

PROFESSIONAL WILD DOG CONTROLLER PROGRAM

Newsletter



More than 360 problem wild dogs removed from Upper Hunter hotspots in three years

The Hunter's unique Professional Wild Dog Controller Program has reached a milestone, removing more than 360 wild dogs in just under the three years since it was launched.

The program is supported by Hunter Local Land Services, the Hunter Valley Combined Wild Dog Association, Australia Wool Innovation and local land managers including Glencore, Bengalla, Yancoal, MACH Energy, Forestry NSW, National Parks and Wildlife Service and FeralScan.

The program was developed after increasing dog attacks were being reported in the Upper Hunter, particularly impacting outlying sheep properties which was affecting confidence in the local industry.

"Where we came from only a few years ago, there were a lot of isolated satellite sheep properties that were coping the brunt of a lot of wild dog activity," said Richard Ali.

"We investigated and reviewed all of our techniques with the local wild dog associations and producers and found as we were only using the approach of baiting, some dogs had evolved and adapted and were outsmarting us as older dogs knew to avoid the baits.

"These dogs became problem dogs and hotspots of wild dog predation emerged, normally in close proximity to these outlying sheep properties."

Now under the Professional Wild Dog Controller Program, three fulltime professional controllers are

available to assist local producers target and remove these problem wild dogs across the Upper Hunter using a combination of strategic and reactive methods.

President of the Hunter Valley Combined Wild Dog Association, Frank Bragg said taking these killer dogs out of the system is helping to restore hope in the future of the sheep industry for local producers.

“We couldn’t be more pleased with the outcomes of the program so far, and the huge gains we have made working strategically together to combat wild dogs in this region,” said Frank.

“The confidence that this is giving people to have the option to get back into sheep, and not have to worry that they are going to have the big levels of predation that we had before.

“After this prolonged drought, there is now the opportunity to go back into sheep and I think it’s of the utmost importance we continue this program and strengthen it with funding well into the future.”

Scone producer Simon Deery said the program has been a saviour for his operation.

“We were pretty much getting a dog attack every six to eight weeks, and that was consistent until the problem dog was removed,” said Simon.

“Trying to build sheep numbers and be diverse on the farm was proving very difficult because we just couldn’t keep the numbers up and we couldn’t afford to buy them to have them killed.

“The trapping has been unreal, the program has been a real saviour here, not to the point our numbers have increased massively yet, but the attacks have decreased massively and that’s the biggest thing.”

More than 40 dogs have been removed from the valley near Mr Deery’s property, east of Scone in the last two years. “That’s a massive amount of dogs and it puts a lot of confidence in us as farmers to know there is help, and it’s only a phone call away and the results that we are getting are accurate, and it really makes you feel like it is worth doing.” Producers must be a member of their local wild dog association to be eligible to participate in this program.

For the last 18 months all fees associated with the program were waived, as part of Hunter Local Land Services drought support to local producers. Landholders can report wild dog activity to Hunter Local Land Services Biosecurity team by calling **1300 795 299**. You can watch our video on the Professional Wild Dog Controller Program by visiting our Youtube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZsLcEYS75t8ENDS>





Professional Controller Profile – Volker Dreyer

Attending a Hunter Local Land Services Trapping School at Ellerston is what projected Professional Wild Dog Controller Volker Dreyer into a career removing wild dogs threatening livestock.

“About 10 years ago a mate lost all his sheep, and I thought I should help him out so I started watching Youtube videos on trapping and attempted a few traps, with a lot of trial and error,” said Volker.

“Then Richard Ali (HLLS Biosecurity Officer) invited us up to the trapping school at Ellerston, and it was amazing.

“I learned so many skills, it was completely different to Youtube of course, and I learned to do everything properly – I can’t recommend the course highly enough!”

After he did the trapping course Volker spent time helping farmers and neighbours around Denman near where he lived and on his own property.

“It was chance really I got into it professionally, as after I was made redundant in the mines up here, Richard found me some contracting work around the Central West, and then I was lucky enough to get a spot as a Professional Wild Dog Controller, for this great program,” said Volker.

Volker finds immense satisfaction in the role.

“What I really enjoy is the happy faces on the farmers when I bring in a dog they have been worried about, or that’s been impacting their stock,” said Volker.

“It’s really good to help out the producers and I really do enjoy the variety of the work and being out on these great properties.”

Volker said the professional standards of the program and utilising new technology helps achieve great results.

“Probably the most satisfying case recently was out on a place near Murrurundi, where I was working with

Richard and Jonathan Randle (Upper Hunter Biosecurity Team) who had the thermal technology,” said Volker.

“They shot one dog but we knew there was another, so I set some traps and after two days, we got the dog, it felt really good to get that one.”

