wide issue Encourage reporting species sightings, tracks, stock losses and other complimentary activities 	20km buffer zone to east of SBF maintained <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nil or reduced stock attacks Increase in sightings of native species on all land tenures Increased landholder confidence to run stock 2 media of 1080 use for wild dog control ongoing in the Shire 	Ongoing February & July
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foxes 	Continue to coordinate an integrated program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage Licensed Pest Management Technician - bait on UCL, reserves, parks etc. where no DBCA control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 media notices of 1080 use ongoing in the Shire Collaborative control in areas adjacent to DBCA activity 1 fox shoot 	Winter: June -August Spring: September – November March
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rabbits 	Continue to coordinate integrated activities e.g. warren ripping/destruction, RHDV release, baiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage landholders to undertake complimentary control activities and removal of debris that may harbor rabbits Engage authorised personnel to distribute RHDV when required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation in RHDV releases 2 releases of RHDV Minimum 2 media prior to RHDV release 	March March-April August - September
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feral cats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cat owner education including devastating impact on biodiversity Reduce threat to native species from feral cat predation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Cat Act 2011 requirement of identification, registration and sterilisation of domestic cats, to ensure responsible pet ownership, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement by SBG with community Anecdotal reports of reduction of feral cats that are living and 	Ongoing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate options for broader landscape scale control of feral cats 	<p>reduce the number of unwanted feral cats in the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any control to be humane and undertaken under Animal Welfare Act 2002 Promote availability of cat traps for loan Liaise with Rangers at Shire of Ravensthorpe 	<p>reproducing in the wild</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Control activity noted by LPMT as part of their wild dog report 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Barrier Fence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with DPIRD, EBA and other stakeholders to ensure completion of the Esperance Extension to SBF SBF integrity maintained to prevent entry by declared species into agricultural land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue updates on Esperance extension Report to DPIRD SBF maintenance issues Encourage UCL track maintenance to SBF, buffer zone, rock holes Communicate with DPIRD and SBF Manager on areas requiring attention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of SBF extension by 2025. Maintenance completed and communicated 	Ongoing

Manage declared plant species in Shire of Ravensthorpe. Management to landholders, general public, natural environment, threatened species. Management to benefit landholders, general public, natural environment, threatened species.

<i>Goal</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Measures</i>	<i>Date Activity</i>
Implement actions outlined in the Biosecurity Management Strategy for the Ravensthorpe Shire and the Southern Biosecurity Group Strategic Plan for:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apple of Sodom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater Hopetoun area plus new areas identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate control in areas from previous activity including treating newly emerged or missed plants Collaboration with Water Corp for removal/treatment of plant on their land tenure Promote the need for control and control options through a range of channels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A reduction in newly emerged plants due to previous control and seed viability being reduced Newly identified sites Media article on species control options 	<p>Jan - March and Sept - Dec treatment times when actively growing</p> <p>Ongoing manual removal and education</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridal Creeper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hopetoun foreshore and free camping area to reduce risk of spread to Fitzgerald River National Park • Krystal Park Estate • Land identified as a habitat, where feasible to implement measures that mitigate their impact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote options for control of bridal creeper • Use of herbicide and rust fungus (<i>Puccinia myrsiphylli</i>) • Liaise with government agencies to advise of species on their land tenure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media article on species control options • Reduction in germination • Collaboration identified. 	March - Sept
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cactus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control working towards eradicating plant from the Shire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure another funding source to continue Oldfield River control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful funding application 	Ongoing

Maintain defined and flexible governance structure and processes.

Goal	Target	Actions	Measures	Date Activity
Develop additional governance policies as required to meet new legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operate as an RBG subgroup/Management Committee under RAIN constitution • Develop annual documentation for RAIN AGM and DPIRD • Maintaining healthy membership and composition of Sub-Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review policies on an annual basis – continue to implement and update OHS policy • Prepare Annual Report, Operational Plan and budget prioritized from Strategic Plan, Biosecurity Strategy for Shire of Ravensthorpe and annual survey • Promote SBG to wider community • Current members actively seek new members • Succession plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting obligations of the constitution • Support RAIN • One SBG report submitted to each RAIN meeting • Each policy reviewed annually to ensure meeting legislative requirements – update OHS policy to comply new legislation • To RAIN Management Committee prior to AGM to facilitate endorsement • Support DPIRD- provide relevant documents by due dates • Nominations for management committee • New members identified 	<p>Operational Plan and previous year Annual Report including audited statement accepted by SBG Management Committee September.</p> <p>All documents along with Conflict-of-Interest Register presented October RAIN AGM.</p> <p>Annual report Oct 2021 lodged DPIRD Dec each year.</p> <p>Operational Report to be submitted December each year.</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

