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**Your Reference:**  
**Our Reference:** SM2-6-2  
**Contact:** Paul Hockings



17 December 2015

Ms. Jennifer Howard MP  
 Chairperson  
 C/- Research Director  
 Agriculture and Environment Committee  
 Parliament House  
 BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Ms. Howard

**Re: Parliamentary inquiry into barrier fences in Queensland**

I refer to the subject inquiry and advise set out below is a submission on behalf of the Council's Wild Dog Control Advisory Committee specifically relating to your terms of reference "whether barrier fences should be expanded to other areas of the State to protect stock" as Longreach is situated north of the current Wild Dog Barrier Fence which does not help rural landholders within the Longreach Regional Council (LRC) area.

Background:

LRC encompasses a large area of 40,638 square kilometres of sheep and cattle grazing land including the townships of Longreach, Ilfracombe, Isisford and Yaraka. Our region is currently experiencing one of the worst droughts on record. Traditionally this has been a sheep grazing and wool producing region but with the recent dramatic increase of wild dogs in the area many properties have converted to cattle only. This conversion has directly impacted our communities resulting in a reduction of employment and services including shearers, crutchers, contract musters, transport companies & lamb markers, as cattle grazing is not as labour intensive. An unsubstantiated figure bandied around is that an additional \$12 flows to Central Western Queensland communities from every additional sheep de-pastured in this area.

On top of experiencing this drought, landholders are also being impacted by weeds and pest animals' in particular wild dogs because of these attacks on livestock. This has a detrimental effect on the agricultural sector, landholders and their families and the environment and is a complex problem being faced by landholders and others in our community.

As a result, LRC formed a Wild Dog Control Advisory Committee. This committee is made up of Councillors, Local Laws personnel, two representatives from each of the four geographical wild dog baiting divisions within LRC (see attachment 1) and strategically manages Wild Dogs in a holistic, efficient and effective manner across the entire region. This committee plays an important role in recommending cost effective action to manage wild dogs across the region to Council, particularly in terms of landholder anticipation and collaboration.

In 2013, LRC worked with Desert Channels Queensland to develop FULCRUM mapping, a smartphone application used in the Central West Qld Region to record sightings and destruction of feral animals which include wild dogs, pigs, goats, cats as well as pest weeds located in Central West Queensland. This application has been pro actively taken up by landholders, wild dog trappers, local residents and government departments alike to provide quantitative data to assist in future funding applications for assistance.

In 2014/15, LRC received funding for wild dog trapping. This was a very successful program which in 251 days resulted in 136 wild dogs being trapped (see attachment 2). It helped to eliminate some of these "bait shy" wild dogs, the majority of these dogs were females. These females were teaching their pups not to pick up 1080 baits and the only way to eliminate these females was by trapping. From this funding, our region have secured three (3) local trappers that have gained experience and would now be eligible to hold workshops and on-property training for landholders.

Council is presently advertising for a full time Contract wild dog trapper to work the council area as hot spots are identified by landholders to be funded from ratepayers' funds. Recently the committee received correspondence from the Acheron Creek and Baldy Knob syndicates asking Council to consider maintaining an 180km exclusion fence along the Council's western boundary which would be built by Landholders (see attachment 3).

Many landholders within this region are under extreme financial and social stress due to the ongoing drought and impacts by weeds and pest animals' in particular wild dogs, they are not in a position to fund cluster fencing or to form group clusters such as those in the Blackall Tambo area.

On behalf of the WDCAC, Council requests your committee; assess options to expand the wild dog barrier fence in a northerly direction from near Windorah, QLD to protect the Central Western Queensland grazing industry.

Please contact me on (07) 4658 4111 if you require any further information.

