

Frequently asked questions

February 2023



The NSW Wild Dog Fence Extension Project was announced in the lead-up to the 2019 election by the Coalition Government and received bipartisan support.

This project will increase productivity for farmers, help protect native animals including threatened species, and give an extra level of defence against biosecurity threats at the border.

Q: How did this project come about?

A feasibility study (first published January 2019) that was commissioned by the NSW Border Fence Maintenance Board and funded by Local Land Services found there would be considerable benefits to extending the current NSW Border Wild Dog Fence (commonly known as the dog fence).

Q. What is the length of the extended fence?

Work is underway to extend the existing 583km NSW Border Wild Dog Fence by up to 790km. The existing 100-year-old dog fence on the Queensland side of the NSW/Queensland border will be extended by up to 440km. The existing fence on the NSW/South Australian border follows property boundaries in both states, with the up to 350km extension to also follow property boundaries.

Q: Who is responsible for delivering the project?

The project is being delivered by an alliance of NSW Government bodies including the Soil Conservation Service, Local Land Services, NSW Public Works and the Department of Regional NSW. The NSW Border Fence Maintenance Board have been engaged to act as a construction committee and will focus on the design and construction of the fence.

Q: Who is funding the project?

The NSW Government is funding the project. This includes all costs associated with the assessments, set-out and construction of the extended fence.

Q: What is the design of the fence?

The design of the fence has been developed in consultation with the NSW Border Fence Maintenance Board. The fence will be made from 15/150/15 exclusion wire and be 1800mm high, with 900mm plastic coated chain mesh overlapping the 15/150/15 and skirting off on the ground. Heavy duty steel posts will be placed every 5 metres with a drill rod strainer post every 250 metres. Some sections of the fence will be custom designed to suit the terrain e.g. floodplains, waterways and rocky ground.

Q: Who will be constructing the fence?

The NSW Government is committed to involving as many local and regional NSW businesses in this project as possible, something that has been reflected in tender opportunities, and the construction of a 15km priority pilot site (see next question for details).

NSW Wild Dog Fence Extension Project - frequently asked questions

Q: When will construction of the extension commence?

Prior to construction commencing, the project requires planning approval. Within NSW, the project will require planning approval under NSW legislation and will be assessed in accordance with the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. Other relevant State legislation, as well as Commonwealth legislation, will be complied with where the project impacts on land outside of NSW.

The construction of a 15km priority pilot site was undertaken in the second half of 2020. The pilot site involved the replacement of the existing dog fence near Hungerford and allowed the project team to test and evaluate its systems prior to the main phase of construction commencing.

Highlighting the NSW Government's commitment to involving local businesses, all the materials for the pilot site were sourced from a business in Bourke while a number of Aboriginal contractors from Enngonia worked on the fence construction.

Q: What will happen to existing fences and materials?

The project team will work and engage with landholders and stakeholders to deal with existing fences and requests for additional gates and so forth. Existing fences and materials may be recovered by the landholder to reuse or be removed by the project team at no cost to the landholder. Existing exclusion style fences will be assessed by the project team and may be used as-is, retrofitted or replaced.

Q: How will the extended fence be maintained?

The existing 583km dog fence is maintained and repaired by the NSW Border Fence Maintenance Board. Landholders in the Western Division of NSW on more than 1,000 ha contribute rates on an annual basis.

The NSW Government will engage with stakeholders and landholders when considering the ongoing maintenance of the extended fence.

Q: What were some of the key findings of the feasibility study?

The study found there would be considerable benefits to extending the dog fence (at an assumed 5% increase in weaning percentages), including:

- \$63 million net present value
- \$11.3 million increase in agricultural output
- \$16.2 million flow on supply chain and consumer output
- Up to 85 jobs created through direct, supply chain and flow on effects, as well as the equivalent of 7 additional ongoing jobs to manage the extended fence
- social and environmental benefits .

At a conservative 5% increase in weaning percentages across livestock production sectors in the additional protected areas, the feasibility study found the project would return a positive benefit cost ratio of 2.48.