Meet all administration requirements

Goal	Target	Actions	Measures	Date Activity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure a diversified funding base sufficient to cover SBG operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain the Declared Pest Rate Plan, monitor, report of funding grants at appropriate times Secure other funding sources as required Maintain funding register and templates to assist with efficiency for writing applications Review and update of Biosecurity Strategy for Shire of Ravensthorpe in collaboration with the Shire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DPR supported across Shire – DPIRD feedback SBG contact register Project reports and financial content to each committee meeting Success across diverse range funding sources Update content as required – present changes to Shire annually 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Quarterly</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing update shire endorsement and notification of updates</p>

Effective communication for well engaged community and stakeholders

Goal	Target	Actions	Measures	Date Activity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOU developed with government agencies Provide value to DPR payers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOU Shire Ravensthorpe, DPIRD, DBCA, Main Roads WA, Water Corp WA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with agencies to develop MOU Encourage annual compliance regime DPIRD (weed inspection etc.) Articulate need to manage pests and weeds on government and private land tenure Identify areas for collaboration and seek funding to match SBG in-kind contributions Promote achievements, awareness relevant pest issues, via displays, eNews, newspaper, meetings, website, guides DPR spend, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of MOU's achieved Record control activities by relevant agency Record Stakeholder engagement in activities Communication milestones met: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum 8 communication activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Newsletter Annual survey Regular annual updates in local media and RAIN eNews Minimum 1 Biosecurity event annually Website 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

DPIRD Strategic Intent 2022-26:

Southern Biosecurity Group through its Operational Plan and budget align with DPIRD Strategic Intent. Specifically, reference to the purpose “enable enduring prosperity for all Western Australians through our work with regions and primary industries”. “Grow our primary industries and regions through balancing social, economic and environmental drivers”.

Item 3, “Dynamic regions and primary industries” – “Deliver systems and support to industry in animal welfare, biosecurity, and ethical and sustainable production to meet community expectations and enhance the reputation of our primary industries”.

Community Survey:

As part of developing the Operational Plan the annual priority survey was distributed in August 2023 with our annual newsletter to landowners to gain community input for planning of the 2024/25 Operational Plan and budget.

To date responses have identified the following Priority Species:

Declared Species:

Some species will require permissions prior to any control being considered.

- Wild dogs
- Rabbits
- Foxes
- Feral cats
- Bridal Creeper
- Prickly Pear
- Phytophthora Dieback
- Apple of Sodom
- Skeleton Weed
- Galah
- Western Grey Kangaroo – (*approved Wildlife Management Plan 2019-2023, commercial harvest, private agricultural land control*)
- Locust
- Fruit fly (*in some local government areas*)

Non declared species: (outside of Declared Pest Rate permitted expenditure)

- Lovegrass
- Boxthorn

Communication and engagement calendar:

Month	Activities
January	Seasonal hiatus
February	Community Spirit – article RAIN e-news, Community Spirit – article species specific plus general information if required Promote Annual Community Fox Shoot in conjunction with Red Card for Red Fox 1080 Wild dog and fox media via Community Spirit article/advertisement RBG zoom meeting
March	SBG quarterly newsletter, RAIN news, Community Spirit and website RAIN hosted Research Updates – SBG update presentation RBG zoom meeting
April	Community Spirit, RAIN eNews, website – article fox shoot information RBG zoom meeting
May	Community Spirit, RAIN eNews – article species specific plus general information if required RAIN e-news, Community Spirit -article species specific plus general information if required RBG zoom meeting
June	SBG quarterly newsletter, RAIN news, Community Spirit and website RBG zoom meeting
July	1080 Wild dog and fox media via Community Spirit article/advertisement RBG zoom meeting
August	Community Spirit, RAIN eNews – species specific plus general information if required RAIN e-news -article RBG zoom meeting
September	Community priorities survey and Annual Newsletter RAIN Spring Field Walk -community consultation Display at Ravensthorpe Wildflower Festival Quarterly newsletter for RAIN eNews, Community Spirit, website (include summary Wildflower Show display) RBG zoom meeting
October	Draft Operational Plan approved at RAIN AGM Annual report including audited financial report provided to DPIRD Community Spirit – article RAIN e-news -article RBG zoom meeting
November	Cactus Month – promote sightings, SBG achievements, control methods, highlight need for control. For Community Spirit, RAIN news RBG zoom meeting
December	Seasonal hiatus RBG zoom meeting Quarterly newsletter, Community Spirit and RAIN eNews, a brief summary of years activity and achievements, Prepare for final edition of paper for year (early December)