Yours faithfully,

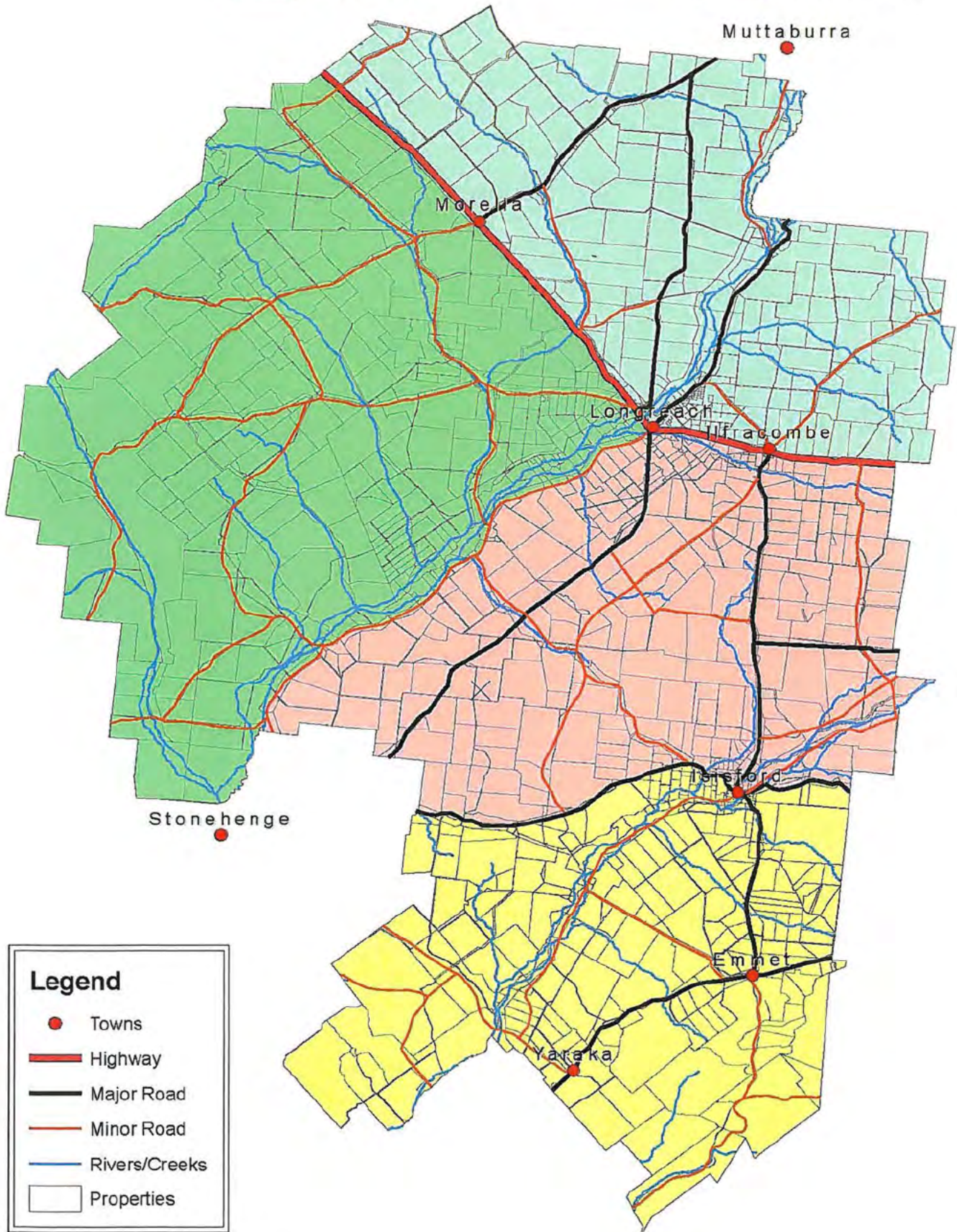
  


Paul Hockings  
Director of Corporate Services



# WILD DOG BAITING DIVISIONS

- |  |  |
|--|--|
