
Policy Title: **Feral Pig Management**
 Policy No: 277

Directorate: Engineering and Environmental Services
 Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer

Adopted Date: Standing Committee Meeting 02/11/2016
 Review Date: 02/11/2018

VERSION	MEETING APPROVED	MEETING DATE	HISTORY
1	Standing Committee	02/11/2016	Adopted

Authorities: *Biosecurity Act 2014*
NBRC's Biosecurity Plan and associated programs

POLICY:

The North Burnett Regional Council (NBRC) recognises the destructive (and sometimes dangerous) presence that Feral Pigs (*Sus scrofa*) have upon the land and its potential productive outputs. Additionally NBRC recognises the potential rate at which these invasive pests can reproduce and magnify their destructive impacts.

NBRC also recognises its role to:

- Support the community;
- Enforce responsibilities in relation to compliance with legislation and NBRC's Pest Management/Biosecurity Plan and associated programs and
- Ensure that available public resources are utilised in an effective and efficient manner in the best interests of the North Burnett community.

To facilitate and support land owners/occupiers in achieving compliance with their responsibilities under the Biosecurity Act 2014 (the Act) and NBRC's Pest Management/Biosecurity Plan (and associated programs), NBRC will promote and implement the following initiatives:

- Free access to 1080 injection services for meat baits supplied by responsible members of the North Burnett community intending to use the baits.
 - Coordinated Baiting Programs which aim to achieve a more widespread and effective impact upon target animal populations.
 - Availability of Pig Traps for hire/use by members of the North Burnett community.
 - Introduction of a trial Snout and Tail Bounty of \$5.00 per snout and tail for feral pigs, accessible by North Burnett Regional Council ratepayers only, for feral pig
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snouts and tails submitted to Council in a suitable condition/manner. Once 1,000 bounty claims have been submitted to Council, the trial will be concluded and the results evaluated to determine if a Snout and Tail Bounty should be implemented on a permanent basis.

- Availability of Land Protection Officers (LPO's) to provide information and guidance to members of the North Burnett community regarding invasive species management.

This policy (and the initiatives implemented under it) maintains the legal obligation/responsibility of land owners/occupiers to manage invasive pests on their land/s. NBRC is not obligated to provide or retain any of these initiatives, which may be withdrawn at any time at the discretion of Council.

NBRC is providing these initiatives on the basis of supporting the community in achieving its responsibilities in the overall best interests of the community and available public resources. Council will monitor and review the effectiveness of all aspects of this policy on a regular basis and make amendments as appropriate.

INTRODUCTION:

Feral Pigs (*Sus scrofa*) are an exotic animal to Australia, where domesticated breeds (*Sus scrofa domesticus*) are regularly farmed for food production. Sometimes they are also kept as pets. Feral and domestic breeds can interbreed and sometimes individuals rear/keep feral pigs in a domestic situation.

Populations of feral pigs have become established across large areas of Australia, whereby they now occupy a space within the natural ecosystem, with the associated pressures they exert within it. Feral pig populations can both create and respond to changes within the natural ecosystem, whereby they are highly effective foragers that can have devastating impacts upon grain crop production, land stability/erosion, invasive pest weed dispersal, native animals, plants and ecosystems (and to a lesser degree public safety - associated with unexpected encounters). Unchecked, feral pigs are contributing to significant crop losses, lost land productivity and pressures on native animals, plants and ecosystems. Council also recognises however that eradication of feral pigs is realistically unachievable, especially with their continued utilisation in domestic applications.

The management of biosecurity matter and risks (such as feral pigs as restricted biosecurity matter) is the responsibility of land owners/occupiers under the Act.

Realistically, the most effective means of keeping feral pig populations in check with the resources available is to:

- Use pressures within native ecosystems; and
- Exert pressure directly on feral pig populations where possible.

OBJECTIVES:

Council's collective Natural Resource Management Policies, Procedures and Objectives will help deliver the objectives of this policy.

Under its Wild Dog and Dingo Management Policy (Doc ID: 746 979) Council has recognised that dingoes (*Canis lupus dingo*) are Australia's naturalised apex terrestrial predator and there is a need to co-exist with them (as eradication is not achievable). The targeting of problematic dingoes and wild dogs under the Wild Dog and Dingo Management Policy and associated procedures will ensure problems and negative impacts on landholders and domestic livestock are minimised. Simultaneously, the acceptance of non-problematic dingoes as the apex terrestrial predator will help ensure pressures are applied across the ecosystem, including upon those animals considered pests, such as feral pigs, feral cats, foxes, rabbits, and problematic numbers of kangaroos/wallabies etc.

Council will also support, promote and enforce compliance to assist land owners/occupiers to meet their legal responsibilities to manage and where possible eradicate feral pig populations from their land/s.

The management and where possible eradication of feral pig populations shall be conducted by humanely destroying all detected feral pigs via trapping, shooting/hunting, poisoning or other techniques as appropriate.

The adoption of this policy and associated procedures will ensure the NBRC maintains consistency throughout the region with regard to the management of feral pigs and the expectations required of land owners/occupiers.

APPLICATION:

Council shall implement this policy through its procedures, activities, services, equipment and resources. Procedures may be developed to ensure the consistent and effective implementation of aspects of this policy across the region.

DEFINITIONS:

Dingo: A canine/dog (*Canis lupus dingo*) endemic and naturalised to Australia, which excluding humans, occupies the position of apex terrestrial predator within Australia. This definition applies to all pure and cross breed versions of the breed, where dingo behaviours and appearances remain.

Feral Pig: A feral pig (*Sus scrofa*) is an animal of this species that persists through obtaining its own food and shelter, either through foraging, hunting or scavenging. It has either been abandoned by its human owner/s, does not have a known owner, or has strayed from its domestic situation. These animals may look similar or the same as domestic pigs, however are often distinguishable from domestic breeds.

Wild Dog: All breeds and cross breeds of domestic dog (*Canis lupus familiaris*) that have gone feral and no longer have any notable direct relationship with humans. This definition also includes *Canis lupus familiaris* hybrids with dingoes where a dingo's natural behaviours and appearances are not adhered to (including "rogue" animals).
