

Support, information and resources
for individuals and communities
impacted by wild dogs



Above: Wild dog exclusion fencing constructed with Bushfire Recovery Funding.

Inset: Combined Bushfire Recovery Fund and DeFence fencing across eastern Victoria. Source: DELWP.

Bushfire recovery aids wild dog control

The Community Wild Dog Control Coordinators and members of the Wild Dog Program have been helping farmers replace fences lost in the 2019-20 bushfires, strengthening wild dog control in the process.

The Community Wild Dog Coordinators (CWDDCs) and members of the Wild Dog Program (WDP) have helped farmers access funding under the Victorian Government's Bushfire Recovery Fencing (BRF) program.

Almost every application has been processed, resulting in the construction of 584km of new fencing in Gippsland and 277km in the Hume.

Significantly, more than half of the BRF fencing comprises Wild Dog Exclusion Fencing (WDEF), bringing the total amount of publicly-funded WDEF erected in both regions in 2019-20 to 516km. (Seventy-five km of WDEF was constructed under the DeFence Project, which was funded by the Commonwealth Government's Communities Combating Pests and Weed Impacts During Drought Program (see page 4).)

These stretches of WDEF (see image above) are helping farmers protect livestock from the threat of wild dog predation which can increase after bushfire.

Further assistance is being offered by the WDP which has secured funding under Work for Victoria to hire an additional four Wild Dog Controllers (WDCs) for the next few months.



Above: CWDCCs, Lucy-Anne Cobby, Brian Dowley and Mick Freeman.

AWI continues its longstanding commitment to communities working to control wild dogs

Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) has announced that it will fund the highly successful Community Wild Dog Control Coordinators (CWDCC) project for a further three years.

The CWDCC partnership project between AWI and DELWP began in 2012, in response to the finding that wild dog predation is the single biggest controllable threat to the wool industry.

Stages 1 and 2 of the CWDCC project saw the development of a framework that encourages and enables private and public landholders to work together to control the impacts of wild dogs.

There are currently 20 Community Wild Dog Control (CWDC) groups throughout north-east Victoria and Gippsland. Up to 180 producers have been involved in these groups, whose actions have protected approximately 180,000 ha of private and public land.

Reductions in wild dog predation and improvements in farm productivity and farmer wellbeing have been reported in all areas with active community wild dog control groups.

Keys to the CWDCC project's success include:

- the coordination of multiple property owners,
- the use of best practice control methods,
- good communication with all stakeholders,
- access to information and training,
- willingness to explore new technologies.

The model developed under the CWDCC project has proven so effective that it is now being extended to include feral pig control (see page 5).

To become involved in community wild dog/feral pig control, please contact your local CWDCC. Their contact details are on page 10.

Taking Control



Above: Wayne Houston became proficient in trapping with help from his local WDC, David Klippel.

Traps give peace of mind - year after year

AWI-funded trap kits have been a valuable long-term investment, with traps bought in 2015 still being used to capture wild dogs five years later.

The Mansfield/Barwite Broken River CWDC Group was one of the first to take advantage of the opportunity offered under the CWDC project to use AWI funding to buy trap kits.

The Group, which initially comprised seven members, bought five trap kits in 2015. An expansion of numbers, combined with confidence in its members' ability to capture wild dogs, encouraged the Group to purchase seven more trap kits in 2017.

Free training in the use and care of the traps was offered under the project. Several training days were run by the CWDCs, and Senior WDC, David Klippel, went on-farm to help interested landholders improve their skills.

One landholder who benefited from the initiative is the last person running sheep in Mountain Bay, Wayne Houston. Wayne received six soft-jawed Jakes traps, learned the basics by watching demonstrations at field days and training events, then honed his skills by working hands-on with David.

"Dave has been great. He has showed me how and where to set the traps, and what to use as lure," says Wayne.

Wayne, who has guardian alpacas and carries out his own shooting program, says that "having a trap in the ground gives me peace of mind".

"At the first sign of trouble, I get my traps in and call the WDC," he says. "It's good to know I can do something before he gets here."

Brendan Mahoney, from Merrijig, is another landholder who has become proficient in trapping since his Group acquired its kits. He has captured eight wild dogs, and has helped other landholders to build their skills.

For Brendan, the benefits of trapping include always having a trap available, being able to target specific species, and the certainty of knowing that a dog or fox has been captured.

