

# Feral Pig Control for the Bulburin National Park bushfire recovery

This project is funded by Australian Governments Bushfire Recovery for Wildlife and Habitat Community Grants Program



Australian Government

## BACKGROUND

Bulburin National Park is the largest remnant rainforest in central Queensland, containing the headwaters of the Boyne River, Baffle Creek and Kolan River. The park is one of the most biodiverse protected national parks in Queensland. Of its regional ecosystem types, two are endangered and nine are of concern. Several threatened flora and fauna species are also endemic to Bulburin National Park – Bulburin nut, Bulburin Medicosma, ringed thin-tailed gecko— and it's one of three known locations for the silver-headed antechinus.

Approximately 7,500 hectares of the park burnt in the 2019 Black Summer fires, leaving these threatened species vulnerable to further decline.

## ISSUE

In a recovering ecosystem post-fire, it's important to reduce the impact on these threatened species, in this case, starting with the control of the destructive behaviour of feral pigs. Although omnivorous, feral pigs prefer green vegetation and roots, causing extensive damage to ecosystems by digging up vast areas of earth searching for roots, causing pugging of the soil, trampling and killing vegetation and fouling water sources. They will also opportunistically eat animals, further exacerbating their impact.

## SOLUTION

The Burnett Mary Regional Group (BMRG) coordinated a Bushfire Recovery Project at Bulburin National Park, specifically targeting the feral pig population, funded by the Australian Government.

As part of this project, BMRG conducted:

- Baseline population sampling of feral pigs over 250 hectares, working with various stakeholders
- Strategic selection of the control site for the greatest impact on the feral pigs
- Feral pig control activities over 30 days
- Increased awareness of the invasive pest issues, such as feral pigs, within the park through various education and communication pieces.

This work was completed with the help of key regional partners Bush to Bay Weed Control, University of Queensland and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships.

## RESULTS

Bush to Bay Weed Control conducted baseline sampling, supported by University of Queensland's supplementary data, to identify six locations within the 250 hectares where 49 individual pigs were found.

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Bush to Bay Weed Control was able to capture a mob of 22 pigs during this project. This was largely due to baseline activities being completed in winter of 2021 (Central Queensland's drier months) while control activities were completed during the wet season, due to unforeseen circumstances. Feral pigs are more dispersed during the wet season, as they will move seasonally with rain up to ranges of 2000 – 4000 hectares, though solitary boars will roam further.

BMRG, with the support of QPWS, will extend efforts to trap the remaining feral pigs beyond the project's timeframe.

## PROJECT OUTCOMES

BMRG, with the help of its partners, has assisted post-fire recovery within Bulburin National Park by reducing the number of feral pigs, thereby giving threatened flora and fauna a reprieve, increasing their chance for population survival.

This project has completed:

- Invasive species baseline population data
- Threat abatement activities
- Increased awareness of the destruction of feral pigs.

Controlling the feral pig population is an ongoing challenge, as they will continue to return to the area. QPWS will continue the control of pigs into the future.



Pigs captured on camera during baseline sampling



Bush to Bay Weed Controls trap in Bulburin National Park



Active trap waiting for pigs to enter



Capture of an actively reproducing mob of feral pigs