

# CAM Phase One: Construction Complete

The completion of the remaining Collaborative Area Management (CAM) Phase One projects, Wyandra and Quilpie cluster fences, will now see the final 450,000ha safely behind wire. Each cluster experienced several challenges throughout the erection process. As one of the driest years on record, 2015 significantly stalled construction as nature forced the hand of land managers once again to redirect their time and energy into feeding and watering precious livestock. Following this dry period, during winter 2016, these parts of South West Queensland experienced very wet conditions, throwing another spanner in the works for both clusters.

In addition to the challenges presented by the weather, the Quilpie cluster encountered significant sections of rocky soils and were required to drill over 600 rock holes for fence posts. Despite the uncontrollable trials and tribulations that were encountered by these clusters, they once again highlighted the remarkable determination and resilience of bush people, completing a combined total of 600 kilometres of fence by late April 2017.

During construction and since completion, both the Wyandra and Quilpie clusters have been highly proactive in trapping wild dogs, with contractors present on the ground in both regions. The dog pictured below was caught by professional trapper Kane Lucas out of the Wyandra cluster in early May of this year. Kane, who is also a landholder within the cluster stated, "It was only 18 months ago we were trapping up to 14 dogs out of one property alone and now we are in the process of complete eradication inside the cluster. During this time, landholders in this area were contemplating restructuring their enterprise to decrease stock losses. They now have the confidence to run commodities which were previously uneconomical due to the heavy predation".

While the construction component is complete and further trapping underway, the CAM Phase One project involves significant on-ground monitoring. The purpose of this monitoring is to gain

an understanding of the changes in wild dog numbers and total grazing pressure as a result of the CAM project.

In order to conduct this on-ground monitoring, South West NRM is in the process of sourcing student volunteers from Griffith University. Griffith are aiming to encompass this activity into students' curriculum over the next twelve months, requiring them evaluate and report on collated data. The University's School of Environment senior lecturer Dr. Peter Davey has communicated that they have had positive attention from high quality volunteers with a passion for research of this nature. We look forward to highlighting students' experiences in future editions of Three Rivers Three Creeks.



Left: A large dog trapped by Kane Lucas in the Wyandra cluster.