

## PRESS RELEASE

PO Box 630,  
Charleville Qld 4470  
Telephone: 07 4656 8500  
Facsimile: 07 4654 1600

19th September 2016

### **South West NRM executes contracts with 15 cluster groups**

A key milestone in the south west Queensland cluster fencing rollout was recently achieved, with South West NRM Chairperson, Mark O'Brien signing the last cluster contract. "Executing these contracts is an important part of the delivery process, as it ensures the commitment of collaboration on pest management continues at the cluster level for the next 20 years. Now that clusters are contracted, we are proud to publically announce the groups and their location.", said Mr. O'Brien.

The 15 new Collaborative Area Management clusters are the Araluen Trinidad, Augathella, Bollon CAM, Bollon South CAM, Clifton, Coban, Cogoon, Eromanga West, Grass Hut Channels, Neabul Wallum, Nebine, Noorama, Ward River, Wellwater, and Western Langlo.

15% are located in Balonne Shire, 10% in the Barcoo Shire, 25% in the Maranoa Shire, 22% in the Murweh Shire, 13% in the Paroo Shire, and 25% in the Quilpie Shire. The shires of Barcoo, Murweh, Paroo, and Quilpie are identified as priority 1 investment areas for the Queensland Feral Pest Initiative and the Australian Government Pest Animals and Weeds (AGPAW) guidelines.

Collectively, the new clusters will see 1,908 kilometres of high integrity exclusion fencing provide wild dog and invasive animal protection to 1,885,690 hectares of agricultural land. The project will work with 96 landholders across 116 rural properties to implement best practice grazing and pest management strategies.

South West NRM's Collaborative Area Management (CAM) Project Manager, Jon Grant said "Each cluster has been required to implement a comprehensive legal framework, including the establishment of a legal entity, management committee, constitution, and maintenance fund. This process provides longevity to the project and ensures scenarios such as ownership change and future maintenance are managed correctly".

South West NRM, through the Queensland Feral Pest Initiative, will provide \$4.72 million in funding to the cluster groups, with landholders contributing approximately \$9.6 million – 67% of the total project cost. It is expected through establishing these clusters, stocking rates could increase as much as 42%, improving the profitability and productivity of the region's agricultural industry.

"If the new clusters stocked just 50% sheep, it is expected the economic benefits to the region would exceed \$6.9 million annually through increased employment and community investment. This represents a 146% return on investment annually from the Queensland and Australian Governments' funding contribution. This amount excludes any additional benefits brought on from increased taxation, and the benefit in reducing the number of properties reliant on drought assistance – a significant cost to the taxpayer", said Mr. Grant.

## PRESS RELEASE

PO Box 630,  
Charleville Qld 4470  
Telephone: 07 4656 8500  
Facsimile: 07 4654 1600

Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, Leanne Donaldson said the benefits of cluster fencing has already started to positively affect the sheep industry.

“Producers were thinking it may take a few years to see the full benefits of fencing, but some areas already fenced have started showing significant improvement almost from day one. I am looking forward to seeing the continued success of this great initiative.” the Minister said.

