

September 2022



## What is an Ecological Management Plan (EMP) ?

A process .....

The EMP process is focused on providing best practice grazing and environmental management advice to land managers. A key feature of the process is managers of pastoral properties working closely with specialist property planning facilitators to develop a shared understanding of the dynamics of their landscape, and provides a different perspective on how the landscape functions.

..... and a plan!

A core EMP activity is the development of a property management plan (hard copy and/ or electronic formats), including maps and diagrams, that integrate the production elements of the business with resource sustainability and nature conservation. The plan outlines the managers goals for the property and business, describes and analyses key property and business resources, identifies the important issues to be addressed and lists the potential actions the manager can take to reach their goals.

The content of an EMP is flexible depending on the needs/interests of each property but can include consideration of:

- land systems and condition
- climate
- Livestock enterprises
- other enterprises
- grazing management
- land rehabilitation
- landscape function
- biodiversity
- infrastructure (fencing, water, stock handling)
- weed management
- fire management
- feral herbivore and predator status and management
- monitoring and reporting systems.

*"I would have loved to have done this when I first started here. I might have done a few things a bit differently!"*

Chris Daniells (Manager, Myroodah Station, via Derby)





## How does it happen?

The EMP process aims to improve the profitability of rangeland businesses through promoting improved grazing systems, enterprise productivity, resource sustainability and nature conservation.

Developing and implementing an EMP can:

- Improve grazing enterprise productivity;
- Enhance the condition of the property's natural resources;
- Support the management of biodiversity;
- Demonstrate good natural resource management practices to external parties;
- Provide a quality tool to attract funding from a range of sources; and
- Assist the identification of diversification opportunities best suited to the land's capability and the land manager's values (eg irrigation, carbon, biodiversity, tourism, recreation, cultural).

Examples of management actions implemented following the development of EMP in recent times have included changes to grazing management systems, construction of earthworks and other structures to combat erosion and restore landscape function and relocation and/or development of new fences and watering points.

## What's involved in developing an Ecological Management Plan?

Express interest – get in contact with one of the Rangelands NRM staff listed below, to express your interest in developing an EMP for your property, work out a suitable time frame and discuss the issues that you'd like the plan to focus on.

Pre property visit work – a Rangelands NRM staff member will work with you and a specialist EMP facilitator to organise the resources required for the property visit (ie maps, land condition information, air charter for the flyover if required).

Property visit – The specialist EMP facilitator and Rangelands NRM staff member will then visit your property. The initial phase is usually conducted around the kitchen table and includes discussion on your goals for the property, your enterprises, the property's natural resources and any particular areas of interest or concern. A landscape mapping exercise will also occur. A charter flight around the station will usually be conducted to gain a different perspective of landscape function. Some areas of the station will also be inspected by vehicle. Typically this will take two to three days in one block and the property's manager will need to be available and involved throughout.

Drafting the EMP – After the station visit the specialist EMP facilitator will prepare a draft EMP. This will include the digitisation and printing of maps developed during the station visit.

Stage 2 EMP – The draft plan will be provided to the station manager for review and comment. Usually, the specialist ECM facilitator will visit the property again to discuss the draft, as well as look at and discuss any areas/issues that need further attention. The EMP is finalized and is the basis of a Dynamic Management Plan with a horizon of 25 years.

For further information and to express interest, contact Head Office on (08) 9468 8250

*Rangelands NRM is a non-political and neutral organisation working together with others towards a better rangelands of Western Australia.*

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*Enabling Prosperity*

