Background
Wild dogs remain a problem for Queensland with impacts on the grazing industries through livestock predation and the community generally through attacks on people and their animals as well as spreading disease. Management of wild dogs is the responsibility of landholders. They are supported in this by State and Local Government.

Improved wild dog management is a key initiative of this government. QDOG, the Queensland Dog Offensive Group, an advisory committee to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, brings together State and Local Government, industry and community representatives to provide strategic direction to wild dog management.

QDOG met in late September in Brisbane and this Communiqué provides a summary of the meeting outcomes.

The New Committee
The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has revamped QDOG to increase local government representation from three members to four, along with the appointment of a new community representative to replace the late Peter Kenny.

QDOG is chaired by Mr Brent Finlay, General President of AgForce and a respected wool grower from the southern Darling Downs. Members are as follows:

Local Government
Cr. Ray Brown  
(Mayor, Western Downs Regional Council)
Cr. Dennis Cook  
(Mayor, Murweh Shire Council)
Cr. Barry Muir  
(Mayor, Blackall-Tambo Regional Council)
Cr. Joe Owens  
(Mayor, Longreach Regional Council)

AgForce
Mr. Ian Harsant  
(AgForce Cattle Board)
Mr. Peter Lucas  
(AgForce Sheep and Wool Board)

Community
Mr. Dave Edwards

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Mr. Ted Parish

Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing
Dr. John Hogdon

The Local Government Association of Queensland, Queensland Regional Natural Resource Management Groups Collective, Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre and Leading Sheep provide observers.

Engagement
QDOG is committed to getting the message out to members of the public about the impacts of wild dogs and the need for landholders to cooperate in their control. QDOG has initiated work between industry, local government and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) to identify the key messages in wild dog control and to spread these messages within the broader Queensland community. QDOG is also supportive of the establishment of a web resource to assist local government in wild dog management and extension.

Wild dog control
Two vertebrate pesticides, 1080 (sodium fluoroacetate) and strychnine play an integral part in wild dog control in Queensland.
The committee reviewed current Queensland restrictions on 1080 bait use. QDOG noted that the Queensland restrictions, whilst exceeding APVMA requirements, were put in place to manage the risk associated with 1080 use. After careful consideration the committee has recommended that the distance for neighbour notification be reduced from two to one kilometre, with written approval required from neighbours where their residences are within one kilometre of the bait site.

The Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre is bringing a range of new products to wild dog control including 1080 ejectors, PAPP (para-aminopropiophenone) baits and ejectors, lethal trap devices and cyanide ejectors. QDOG has asked that DAFF ensure that policies are in place to allow these products to be used immediately they are approved by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA).

The committee reviewed and endorsed the proposed ‘Protocol for the production of 1080 meat baits’. This protocol outlines how landholders can reduce their bait meat cost by using meat from livestock slaughtered on property, feral livestock and kangaroos. A permit is required to use kangaroo meat and a generic ‘letter of application’ forms part of the protocol. The new protocol is available at: http://www.daff.qld.gov.au/documents/Biosecurity_EnvironmentalPests/IPA-Protocol-1080-Meat-Baits.pdf

QDOG considers increased participation in wild dog control is critical to improving their management in Queensland. Community engagement has been the primary approach to achieving this aim for several years. However this approach has had limited success to date with performance indicators such as participation in baiting still low. The Committee now believes that compliance needs to be added to the approach. QDOG believes that, whilst Local Government issues pest control notices and takes other measures on a variety of declared weeds, they do not undertake compliance on wild dogs.

QDOG passed a resolution at this meeting that the Minister both direct and support Local Government to enforce the provisions in the Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002 in relation to wild dogs.

Committee updates
DAFF provided an update to the meeting on its activities including the recruitment of five new wild dog officers, maintenance of the wild dog barrier fence, as well as inputs from the operational and science areas of the Department.

AgForce provided an update on their wild dog communications, planning for wild dog week and industry coordinators.

The next meeting of QDOG will be held in Charleville in late November. Issues to be covered at this meeting include a review of the Queensland Wild Dog Strategy.