Other Group members, Tom Forrest and Garry Breadon, find that traps are particularly worthwhile during lambing season. Tom, who also baits to protect his stock, has captured one wild dog and eight foxes in the last three months.

Traps are only useful if they are being used. If you have a trap that is sitting idly on the shelf, please consider sharing it with a friend or neighbour. WDCs are available to train landholders in the art of trap setting and management, and can be contacted on the numbers found on page 10.



Above: Glenaladale farmer, Trevor Howden, checks the voltage in his new DeFence WDEF.

Community effort makes the difference

The DeFence project highlights the benefits of taking a collaborative approach to tackle a common problem.

The multi-partner project involving the Federal Government, East Gippsland Shire, Landcare, DELWP and AWI has resulted in the construction of 75km of WDEF in north-east Victoria and Gippsland.

With assistance from the CWDFCs, sixty-four landholders applied for funding under the Federal Government's Communities Combating Pests and Weed Impacts During Drought Program. Thirty-six were successful.

Fencing companies Gallagher, Waratah, Clipex and Datamars were invaluable to the success of the project. Representatives from each organisation attended three field days held pre-Covid in Gelantipy, Bendoc and Swifts Creek, demonstrating their products and offering advice to help landholders design the best WDEF for their conditions. (Note that more fencing field days are scheduled to be held when Covid restrictions ease.)

Each stretch of WDEF was constructed quickly and efficiently. Ensay sheep farmer, Craig Lloyd, was especially grateful for the quick turnaround.

"The sooner my fence was completed, the sooner I was protected, as four wild dogs were seen nearby the following week."

Wayne Jenkins experienced his "best-ever lambing percentage when everybody was working together and throwing everything" at the wild dog problem in his area.

The Tostaree farmer is a member of the recently formed Western Snowy Wild Dog and Pig Control Group (Group) which is supported by AWI and works closely with the WDCs, Parks Victoria's Good Neighbour Program and Southern Ark's Rock Wallaby Protection Program. The Group covers some 115,000ha and includes landholders in and around Buchan, Gelantipy and Wulgulmerang.

As its name suggests, the Group was formed to tackle both wild dogs and feral pigs, which are an emerging issue in the area. Feral pigs kill lambs and native animals, sully the environment, damage fencing and consume 1080 baits intended for wild dogs and foxes.

There are currently 36 members in the Group, a number which is expected to rise when Covid restrictions ease, and arrangements for providing local 1080 training and accreditation are finalised.

Wayne completed his training (which was subsidised by DELWP) last year and says it has been a valuable tool for controlling both wild dogs and foxes. He lays down baits on his own farms "at the first sign of trouble" and participates in coordinated baiting programs on nearby properties which provides an extra line of defence, especially in the lead up to lambing.

Taking Control



He is grateful that his neighbours appreciate the importance of controlling wild dogs and foxes and participate in the monthly baiting programs, even though they do not have sheep.

"It's impossible for me to keep my stock safe on my own," he explains. "I try to keep them secure but the deer damage the fences, and that lets the wild dogs in. I'm totally reliant on everybody working together to control them."

Wayne works closely with the WDCs, calling them as soon as he is aware of wild dog activity. He also calls in a couple of trusted recreational shooters who, using thermal heat-detecting scopes, were able to kill a particularly elusive wild dog close to his house.

Over the past five months, Wayne, the WDCs and the shooters have trapped or shot 45 wild dogs, and many others are believed to have died as a result of baiting.

"I haven't lost a sheep in five months, and I've had my highest lambing percentage," says Wayne. "Whatever we're doing in combination is working."

Widespread interest in feral pig control

Interstate representatives joined members of Victoria's pest animal teams to discuss the emerging issue of feral pig control at a workshop held in Gelanitipy pre-Covid.

Above: Feral pig trap demonstrations attracted considerable interest at the workshop in Gelanitipy.

Day One of the two day workshop was a forum for representatives from the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Local Land Services, WDCs, CWDDCs and Agriculture Victoria teams to share their experiences about wild dog and pig control.

Around 25 community members from around the Gelanitipy area joined the workshop on Day Two, which centered around ways to work together to handle the emerging issue of feral pigs in the area.

As with wild dogs, a coordinated approach involving public and private land managers and a variety of control methods will achieve the best results. Feral pig behavioral experts explained and demonstrated the variety of control methods available, including baiting and trapping.

They stressed that as it is very easy to 'spook' feral pigs, land managers need to plan ahead and prepare their sites before beginning a control program.

