



Our Ref: DK:AB

28 January 2016

Research Director  
Agriculture and Environment Committee  
Parliament House  
Brisbane 4000

Dear Sir/Madam

**Submission to Inquiry into Barrier Fences in Queensland.**

Council considered a report on the inquiry into barrier fences in Queensland at its meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2016 and passed the following resolution.

“THAT Council

1. Prepare a submission to the State Government's Agriculture and Environment Committee conducting the Inquiry into pest animal barrier fences in Queensland that will recommend –
  - Retention of the Status Quo with regard to the Barrier Fence Boards
  - Urging the State Government to be more proactive in pest animal control
  - Requesting State Government Departments to actively control pest animals on land under their control.
2. Write to all Councils along the rabbit barrier fence requesting they make a submission to the State Inquiry into pest animal barrier fences in Queensland recommending the retention of the Status Quo with regard to the Barrier Fence Boards in Queensland.

Councillors consider the works carried out by the Darling Downs Moreton Rabbit Board are vital for the protection of prime agricultural and grazing land throughout our region and beyond. Council also supports the work done by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Wild Dog Barrier Fence Board in maintaining the 2560 kilometres of barrier fence in the State.

However Council does not consider a combination of the two Boards into one Board is feasible due to the size and locations of the two fences and the existing spur fences running off those fences which are maintained by Local Government. With the Rabbit barrier fence being 555 kilometres in length this is a huge logistical undertaking and the combination of the two Boards could lead to inefficiencies and decrease maintenance on both fences. Council therefore is very much in favour of retaining the Status Quo.

Another option considered by Council was for Local Governments to take over maintenance of the Rabbit fence but this option was not considered suitable as different Local Governments would place different emphasis on maintenance and this could cause breakdowns in the barrier fence.

**Southern Downs**  
REGIONAL COUNCIL

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communications to:

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Council also discussed the different approaches used by property owners to the control of feral animals with some being very proactive and others not carrying out control measures and increasing the problem by allowing indiscriminate breeding. It was also pointed out that State lands are sometimes not controlled and feral animals are spreading to private land from State lands. An example quoted was the amount of rabbits harbouring in the Queensland Rail corridor throughout the Southern Downs and the anecdotal evidence of wild dogs spreading to farmlands from National Parks and other State Reserves.

Council has allocated \$1,326,000 for Pest Plant and Animal control in 2015/16 through the following budgets-

- Pest Animal Control \$208,000
- Pest Plant Control \$723,000
- Pest Management Precept \$364,000
- Killarney fence capital \$11,000
- Stanthorpe fence capital \$20,000

The expenditure of the State Pest Management Precept is broken down as follows-

- Services Contribution \$52,659
- Rabbit Control / Research \$41,377
- Darling Downs Moreton Rabbit Board \$268,160

The contribution from the eight Local Governments along the rabbit fence to the operation of the Board totals \$1,600,000 and it is believed that this money is well spent and protects the vegetable and cropping industries on the Queensland side of the rabbit exclusion fence.

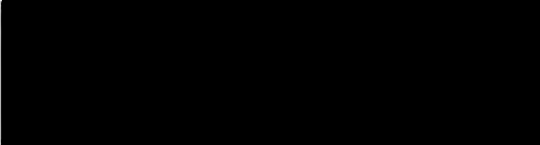
The State Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) is responsible for the funding and operation of the board that controls the wild dog fence and it is believed that this arrangement should be maintained in its current status and format.

At the Council meeting it was also recommended that Council should write and contact the other Local Governments contributing to the Rabbit Board and request them to make a submission supporting the current board arrangements and the Status Quo. This correspondence is being sent to the other Local Governments.

Council also discussed the Terms of Reference of your inquiry and agreed that Barrier Fences and Cluster Fences should be expanded where beneficial to graziers and agriculturists in other parts of the State.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment to the inquiry into Barrier Fences in Queensland and Council wishes to emphasize the importance of retaining the Status Quo and hopes your Committee supports this approach.

Yours faithfully



David Keenan  
Chief Executive Officer