For the Upper Hunter local, Volker is thrilled to see confidence returning to local producers after years of drought and predation by wild dogs.

“More people are starting to talk about sheep, getting back into them and that’s great, it’s so satisfying when you get a wild dog, because you know it’s making it better for the farmers and we are committed to removing them so they can feel more confident.”

Bengalla Mining Company are proud to support the PWDC Program. Bengalla Mining assist the PWDC program by providing funds annually to assist local landowners in controlling wild dogs across the Upper Hunter region by aerial baiting and ground control programs and also by being actively involved in community control programs in the Upper Hunter. Results to date have resulted in wild dog populations decrease considerably in the Rouchel, Parkville and Merriwa region. By protecting these lands, Bengalla can assist in supporting the economic value for these landowners and environmental enhancement in these areas, thus promoting a win for all involved.

Programs in the Bengalla area:



**13 Landholders
involved**



**14 Dogs
caught**

2019-2020 STATS



OVERALL STATS



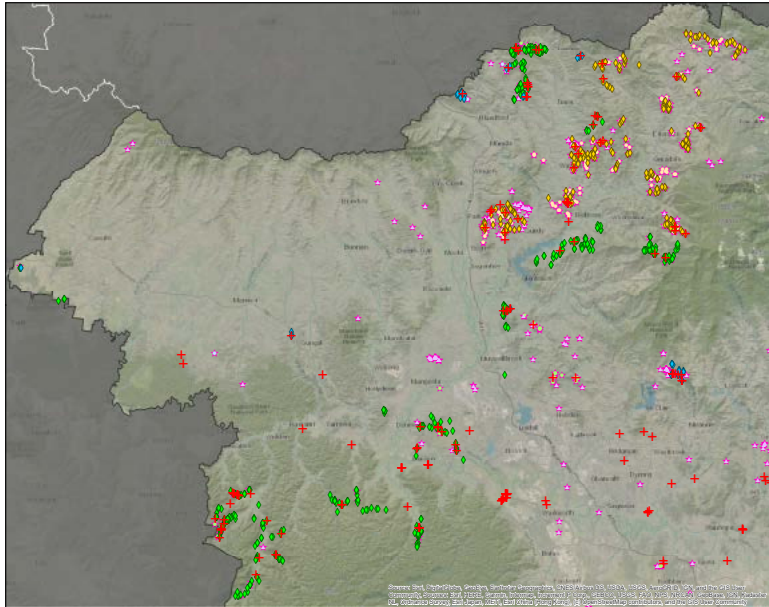
= 367 dogs



= 116 landholders



= 76 reactive/
strategic programs



HUNTER LOCAL LAND SERVICES
PROFESSIONAL WILD DOG CONTROL ACTIVITIES 2019 - 2020

Legend

- Hunter LLS Region
- Wild Dog Controls**
 - WDM2 Ben Johnson
 - WDM4 Tim Booth
 - WDM5 Volker Dreyer
 - Dog Destroyed
- Wild Dog Damage**
 - Damage reported
- Wild Dog Sightings**
 - All Others
 - WDM2 Ben Johnson
 - WDM4 Tim Booth
 - WDM5 Volker Dreyer



Scale: 1:490,000
Prepared By: David Richardson
Date: 17/11/2020

Landholder contributions update

With the easing of drought conditions across the Upper Hunter, the Hunter Valley Combined Trapper Committee has voted to reinstate producer contributions to the Professional Wild Dog Controller Program from 1 January 2021.

For the last two years, fees have been waived as the committee recognised the strain of the ongoing drought on local farming families.

This will mean from the start of next year, producer's will be required to contribute up to \$500 of a 10 day program.

Producer's must also be an active participant of their local Wild Dog Association and participate in control programs such as group or aerial baiting.

MACH Energy Australia Mount Pleasant Operation (MACH) is proud to support the Hunter Local Land Service (HLLS) and the Hunter Valley Combined Wild Dog Association (HVCWDA) in particular the Wybong Wild Dog Control Association and the Goulburn River Wild Dog Associations.

MACH sees the Hunter Local Land Services Professional Wild Dog Controller Program as a way of supporting the agricultural community through the targeted elimination of problem wild dogs who evade conventional methods of control.



Sponsored by



HunterValley
Combined Wild Dog
Association



GLENCORE



Upper Hunter
County Council



Contact us

Frank Bragg
Chairman
Hunter Valley Combined
Wild Dog Association
0429 827 479
rossgole2336@gmail.com

Richard Ali
Senior Biosecurity Officer
Hunter Local Land Services
0429 722 944
richard.ali@lls.nsw.gov.au

Jonathan Randle
Biosecurity Officer
Hunter Local Land Services
0429 342 995
jonathan.randle@lls.nsw.gov.au

