



Research Director
Agriculture and Environment Committee
Parliament House
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Via email: aec@parliament.qld.gov.au

29 February 2016

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Submission to Agriculture and Environment Committee Inquiry into Barrier Fences in Queensland

South West NRM is a natural resource management organisation representing the region of south west Queensland. As pioneers of the Collaborative Area Management (CAM) cluster fence management concept, our organisation has implemented seven pest exclusion clusters throughout south west Queensland, totalling in excess of 1.6 million hectares of agricultural land and 1,855 kilometres of high-integrity exclusion fencing. South West NRM strives to build a healthy, sustainable, attractive and profitable region through effective management strategies.

South West NRM welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Agriculture and Environment Committee Inquiry into barrier fences in Queensland, and we commend the Committee for examining this important topic.

Wild dogs are widely acknowledged as one of the greatest threats to profitability and productivity for livestock producers in Queensland. For rural landholders in south west Queensland, wild dogs present a significant economic and emotional risk to maintaining or re-establishing a viable sheep production industry. With wild dog populations increasing substantially over the past five years, it is evident that the Wild Dog Barrier Fence, in itself, is no longer sufficient to provide the region with wild dog protection.

Pastoral lands both inside and outside the barrier fence are experiencing financial hardship as a direct result of wild dog impacts. Significant predation of livestock, particularly sheep, and a decrease in lambing rates to 30-40% due to wild dogs, has limited the recovery of a sheep industry in the previously prosperous region. Insufficient maintenance has resulted in more vulnerable points along the fence line for wild dog access and migration, inherently removing its initial benefit of exclusion.

In 2014-15 financial year, the management and maintenance of the Wild Dog Barrier Fence cost \$2.2 million with \$1,100,317 funded by local governments – a significant investment. South West NRM recognises and strongly supports exclusion fencing as a strategy for managing wild dog impacts (as demonstrated in our CAM cluster projects),

Throughout south west Queensland, our organisation has formed seven clusters, each surrounded by a high-integrity exclusion fence. Since the initial phase of implementation, landholders have reported a significant decline in wild dog populations within the cluster areas, and as such, decreased production loss, increased lambing up to 110%, and a

more rapid return to large-scale sheep and wool production. The location of the Wild Dog Barrier Fence provides significant opportunity for landholders to use the existing fence as a cost-saving inception for new clusters to emerge, an essential requirement during times of reduced financial ability due to drought. This opportunity is evident by three clusters which have utilised 151 kilometres of barrier fence (5.9%) as part of their cluster exclusion fence.

South West NRM proposes that ownership and maintenance of the barrier fence transfers to the respective boundary holding landholder upon the establishment of a cluster. Through this process over time, the management and responsibility of the barrier fence is shifted to landholders, the primary beneficiary of its success; thus reducing state and local government expenditure. This may involve landholders receiving a one-off financial contribution from government to improve the portion of barrier fence in their cluster area, dependent on its assessed quality.

The immense length of the barrier fence presents significant time and cost inefficiencies in its management and maintenance, as evident by its disrepair. As rural landholders are in-situ to the barrier fence, access and repairs can be conducted quicker, further reducing degradation and expense. Additionally, the provision of in-kind labour provides a significant cost reduction when compared to government management.

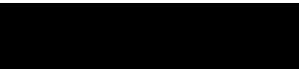
The local governments of the South West Regional Economic Development area contributed \$737,794 in the 2014-15 precepts (67% of all precepts, or 34% of total project expenditure) to the Wild Dog Barrier Fence. Transferring ownership of the barrier fence to landholders would reduce the financial burden that precepts place on local government expenditure, and encourage local spending in the regional councils.

South West NRM strongly believes that implementing a strategy like the above-mentioned as opportunities arise through cluster fencing projects, would greatly assist rural landholders to minimise risk and facilitate economies of scale in developing new clusters, providing a more sustainable long-term strategy to wild dog management. If state government were to transfer ownership of the portion of barrier fence to landholders, the financial and management obligations of the Wild Dog Barrier Fence would over time reduce, and improve both state and local expenditures.

It must be stressed that maintaining the integrity of the existing Wild Dog Barrier fence is paramount. It will probably never be completely part of a cluster so all areas outside clusters need to be maintained with the present level of funding at least. Properties that don't get the opportunity to be part of a cluster and who have no control over the Wild Dog Barrier fence need the security of knowing the fence will be maintained.

On behalf of South West NRM I thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this inquiry. Should you require any further information on this submission please do not hesitate to contact Mary-Anne Healy, General Manager South West NRM on (07) 4656 8500 or email gm@swnrm.org.au.