Note that there is scope for new and existing community wild dog control groups to incorporate feral pig control into their activities. For more information, contact your CWDDC via the contact details on page 10.

For more general information about feral pig control:

On private land:

Jason Wishart (Biosecurity Manager – Established Invasive Animals – Agriculture Victoria) on 0436 818 906 or Jason.wishart@agriculture.vic.gov.au

On public land:

Stefan Kaiser (Program Manager – Weeds and Pest Program – DELWP) on 0409 700 551 or at stefan.kaiser@delwp.vic.gov.au

Ben Fahey, Senior Analyst – Environment and Conservation (Parks Victoria) on 0488 399 878 or ben.fahey@parks.vic.gov.au

VICTORIAN WILD DOG PROGRAM

Collaborative wild dog management 2019-20

WILD DOG CONTROLLERS



Proactive and responsive wild dog control

497 incident responses
1,800 km of tracks baited
1,200 km of tracks trapped
549 dogs captured

COMMUNITY ACTION



Coordinated and targeted wild dog control

115 landholders
20 Community Wild Dog Control groups
14,146 baits laid on private and public land
885,000 ha of farmland protected

ENGAGEMENT

Learning and listening



21 education and training events
16 Wild Dog Management Zone meetings
2 national Pest Animal Workshop Group meetings
1 Victorian and interstate skills exchange

INNOVATION



Identified new and emerging opportunities

Interactive Wild Dog Management Zone planning map
ArcGis Collector & Survey 123
Remote trap-monitoring system
Funding for 441 km of wild dog exclusion fencing



Environment,
Land, Water
and Planning

Dealing with nuisance dogs in peri-urban environments

Working in peri-urban areas can be challenging for WDCs, particularly where there are high rates of dog ownership.

Acting Senior WDC, Dwayne Needham, lists a few telltale signs that help distinguish domestic dogs from wild dogs:

- Domestic dogs bark or yap when harassing stock, while wild dogs are generally 'silent killers'.
- Howling is usually associated with wild dogs, not domestic dogs.
- Wild dog scat is fairly dry and contains fur and bone fragments. Domestic dog scat usually has the look and consistency of tinned dog food.

If you live in a peri-urban area and suspect that a domestic dog has been harassing your stock, your first call should be to your local shire ranger.

If you are unsure whether the nuisance dog is domestic or wild, contact your local WDC who will conduct their own investigation. This may involve using field cameras to help identify the dog.

The WDC will pass information about a nuisance domestic dog to the shire ranger, who will deal with the issue in accordance with the Domestic Animals Act 1994.

Under this Act, livestock owners are permitted to despatch a dog that is roaming on their property. However, this should be the last resort.

"A better course of action is to speak to your neighbour, explain what their dog has done and warn them about what may happen if you find their dog on your property again," says Dwayne.

You can help the WDCs and shire rangers by installing field cameras to identify nuisance dogs. Some community wild dog control and Landcare groups offer funding for the purchase of field cameras.

For more information about the rights of landholders whose stock are attacked by a domestic dog, visit: <https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/livestock-and-animals/animal-welfare-victoria/dogs/farm-working-dogs/ownership-requirements>

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Practical help for users of 1080 baits

Agriculture Victoria (AgVic) has a range of resources available to help ensure bait users are complying with the Directions for the Use of 1080 and PAPP Pest Animal Bait Products in Victoria, and other relevant legislation.

AgVic Chemical Standards officers and the CWDDCs are available if you require any assistance or copies of baiting documentation and templates, including:

- The Directions for the Use of 1080 and PAPP Pest Animal Bait Products in Victoria (DfU);
- signage
- risk assessment form
- record keeping template
- neighbour notification template
- record of neighbour notification template.

These resources are also available online on the Agriculture Victoria website, and in the latest copy of the DfU.



Information on best practice use of 1080 will also be made available at the wild dog management zone meetings that are planned for early autumn 2021.

Further information on using 1080 baits can be found on the Agriculture Victoria website or by calling their Customer Contact Centre on 136 186 and asking to speak to a Chemical Standards officer.

Wild dog and pest animal survey 2020

A simple, one page survey is enclosed in this issue of TakingControl – please take the time to fill it out.

The survey aims to understand which pest animals are of most concern to your business, the control methods you already use, and what information and training you would like for wild dog and/or other pest animal control.

Your feedback will assist AWI's Victorian Vertebrate Pest Management Program to determine what type of support your community needs for wild dog and other pest animal management.

