

Wild Dog Destruction Board

(FOR THE WESTERN DIVISION OF NEW SOUTH WALES)

ABN: 14 286 958 340

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The Research Director
Agriculture and Environment
Parliament House
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Dear Mr Hansen,

Thank you for your letter of 17 November 2016 concerning the inquiry into Barrier Fences in Queensland. The NSW Wild Dog Destruction Board considered your correspondence at its most recent meeting held in Broken Hill on 4 and 5 February 2016.

The title of this Board is in fact a misnomer as it does not have a primary or associated role in the destruction of wild dogs and dingoes. This matter is in the process of being rectified through legislative amendment provided in the NSW Biosecurity Act 2015 (enacted but not yet commenced). The Board will in the future be known as the Border Fence Maintenance Board, being a name which more accurately reflects its true function.

The Board, which comprises six members, employs 12 staff whose primary role is to monitor and maintain the 600 km wild dog barrier fence located on the borders between NSW, Queensland and South Australia. The annual cost of maintaining this fence is approximately \$1.8M. Approximately 90% of the funds used to maintain the fence are raised through rates applied to all landholders in the Western Division of NSW whose property exceeds 1000 hectares in area. The remaining 10% of funds is provided by way of a grant from the NSW Government. The Western Division of NSW is the western most part generally classified as a semi-arid rangeland and most of the land within this area is held under a Crown leasehold title system (Western Lands Leases held in perpetuity).

The fence is deemed by landholders in the Western Division as essential and integral to the continuance of the pastoral industry in NSW, in particular sheep and rangeland goats. The NSW-Queensland border fence extends from Cameron Corner a distance 349 kilometres to the east. The Queensland Barrier Fence intersects with the NSW-QLD Border fence approximately 250 kilometres east of Cameron Corner and the NSW fence continues for another 115 kilometres east to just east of Hungerford. See attached diagram.

The whole of the NSW fence is inspected twice each week and routine maintenance is undertaken to ensure it remains dog proof at all times. During the last three years 50 kilometres of the NSW-QLD border fence has been completely replaced at a cost of approximately \$850,000.

The NSW Wild Dog Destruction Board has held concerns for some years on the integrity of the QLD Barrier Fence. Casual inspections, which have occurred from time to time by NSW dog board staff of a small section of the Barrier fence north from where it intersects with the

NSW-QLD border fence, has shown that it is not always well maintained or dog proof. This section of the fence may not be typical of the condition of entire Barrier Fence.


It is the NSW Wild Dog Destruction Board's view that maintenance of the wild dog fences in the adjoining states of Queensland and South Australia, to the same standard as that which exists in NSW, is essential to ensure that there is one continuous barrier preventing the incursion of wild dogs into south-eastern Australia. If this barrier is not maintained by the respective jurisdictions, there will be significant ramifications for the sheep, wool and meat industries in Australia. Similarly, where such incursions exist, active wild dog management programs should be pursued and supported.

It is already understood that that there are unknown numbers of wild dogs and dingoes inside the Barrier fence in Queensland and this is resulting in significant stock losses for Queensland landholders in that area. The three NSW local government areas (LGA's) located on the eastern edge of the Western Division, being Bourke, Brewarrina and Walgett are also experiencing increasing prevalence of wild dogs. These three LGA's share a border with Queensland, but are located east of the termination point of the NSW dog fence, which is 15 Kilometres east of the town of Hungerford. Thus wild dogs present inside the Barrier fence in Queensland are able to freely move between States. As such landholders within these LGA's rely on the integrity of the Queensland Barrier fence, being part of the national wild dog fence, to prevent wild dog incursion.

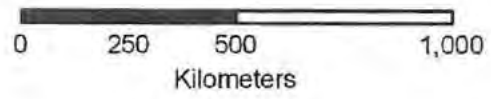
The Shire of Brewarrina has recently made representations to have the NSW dog fence extended a distance of approximately 300 kilometres along the NSW-QLD border from Hungerford to the eastern extent of Walgett Shire. This approach followed a Wild Dog Forum convened by Brewarrina and Bourke Shire Council's. Queensland's Balonne Shire also attended that forum and gave presentations. Such a structure would cost many of millions of dollars to construct but this approach by Brewarrina clearly demonstrates the frustration and concern for this issue in Western NSW.

The Board is also aware of various support for cluster fencing in Queensland. This Board does not support this approach to dealing with the current problem inside the Barrier fence. The Board is of the view that such fencing funnels dogs to those areas where cluster fencing does not exist and creates a bigger problem for those landholders who do not, for whatever reason, have the protection of cluster fencing. This Board is of the view that any Queensland government support for cluster fencing would be better utilised on improvements to, and maintenance of the Barrier fence, and coordinated programs with landholders to manage the existing wild dog problem inside the Barrier fence.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Bell
Chairperson



Current fence alignments

- Rabbit netting fence
- Dingo barrier fence