Yours faithfully,

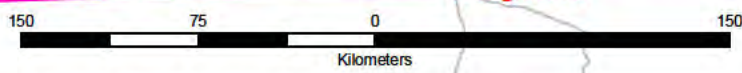
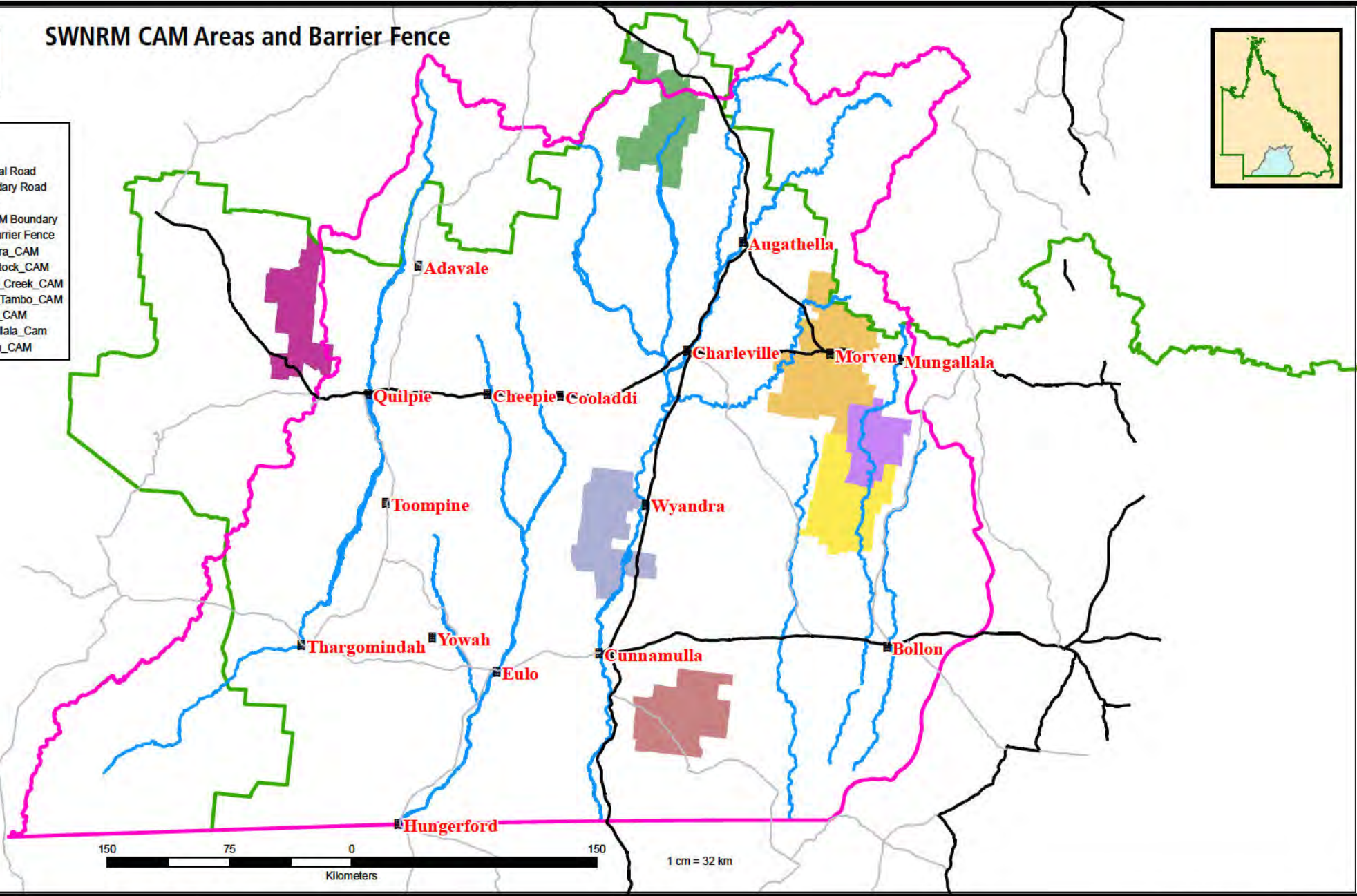

Mark O'Brien
Chair, South West NRM



SWNRM CAM Areas and Barrier Fence



- Legend**
- Road**
- Principal Road
 - Secondary Road
 - Towns
 - SWNRM Boundary
 - Dog Barrier Fence
 - Wyandra_CAM
 - Woodstock_CAM
 - Tomoo_Creek_CAM
 - South_Tambo_CAM
 - Culpie_CAM
 - Mungallala_Cam
 - Morven_CAM



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2. Based on Cadastral Data provided with the permission of the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, current as of 2013

This map is not to be sold or re-made as part of a commercial product.
 The Property boundaries shown on this plan are APPROXIMATE ONLY.
 They are NOT an accurate representation of the legal boundaries.

The data on property occupancy has been collated by graziers with assistance from a number of sources and has been cross referenced wherever possible.
 The information was correct to the best of our knowledge at the time of printing

This information is not for public dissemination and the collators take no responsibility for any errors or misuse of the data.

Coordinate System: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 55
 Projection: Transverse Mercator
 Datum: GDA 1994
 False Easting: 500,000.0000
 False Northing: 10,000,000.0000
 Central Meridian: 147.0000
 Scale Factor: 0.9996
 Latitude Of Origin: 0.0000
 Units: Meter

Document Name: CAM for Wild Dog Committee

Reference Scale: 1:0

Document Path: M:\Projects\Current Projects\Mapping Requests\Internal\MAHICAM for Wild Dog Committee.mxd