

PRESS RELEASE

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Cluster fencing becomes a reality for 16 successful cluster groups

Cluster groups throughout south west Queensland were informed late last week of their approval under South West NRM's Collaborative Area Management Phase 2 project. A total of 16 clusters have been approved, providing wild dog and invasive animal protection to more than 2,000,000 hectares.

"The level of quality and detail we have received in this round of applications has been at an incredibly high standard. It certainly made our assessment panel's task of reviewing the clusters a complex and difficult job." said South West (NRM) Chair, Mark O'Brien. "Based on the information provided to us in the applications, and even working on a pessimistic scenario of landholders stocking 50% sheep, these 16 clusters could bring more than 600,000 sheep back to the region. Combined with the other projects funded under the Queensland Feral Pest Initiative, these clusters are going to be a game changer for the primary production industry, local communities, tourism and small business."

South West NRM's Collaborative Area Management (CAM) Project Manager, Jon Grant said "We have been working very hard with each cluster that we invited to submit an application, to enhance cost-efficiency and work through the people and implementation issues. Now we have been able to approve 16 clusters that demonstrate very strong economic integrity and value-for-money – double the amount we originally anticipated. Cluster applications were assessed on a number of selection criteria, with approved clusters covering both reactive (existing wild dog zones) and proactive (sheep production areas) environments to ensure the region has the best opportunity for reducing wild dogs and recovering a sheep industry".

South West NRM has partnered with the Central Western Queensland Remote Area Planning and Development Board (RAPAD) and the Maranoa Regional Council to jointly fund 2 clusters.

"Partnering with both RAPAD and the Maranoa Regional Council on these clusters has made strong business sense, and allows all clusters in the region to be managed under the same legal framework and process, developed by South West NRM over the past 4 years. It is very important to keep consistency in managing these clusters to ensure we deliver the same high standard of outcomes" said Mr Grant.

A breakdown of the clusters and their shires are:

Balonne	–	275,485 ha
Barcoo	–	189,709 ha
Maranoa	–	412,211 ha
Murweh	–	408,817 ha
Paroo	–	249,287 ha
Quilpie	–	482,385 ha



South West NRM
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for rural communities*

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Approved clusters have now been instructed to form their legal entity, normally an incorporated association; the entity that will manage and govern the cluster group and maintain the exclusion

fence for the next 20 years. Once legal entities are formed and contracts have been signed, a location map of the clusters will be made public.

The Queensland Feral Pest Initiative has received funding through the Queensland Government to support the growth of a productive and prosperous food and fibre sector in Queensland. Funding has also been provided through the Australian Government Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper, the Australian Government's plan for stronger farmers and a stronger economy.

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