|  DIVISION 1 |  DIVISION 3 |
|  DIVISION 2 |  DIVISION 4 |

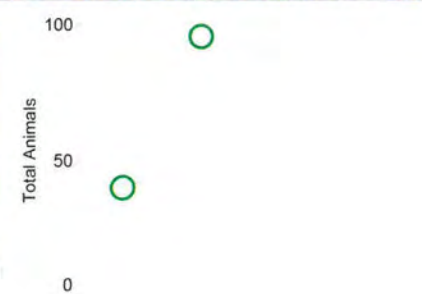
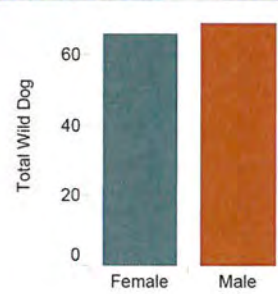
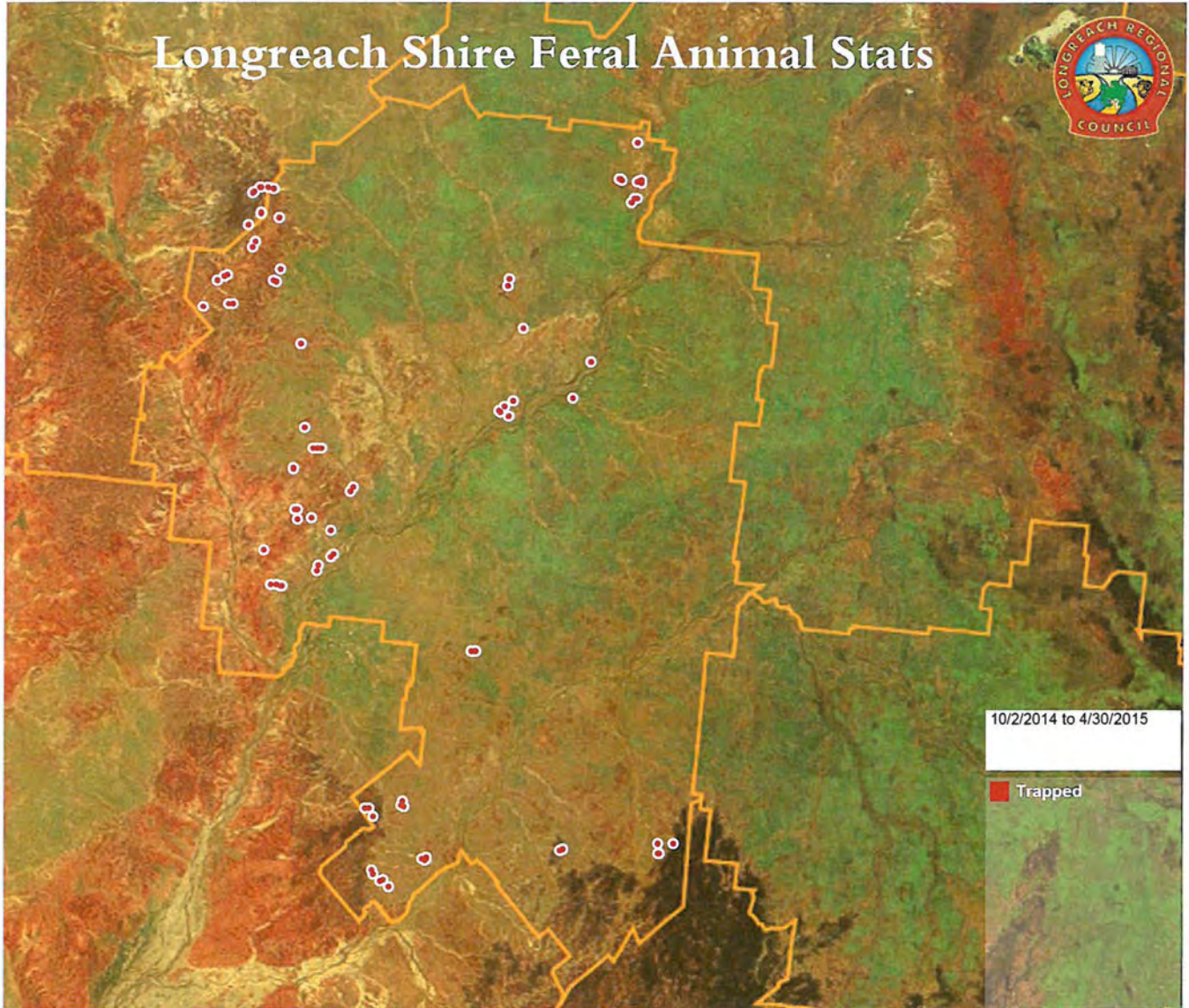


