



"Together, create and apply solutions"

Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre

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14 April 2011

Mr Ian Mickel
Shire President
Esperance Shire Council
Windich St
ESPERANCE WA 6450

Dear Mr Mickel

Re: Support for the proposed extension of the State Barrier Fence in Western Australia.

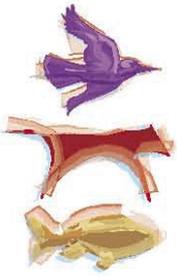
I have been involved with the Northern Mallee Declared Species Group (NMDSG) in my role as the National Wild Dog Facilitator, with the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre since July 2009. The proposal for the extension to the State Barrier Fence was discussed at the first meeting I attended at the offices of the Department of Agriculture Offices in July 2009. Since then I have been informed of the progress of this proposal through Mr Scott Pickering and his involvement in the National Wild Dog Management Advisory Group (NWD MAG) and Mr Barry Davies who until recently was also involved in the NWD MAG and DAFWA. The commitment of government funds through the royalties for regions programme was a direct result of the lobbying and work put in by Mr Pickering and members of the NMDSG and they should be applauded for their actions and commitment to this issue.

At the invitation of the NMDSG I recently delivered a presentation on the benefits managing wild dogs on a landscape level rather than at the property scale to producers and stakeholders at the Salmon Gums Wild Dog Management Field Day and NMDSG Annual Meeting. The focus of these presentations, and in fact my entire project, is to deliver effective wild dog management across all tenures within the landscape to ensure any wild dog living within a region is exposed to some form of control. In my address to both of these gatherings I emphasised the importance of how the control of wild dogs is a whole community project, citing work carried out in Queensland.

Much focus has been placed on the extension of the State Barrier Fence being a dog fence and while it is true that wild dogs will be excluded the fence will also be a barrier to other pest species that impact heavily on primary production in the region such as emus and macropod species. While the media has labelled this fence a "dog fence" the NMDSG have been trying to emphasise the importance of this fence as a vermin fence rather than just as dog fence with little support from the greater community. The financial impacts on sheep producers through wild dog attacks are well documented with a recent study in Queensland demonstrating that the cost to small stock producers being around 17 million dollars a year through direct losses and control. These figures could very well ring true for the Esperance region with the current sale figures for sheep and wool in the region.

The erection of the State Barrier Fence around Esperance would provide sheep and small stock producers with the confidence to increase their flock sizes and expand or utilise country that previously hasn't been used for fear of wild dog attacks. The flow effects from a healthy and expanding sheep and wool industry to the region are massive with increased productivity comes increased demand for labour, transport and infrastructure and hence materials. Similarly increased productivity in the grain industry through the exclusion of emu's and kangaroos would provide greater confidence to local business owners and associated industries in the region all of which would benefit the Shire and greater community.

The clear delineation between the agricultural land and Unoccupied State lands in this instance provides the ideal conditions for the erection of a Barrier Fence and it will provide a huge amount of protection for stakeholders in the region. In addition to the favourable landscape the work of the NMDSG to keep wild dogs out of the timbered areas of the farming area means that wild dogs could quickly be eradicated from inside the fenced area providing what could be considered a "clean" area



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for sheep production. However should the fence not go ahead and wild dog numbers continue to increase, and they will given the favourable seasons had in areas to the north of Esperance, there is a real potential for wild dogs to infiltrate the farming country and cause far greater impacts to producers closer to the coast. I have been to the region three times now since my first visit and I am always amazed that wild dogs are not found closer to the coast given the amount of timbered corridors found throughout the region that lead to nature reserves and uncleared land as well as forestry plantations. These areas in other states provide harbour where wild dogs are quick to become established and then cause problems for producers in surrounding areas. In my opinion and experience it is only a matter of time until this occurs and if it not for the diligence and efforts of the members of the NMDSG it probably would have already occurred.

Given the opportunity provided through the Royalties for Regions programme and the work and support of the NMDSG and its members the Esperance Shire Council would be remiss if it did not take this opportunity to extend the State Barrier Fence and support its primary producers and the greater community. In my role as the National Wild Dog Facilitator I fully support the Northern Mallee Declared Species Group in there efforts to have the State Barrier Fence extended to protect the Esperance Region from the impacts of pest species of agriculture in the region.

Yours truly,

Greg Mifsud
National Wild Dog Facilitator