

# Lake Muir and Denbarker Community Feral Pig Eradication Group

## Summary Report of Recent Activities

### 1. Project Aim

The primary aim of the project is:

- To facilitate the involvement of all landholders in the Lake Muir and Denbarker areas in contributing to the initial reduction of the feral pig population and the subsequent maintenance of low pig densities.

In recent times the group has also provided advice and assistance outside of the Lake Muir and Denbarker target area to others seeking to manage feral pigs.

### 2. Project Management

The 'Lake Muir and Denbarker Community Feral Pig Eradication Group' (the Group) continues to manage all operational aspects of the project. Mark Muir is now in his sixth year as Chairman of the group. Tony Fox was appointed in July 2007 as Deputy Chairman. Membership of the group is broadly representative of the landholders in the district with some changes in faces but not the organisations that are represented. Staff at the Plantagenet Shire continue to administer financial matters on behalf of the Group. The Group is very grateful for the Shire's ongoing support.

### 3. Feral Pig Control Results

Peter Cochrane and Kevin Machen continued to conduct surveillance and trapping activity throughout the project area during 2007. A third trapper, Bob Radomiljac, was appointed on a trial basis in February 2008. Peter has been a trapper for the Group since the project began operations in 2001.

The Group is pleased to report that pig numbers remain at low levels in the project area. The work effort required to trap pigs is assessed by calculating the number of pigs trapped per week of trapper time. There was a steady decline in the number of pigs trapped per week for the first four years of the project but the rate has stabilised in recent years (Table 1).

**Table 1. The number of feral pigs trapped by locality and the amount of time trappers were employed for each year of the project.**

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Lake Muir	70	51	51	42	32	68	*
Rocky Gully	0	0	0	3	4	18	*
Denbarker	24	44	26	7	10	24	*
<b>Total pigs</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>81</b>
Total weeks of trapper time	16	20	20	32	21	55	29
Pigs per trapper week	5.9	4.8	3.9	1.6	2.2	2.0	2.8

\* Figures not yet available

Landholders in the project area continue to express great satisfaction in the achievements of the Group. The Group continues to work hard on gaining good quality information about the location of pigs and providing feedback to community members who report sightings to the Group. Trappers are using satellite maps obtained from the internet to help identify likely watering points. The objective is to find all pigs on a particular water course rather than most.

The Albany Branch of the Sporting Shooters Association continues to provide support to the Group when requested to do so. This arrangement has worked well for both groups.

The project trappers caught pigs at Dongolocking (Wagin area) and Pallinup River (Jerramungup Shire) on behalf of other community groups in need of assistance to manage a feral pig problem. Where possible support for other groups will continue to be provided.

#### **4. Financial Summary**

The major financial contributors to the group have remained largely unchanged in recent years. South Coast Natural Resource Management Inc has provided a major annual contribution to the project for 3 years. In late 2006 the group was successful in an application for a Natural Heritage Trust funded Envirofund grant to help protect the biodiversity at Lake Muir. All other major contributors have continued to support the group each year. The foundation funders have continued with annual support.

The balance of funds held in trust by the Plantagenet Shire on 31 December 2007 was \$25,330. Approximately \$58,000 income is expected in the 6 months to 30 June 2008 enabling ongoing trapping activity for the current financial year.

#### **5. Other Achievements and Plans**

Two "Feral Pig Awareness Workshops" were held in 2006, one at Forest Hill and the other at Denmark. Two further workshops with a biodiversity theme are planned for later in March 2008, one in the Porongurups and the other in Walpole.

Trap design is a focus for the group with three styles of trap considered worthwhile. These are the "Figure 6", the "Drop Gate" and the "Swing Gate". The "Drop Gate" has proven to be successful with a large boar that had eluded the trappers previously being caught. The Envirofund money was used to develop the new traps.

Maintaining an effective surveillance network with the community and providing a timely response is an ongoing challenge for the Group. There is a commitment by the Group to continually improve in this area.

#### **6. Conclusion**

After nearly eight years of effort the Group feels some degree of satisfaction that the pig population has been largely contained. However the threat is ongoing and it is only with continued community support that the project will be able to have an impact. The Group is very pleased with the willingness of people to contribute, both with financial support and also time to get the various jobs done. We look forward to continuing in partnership in the battle against a most damaging vertebrate pest.

Dr Tony Higgs  
11 March 2008