**Legend**

-  Towns
-  Highway
-  Major Road
-  Minor Road
-  Rivers/Creeks
-  Properties

# ATTACHMENT 2

## Longreach Shire Feral Animal Stats



17/06/2015

The Mayor & Councilors

Longreach Regional Council

Re. Funding Support for Maintenance of Wild Dog Fences

Dear Mayor Owens & Councilors,

I am writing on behalf of members of both the Acheron Ck & Baldy Knob Dog syndicates, based on and around the Silsoe Rd district of the LRC area.

These syndicates have been in operation for close to 50 years and the knowledge, dedication & cooperation of the member businesses has been highly effective in leading the fight against wild dogs in the western area of the Longreach shire. Whilst the support LRC has shown to both syndicates in recent years is well recognized, & appreciated, it is also worth noting the high level of active engagement by the members. At the latest Baldy Knob aerial baiting all businesses actively participated in lead up preparation of the meat & with necessary duties on the day, 13 people attending to rectify issues with the supplied meat prior to the arrival of the bait plane. The majority of producers organize & participate in private baitings in addition to council baitings, & are active year round in trapping any remaining dogs. The same is true of the Acheron Ck syndicate. These actions have helped stem the buildup of dogs in the areas further west, and the inflow of dogs into the syndicate areas & beyond.

At a recent meeting (16/06/15) members of both syndicates resolved to pursue funding for Wild Dog exclusion fencing, subject to a plan - agreeable to all parties- being presented to, & approved by, the state & federal agriculture ministers. Whilst the latest draft (v.4) of the CWQld Strategic Fence Plan has fallen short of what is required to ensure our full support we have resolved to actively engage & support what we realize is a work in progress, and assist in its development.

In this early planning phase members have indicated strongest support for a linear fence in excess of 180km in length, protecting the western most sheep country in the LRC area. This fence would protect not just those businesses directly abutting the fence but also a considerable number of properties further inside, & allow more effective targeting beyond the fence.

However one of the main concerns raised by all in attendance was the ongoing cost of maintenance once the fence is complete. The past experience of members of both syndicates, both in the baiting era & prior, is one of continual reliance on a few to protect the many. In regards to this fence proposal it seems clear that those directly abutting it will bear the cost of maintenance while many businesses further east shall share the benefits without the cost in materials & time.

To that end it was resolved to approach council with the view of creating a fund to assist with some of cost involved in the fence maintenance. It was our view that there should be some assistance provided to reflect both the level of protection given to grazing businesses further inside our proposed linear fence, & also to reflect the flow on benefits that the broader community receives from the resulting higher production & increased sheep numbers.

Whilst no producers are debating the urgent need for wild dog control fencing in this area, all are feeling the pinch of sustained dry seasons, reduced equity & very poor cash flow projections for at least the next two to three years. This situation leaves many of us hopeful not just for improvements in the current proposal, but for recognition from council that building & maintaining this vital piece of infrastructure needs the public & financial support of the Longreach Regional Council & our broader community.

Regards, Paul McClymont (On behalf of members of the Acheron Ck & Baldy Knob Dog Syndicates.)