

Newrybar Swamp Feral Pig Management Committee

Submission on State-wide review of NSW pest animal management issues paper-

The Newrybar Swamp Feral Pig Management Committee (NSFPMC) recently met on November 10 2015 and resolved to write a submission to the State wide review of pest animal management in NSW.

The NSFPMC established in 2001 following a public meeting held by the former Tweed-Lismore Rural Lands Protection Board , NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), Ballina Council, and local landholders. The meeting was initiated following a number of safety concerns in relation to:

- pig presence in the residential areas of Lennox Head and Ballina;
- motor vehicle collisions involving feral pigs on the Pacific Hwy and Ross lane;
- Pig presence on the runway of the Ballina/Byron regional airport and flight hazard risks with approaching and departing planes; and
- Biosecurity risks with the proximity to the airport/port of Ballina, Ballina waste management facility and Ballina sewerage treatment plants.

The NSFPMC consists of Ballina landholders, Ballina Council rep (env/waste/STP/airport), North Coast Local Land Services, RSPCA and NPWS.

The management area covers Newrybar Swamp/surrounds approx. 76sq km including Ballina/Byron airport, Ballina STP, Ballina waste management facility, towns of Lennox Head and Ballina, bordering the Pacific Ocean and the Pacific Hwy.

The NSFPMC implements the Newrybar Swamp Feral Pig Management Strategy, which outlines the desired actions for implementation. This planned approach to management and control focusses on containment and eradication if possible. Meetings are held quarterly to discuss status and success of pig control.

To date the total number of pigs removed from 4/4/2004- current = 1971 - 521 boars, 396 sows, 239 suckers, 815 unborn young. Our success has been achieved through:

- Importance of ongoing long-term effort and collaboration
- \$\$ Contributions by all stakeholders (small amounts every year)
- Sharing of information/data collection
- Regular updates and adaptive management approach

The challenges have been faced with:

- Difficulty of promotion of control outcomes due to publicity to illegal hunters
- The cost of program success due to illegal hunting
- Need for ongoing effort and recognition of the higher costs to reduce low numbers.
- Continuation of funds for ongoing control actions.

Of particular concern to NSFPMC is: Illegal hunting issues involving:

- Deliberate introduction of feral pigs
- Use and loss of hunting dogs

- Theft, destruction and tampering of equipment (ie cameras, traps, gates, fences)
- Illegal access of private and public lands
- Illegal use of firearms
- Cruelty to animals
- Violence between hunters over 'territory war' resulting in assault.
- Requires collaboration and cooperation of land managers (private and public-NPWS, Crown lands)
- Reporting incidents to Police – log event numbers.
- Use of proactive and covert methods and operations to gather intelligence (date/time/place) to target offenders
- Targeted investigations involving NSW Police (Rural Crimes Investigators), RSPCA, Forestry Corporation staff, NPWS local staff and investigators

Newrybar Swamp is not the only area to encounter these issues. Other examples include: Bundjalung National Park, Bungawalbin Nature Reserve, Bungawalbin State Conservation Area and Bungawalbin National Park.

Penalties issued to confirmed offenders with successful prosecutions under NPW Act/Regs for offences range between \$300-\$500 per offence e.g. Hunt protected fauna, use hunting device, use of weapons, vehicle offences, but we feel penalties for such offences are too small.

The work undertaken by the members of the NSFPMC would be greatly supported if there were identified funding models and cost sharing arrangements identified to assist delivery of collaborative tenure neutral programs. For example:

- Create systems to allow for funds to be managed by a central organisation such as LLS for nil-tenure programs.
- Allow funds to be carried over between financial years for collaborative programs that meet program needs.
- Utilise procurement processes that allow for combined engagement of contractors for delivery of cross-tenure works.

Our group would like to thank the CRC for the opportunity to have input into this review process and would be happy to respond to any further questions the NRC may have regarding this submission or our program.

We hope the issues raised in this submission, may allow for greater provision of support through relevant land management agencies to ensure that pest programs have capacity to continue into the future with adequate agency support and resources to effectively and efficiently manage feral pigs in the NSFPM area.

Yours faithfully,

Lisa Wellman

Chair

On behalf of the Newrybar Swamp Feral Pig Management Committee

30/11/15