

NSW Wild Dog Fence extension project



Frequently asked questions

The extension of the NSW Border Wild Dog Fence will be a game-changer for landholders and community members in Western NSW. This investment will increase productivity for farmers, help protect native animals including threatened species, and will give an extra level of defence against biosecurity threats coming in over 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 be had by extending the current NSW Border Wild Dog Fence (583 km in length erected along parts of the NSW and Queensland/South Australian borders) by 420 km in the east to Mungindi and 322 km in the south to just short of the Murray River. See overleaf for further information on the feasibility study.

Q: Who is responsible for delivering the project?

The project is being delivered by an alliance of NSW Government agencies including Soil Conservation Service, Local Land Services, Public Works Advisory 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 1800 mm high with 900 mm plastic coated chain wire buried to 300 mm deep and overlapping the 15/150/15 by 300 mm. Heavy duty steel posts will be placed every five 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. The tender for the construction of the 742-km extension, valued at around \$17 million, closed in February 2021. The successful businesses have formed a panel of suppliers and will be invited to quote on individual stages of the build, with local small and medium sized businesses to aid in completing the project. The project team are continuing to work with the businesses regarding the manufacture and supply of fence materials, and construction of the extended fence, prior to construction commencing.

Q: When will construction of the 742 km 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*. The project commenced work on its Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in 2020, which included carrying out a robust community consultation program. Work is continuing on the development of the project's EIS which will be lodged with the NSW Department of Planning and Environment, when it will then be put on public exhibition for further comment. Project stakeholders will be kept informed of the process as it progresses. Other relevant State legislation will be complied with where the project impacts on land outside of NSW.

The construction of a 15 km priority pilot site was undertaken in the second half of 2020. The pilot site involved the replacement of the existing NSW Border Wild 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 Local Land Services at no cost to the landholder. Existing exclusion style fences will be assessed by Local Land Services and may be used as-is, retrofitted or replaced.

Q: How will the extended fence be maintained?

The current NSW Border Wild Dog Fence is approximately 583 km and is maintained and repaired by the NSW Border Fence Maintenance Board. Landholders in the Western Division of NSW on more than 1,000 hectares contribute 5.5 cents/hectare in rates on an annual basis.

A working group consisting of members from the NSW Border Fence Maintenance Board, Crown Lands and Local Land Services are currently work shopping options for the ongoing maintenance of the extended fence. The working group will present these options to the NSW Government for consideration.

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 by 742 km (at an assumed five per cent 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
- 85 jobs created through direct, supply chain and flow on effects, as well as the equivalent of seven additional ongoing jobs to manage the extended fence
- community benefits including social and environmental.

At a conservative five per cent increase in weaning percentages across livestock production sectors in the additional protected areas, the fence extension would return a positive benefit cost ratio of 2.48 indicating the project will clearly generate a positive economic return. The project was a key 2019 election commitment for the NSW Government, with other political parties committing to the project.

For further information regarding the NSW Wild Dog Fence Extension project, visit www.ils.nsw.gov.au/WDF or contact the project team on (02) 5852 1215 or wilddogfence@scs.nsw.gov.au.

