

# How I would kill dogs

RECENTLY while travelling in Cambodia, we visited the landmine museum in Siem Reap, set up by a former Khmer Rouge child soldier, Aki Ra. He was 10 when conscripted by communists to fight monarchist forces.

More than 6 million such devices were laid throughout Cambodia, a plague today on its people.

Aki decided it wasn't good enough to wait for authorities and international bodies to act, and cleared devices with stick and knife by himself, one mine at a time. By the time he was noticed by authorities, he had cleared and dismantled thousands of mines.

He received further training and now his team is one of many working to remove these lethal devices from prime farming land.

Cambodia is rapidly clearing these mines and reopening up pristine farming land, now exporting more than 5 million tonnes of rice per annum. It is a great story about wonderful people and their efforts in reclaiming highly fertile farming land. There is a salient parallel here, recognising the power of the individual versus entrenched ideas and orthodoxy of action.

For the past 10 years, we have seen migrations of wild dogs across all parts of Australia, and in most cases have only been able to 'admire' the problem. Some local governments have set examples for us to follow and some national parks folk

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• queenslandcountrylife.com.au/wild\_dogs

have done a cracking job in their area. However, overall, we are plagued by case studies and schemes dreamt up by well-meaning people and organisations, with much research but little tangibility in planting that flag on the hill and shouting "we have won the war". Far from it.

Recently, the National Wild Dog Action plan was launched, formally recognising the "huge impact that wild dogs are having across the nation" – a good effort by WoolProducers and a promising start. I also note some of the valuable research that the Invasive Animals CRC and AWI are doing.

However, nowhere could I find any reference to the "killing and destruction of wild dogs" as a prime objective. So let's begin with a mission statement (see breakout) that is clear, along with some ideas that might help conclude a

## THE MISSION BRIEFING FROM 'THE GENERAL'

**1** We are about killing wild dogs, not about "controlling", "managing" or "researching" wild dog populations. Welcome The National Wild Dog Kill Program.

**2** Empower individuals, to continue with proven kill methods: (a) State bounty of \$100 per tail/scalp for dog and fox; (b) graziers entitled to 200 per cent tax deductions on all legitimate dog control measures (same with noxious weeds control).

**3** NSW DPI recently released excellent news regarding increasing aerial baiting rates to 40 baits per km, effectively killing 90pc of wild dogs in that area. Continue this excellent work and roll it out across all infested areas, helping to control other feral species such as pigs.

**4** Make it easy to buy 1080 baits, not difficult. Recent laws to make sure graziers obtain accreditation are counterproductive. Governments are happy for us to join the army and shoot an enemy, but don't trust us to put out 50 baits or more?

**5** Make feral dog and pig eradication a national

sharpshooting sport, recognised by schools and local governments as worthwhile pursuits for young people.

**6** Set three-year timeframes with annual measurement, allowing flexibility of programs.

### The National Wild Dog Kill Program is a basic military operation:

■ Selection of area, based on best information and community involvement.

■ Carpet bomb forest areas with baits – 40 baits/km at least.

■ Encourage locals to bait on their properties.

■ Promote Baiting Week as a community event with media help to let everyone know.

■ Provide bumper stickers and quality Merino T-shirts with "Killing ferals and proud of it". Follow up with pictures in newspapers and on social media of the biggest dogs and most kills.

■ Call in approved trappers and professional shooters to clean up the area.

■ Tally all kills and report.

■ Move on to the next planned area. – Comment: CHICK OLSSON.

successful war on wild dogs.

I suggest local communities be rewarded with pecuniary incentives and/or public recognition ceremonies in state parliament for services to the state, so this goodwill and good news spreads. There is genuine intention from most quarters to

solve this. Those affected need results if they are able to run wool/lamb enterprises, still one of the most profitable pastoral mixes. But like clearing landmines in Cambodia, new farming areas for sheep will be neither safe nor profitable until the feral problem is removed completely.



Chick Olsson says his campaign against wild dogs is "a basic military operation".

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## Dog fence community consultation

By MARK PHELPS

AGRICULTURE Minister John McVeigh says he remains open minded on how a check fence to protect western Queensland livestock from wild dog attacks could be funded.

Mr McVeigh said proponents of the 14,000km fence had suggested equal funding from federal government, state government and industry.

The group was now in the community consultation phase in its attempts to ensure there was sufficient community support for the

proposal including possible routes for the fence.

"The proponents of the fence have put forward a model based on shared funding," Mr McVeigh said.

"We remain open minded on the fence are now waiting on the group to complete its consultation process and finalise its proposal."

The minister was speaking at a wild dog meeting in Charleville following on from a meeting in Longreach six weeks ago.

Queensland's chief biosecurity officer Jim Thompson said \$2.9 million of \$5.6m in drought funding for feral animal control had been

allocated to eight feral animal control projects concentrating on wild dogs.

The drought funding was announced by federal Agriculture Minister Barnaby Joyce in January and is only now flowing through to the states. A condition of the federal government funding was that it would not be spent on the construction of fences.

The funding was provided to control already drought-stressed feral animal populations with baiting, trapping and shooting campaigns.

The next wild dog meeting is planned for Cloncurry in September.

## Manufactured baits go on sale

By MARK PHELPS

LANDHOLDERS have secured two weapons in the war against wild dogs with rural supply retailers now allowed to sell manufactured 1080 wild dog baits.

Agriculture Minister John McVeigh announced changes allowing landholders to buy 1080 baits through local rural supply stores and a pilot program for councils to achieve greater compliance in pest animal control.

"These two initiatives will help landholders and communities fight feral animals," Mr McVeigh said.

"This is a standout example of how the LNP government is turning things around for western Queensland. We can't make it rain, but we can help graziers, councils and their communities with common-sense changes to help them fight the menace of wild dogs.

"In stark contrast to the lunacy of the Labor government that insisted on human-grade meat for baits and layer upon layer of restrictions on bait chemicals, today I am launching a new system that will give landholders easier access to baits – starting in Murweh Shire.

"As of today, licensed retailers can apply to be approved to supply 1080 to landholders with a Bait User Permit, which landholders can now apply for from Biosecurity Queensland.

"Under Labor, only public sector employees accredited by Queensland Health could provide 1080 baits to rural landholders.

Landholders will also be able to take the permit to local government to obtain fresh meat baits.

In addition, landholders will be able to apply to gain accreditation to prepare and distribute 1080 baits as a third party service provider.

The system is already used in Western Australia.

The permits provided to landholders are expected to remain valid for two years.

"The LNP is giving landholders more flexibility to control wild dogs on their properties and in coming weeks, the new system will also allow contractors to apply to become approved 1080 providers."

Mr McVeigh said Murweh and Paroo Shire Councils, and the Somerset Regional Council would also participate in a Wild Dog Compliance Pilot Project.

"Landholders have told me they're sick of seeing their hard work go down the drain because of others who refuse to take any action to control wild dogs," Mr McVeigh said.

"This pilot project will assist local councils to investigate complaints and to take action against landholders who are not actively controlling wild dogs."

Queensland's chief biosecurity officer Jim Thompson says landholders cannot be compelled to use 1080 baits to control wild dogs even if compliance laws surrounding the destruction of pest animals are rigidly enforced.

Speaking in Charleville, Dr Thompson said landholders were required to take reasonable steps to control pest animals on their land.

However, landholders could opt to shoot or trap pest animals or take other reasonable steps and still meet their obligations.

Balonne Mayor Donna Stewart said it was virtually impossible for local governments to enforce compliance involving any control method.

"Local Governments do not have the financial resources to start with," Cr Stewart said.