



Foundation for Rabbit-Free Australia Inc.

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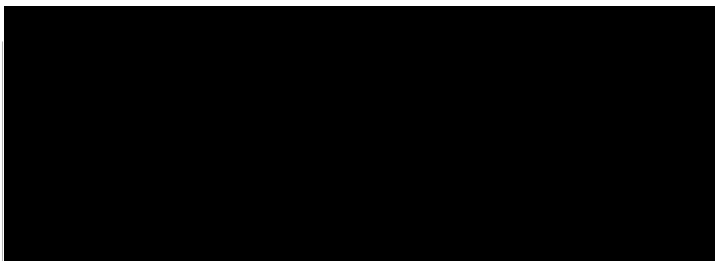
SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO BARRIER FENCES IN QUEENSLAND

The Foundation for Rabbit Free Australia (RFA) is the nation's only not-for-profit single purpose entity that raises funds from the public and private sectors into the control and management of the European wild rabbit, Australia's known worst vertebrate pest. While located in Adelaide, it has an abiding interest and involvement in all jurisdictions where wild rabbits are found. Its Committee and advisers have substantial collective experience and are well placed to comment on matters such as this.

Barrier fences are only partially effective in physically excluding invasive species but have considerable additional value as the physical evidence of an exclusion policy - in effect a line drawn on a map around which eradication can be a reasonable target. Rabbits are present within the Darling Downs-Moreton Rabbit Board area but probably only in a portion of the area suitable to rabbits, as suggested by recent modelling by Susan Fuller (QUT), Rieks van Klinken (CSIRO), Justine Murray and others. It also remains likely that rabbits could expand their range in southern Queensland into areas previously thought to be unsuitable, in much the same way as they recently expanded on the Atherton Tableland. Therefore, the damage inflicted by rabbits in this area is probably only a small proportion of the potential damage and should not be used as a measure of the current value of the fence.

RFA is unable to comment upon whether the continued investment in the rabbit fence is the best possible use of resources for rabbit control in this area. However, we believe it would be extremely foolish to reduce the investment in rabbit control. Co-ordinated warren destruction programs may be considered, particularly in the granite belt where rabbit numbers are high near the boundary of the Darling Downs-Moreton Rabbit Board area. Advice could be sought from the Victorian government agencies on the specialized equipment they used to successfully tackle major rabbit infestations in difficult granite country of western Victoria. RFA is grateful to be given the opportunity to comment on this important matter for Queensland. For further information, please refer to our website at www.rabbitfreeaustralia.org.au

Yours Sincerely,



Nicholas Newland AO
Chairman
Foundation for Rabbit Free Australia
(per Edwina Grant
Executive Officer
Foundation for Rabbit Free Australia)