The information you submit is confidential and will not be passed on to any third party without your consent.

Please complete the survey before 1 December, 2020 and return it using the Reply Paid code on the back.

Alternatively, you can fill in the survey online by scanning the QR code below with your smartphone or other device, or by going to

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CPYD526>.





Above: Marg Krelle and other North West WDCs.
Credit: Scott McLean.

Marg Krelle retires - but continues to share her knowledge

The North West Wild Dog Control team is sad to announce the retirement of Marg Krelle who has been trapping wild dogs in the Mallee since 2001.

Marg began trapping dogs after the death of her father, who was well-known in the area for helping farmers trap problem dogs on their properties. Over the years, she has seen many changes - from the habits of wild dogs, through to the types of programs and equipment being used to control them.

Marg's contribution to wild dog control has been invaluable. Fortunately, her considerable skills and knowledge will not be lost as she has agreed to stay on as a community liaison officer.

Thank you, Marg, for all your help and good luck for the future.

Working and domestic dog safety

When aerial and ground baiting programs are underway, it is important that dog owners take steps to avoid their animals accidentally ingesting baits intended for wild dogs and foxes.

Both 1080 (sodium fluoroacetate) and PAPP (Para-aminopropiophenone) are fatal if ingested by working or domestic dogs. Take notice of signs and letters advising that baits have been laid, and keep your dog restrained or muzzled at all times. Baits can remain viable for a considerable amount of time, so never assume a baited area is safe as soon as a baiting program has ceased.

If you suspect your dog has taken a bait, seek veterinary help immediately.

It is worth visiting Pestsmart's website for tips on avoiding accidental ingestion, and what to do if you suspect your dog has been taken a 1080 or PAPP bait: <https://www.pestsmart.org.au/working-dog-safety-first-aid/>

Taking Control

Wild dog awareness

Understanding wild dog behaviour will help you prepare for upcoming dog issues.

- Wild dogs learn your routine very quickly and are skilled at avoiding you so as to not be seen. Changing your routine can disrupt their behaviour, making it more likely that you will detect them.
- Shooting is an effective but underrated control tool. Your equipment must be well-serviced, and you must be practiced. You should be able to score 9/10 hits of a 375ml can at a distance of 50-75m before going out. If not, you need more practice!
- Thermal scopes that work on heat detection and do not emit any light can significantly improve shooters' ability to detect and kill wild dogs at night.

Vale Philip Boote

Sadly, Philip Boote passed away after a relatively short battle with cancer earlier this year.

Phil started work with the Lands Department as a 25 year old in 1980. He became a WDC in the 1980s and spent the next 34 years controlling dogs around the Alexandra district.

Around 2014, Phil moved to Dartmouth as the WDC for the Mitta Mitta/Sandy Creek Wild Dog Management Zone. He had an immediate impact there, and quickly became a well-respected member of the community.

Phil was also on hand with the Upper Murray fire team, helping out with logistics and making sure the crews were well fed.

Phil retained his sense of humour and colourful character through to the end. Our thoughts are with his family, close friends and colleagues.



Above: Phil "Bootey" Boote on right, assisting with wild dog research.

Credit: DELWP.

Contact	Localities	Telephone
Ian Campbell	Cooryong, Biggara, Nariel, Lucyvale, Cudgewa, Tintaldra, Walwa, Burrowye, Shelley, Mt Alfred, Tallangatta, Koetong, Granya, Tallangatta Valley, Mitta Valley, Sandy Creek, Gundowring	0409 188 465
David Klippel	Mansfield, Merrijig, Jamieson, Alexandra, Yea, Molesworth, Myrtleford, Bright, Mt Beauty, Whitfield, Cheshunt	0428 503 169
Dwayne Needham	Bairnsdale, Dargo, Omeo, Benambra, Swift's Creek, Ensay, Ellinbank, Gembrook, Noojee, Heyfield, Licola, Maffra	0429 667 868
Geoff Hodge	Buchan, Gelantipy, Orbost, Cann River, Bonang, Bendoc, Tubbut, Deddick	0427 321 312
Scott McLean	Big Desert, Wyperfeld	(03) 5051 4362

CWDCC	Region	Contact
Lucy-anne Cobby	Hume	(02) 6043 7900 0429 079 131 lucy-anne.cobby@delwp.vic.gov.au
Brian Dowley	Gippsland	(03) 5152 0626 0408 436 600 brian.dowley@delwp.vic.gov.au
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