

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Agriculture and Environment Committee](#)
Subject: Submission to inquiry into barrier fences in QLD
Date: Sunday, 27 December 2015 8:33:06 AM

I live in the Coominya district of the Somerset Regional Council (SRC). Early in 2015 I observed rabbits on my property and 2 neighbouring properties. I have lived here for nearly 20 years and I have never seen rabbits here or in the wider area. This infestation was almost certainly an introduction by one of neighbours who is a pet enthusiast recently arrived from Victoria. Whether this introduction was the result of stupidity, ignorance and/or malice is not known to me.

I reported this infestation to the SRC and I got nil response. This wasn't surprising as this Council is "pet friendly" in the extreme and has an apparent block to communicating with complainants in this regard. They appear to have the same attitude to complaints re feral pest animals. I finally managed to get a response from the SRC after a lot of stirring, including contacting the DDMRB. As the SRC doesn't contribute to the DDMRB they weren't particularly interested although they did contact the SRC on my behalf several times.

Apparently the SRC did investigate my complaint, found rabbits, and did take action. The nature of that action is unknown to me as the SRC have a communication block.

I also took action in whatever way open to me. I managed to account for 12 rabbits over several months, half by trapping, half by shooting. This entailed a lot of painstaking work.

I haven't seen rabbits or rabbit sign on my property or the 2 neighbouring properties for about 3 months. I have no way of knowing if there are rabbits elsewhere in the immediate area.

There are a number of issues which became apparent from this incident -

(1) The SRC borders on the Ipswich, Lockyer and Toowoomba Regional Councils who all contribute to the DDMRB. The SRC should be compelled to contribute to and liaise with the DDMRB who have the expertise. This rabbit infestation at Coominya is not an isolated instance in the SRC by their own admission.

(2) The SRC should be compelled to improve their communication with residents and complainants in regard to pest animals. New arrivals in the Council area should be personally informed of their responsibilities in regard to pest animals, plants and domestic animals. Councils are well aware of changes in ownership of properties, urban or rural.

This should apply to all Councils in Queensland. There are rabbit infestations outside of South QLD.

(3) The DDMRB and the Department of Agriculture are also not doing anywhere near an adequate job of educating people generally about their responsibilities re pest animals.

It is all very well and good imposing a \$44,000 fine for rabbit introductions. How many of the population know this? This law doesn't appear to be policed very well let alone prosecuted. A law which is not applied and pursued is worthless and brings the law in general into disrepute.

(4) There appears to be some half measures in place regarding the keeping of rabbits in QLD. This practice should be totally banned. The only exception should be those scientific institutions which need to keep rabbits for experimental purposes. The security of those animals needs to be strictly policed.

(5) As a bushwalker I have walked along sections of the rabbit fence in the Barney-Ballow massif area of SE QLD. This is extremely steep and difficult terrain. I have also recently crossed the dingo fence (also effectively a rabbit fence) at the Warri gate in far SW QLD. In both instances I have a great deal of respect for the work of the maintenance crews who do their jobs so well under very difficult conditions.

(6) Conversely, I have little respect for the various management people who are ultimately responsible for keeping pest animals out of Queensland. There needs to be a comprehensive shakeup.

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