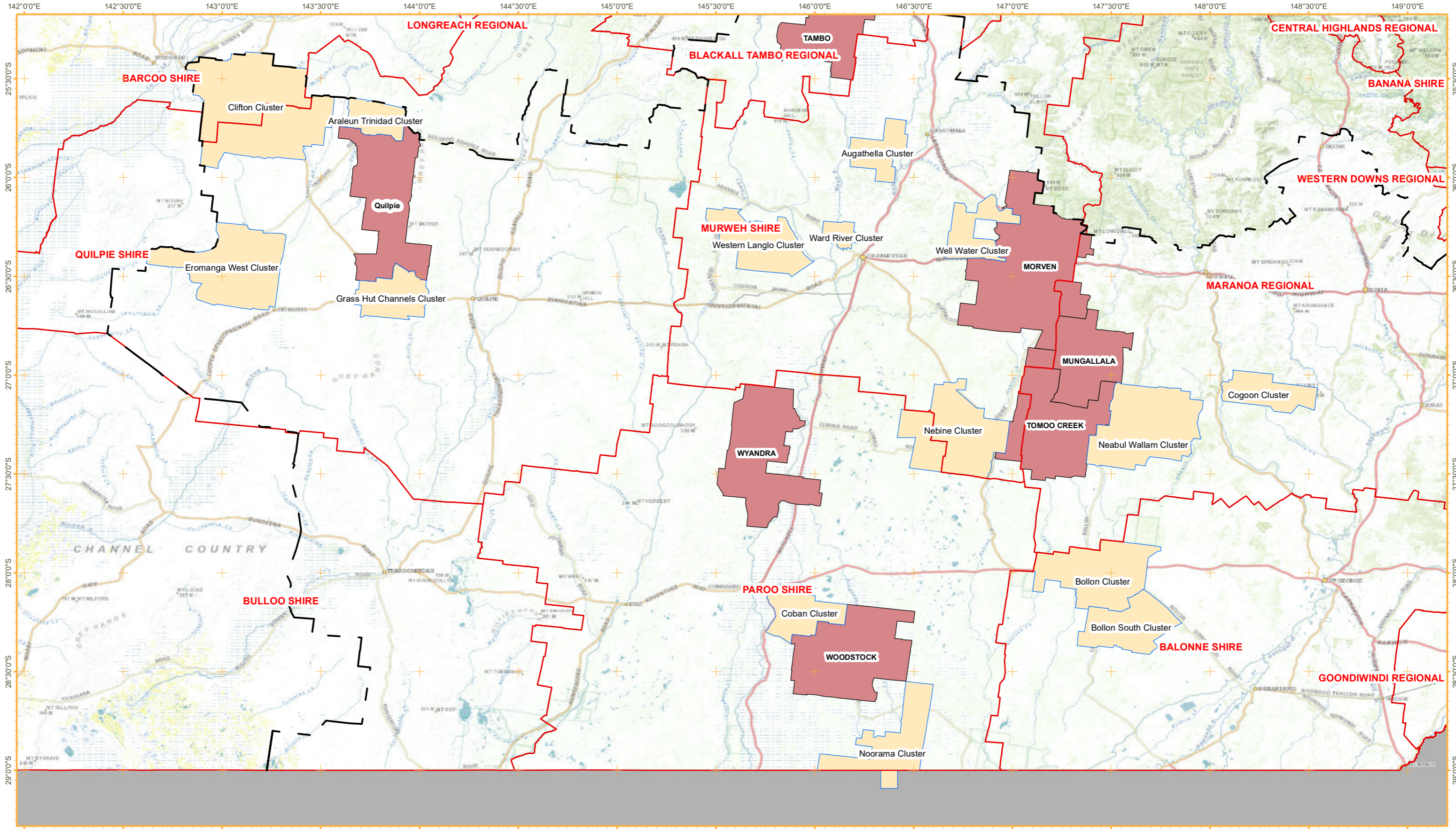
The total perimeter of all 15 clusters is more than 3,600 kilometres, however through the strategic use of existing Wild Dog Barrier Fence, and existing cluster and individual exclusion fences, the cost of establishing the new clusters has been reduced by 47%. It is expected through increased awareness of the project benefits and additional government assistance, the ideology of creating a honeycomb effect in the region will soon be a possibility.

Although the final contract with landholders has just recently been executed; some clusters that signed very quickly, have already received materials and started the process of building their fence. Adma Sargood of the Wellwater cluster, located west of Morven, said “it is fantastic that we have been able to receive our materials quickly and begin building our cluster fence. This funding and the ability to be part of a cluster is a lifeline for us and our fight against wild dogs. In the past 16 months, we have trapped 177 wild dogs at a cost of \$27,200 before we even start counting livestock losses. We expect that our cluster fence will be completed by Christmas, if not sooner”.

South West NRM has partnered with the Central Western Queensland Remote Area Planning and Development Board (RAPAD) to jointly fund the Clifton cluster, and the Maranoa Regional Council to jointly fund the Neabul Wallum cluster.

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.

For more information, please contact Mark O’Brien 0427 568 324 or Jon Grant 0474 761 633.

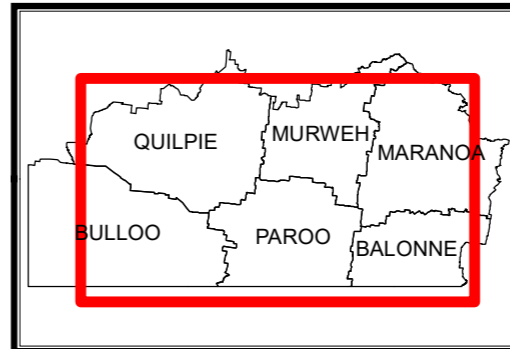
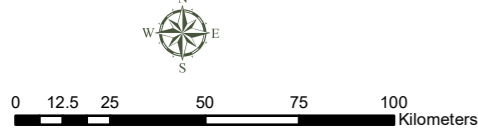


**CAMS2 PROJECT**

**OVERVIEW**

**Legend**

- Wild Dog Barrier Fence
- Local Government boundaries
- CAM Phase 2 clusters
- Existing South West NRM clusters



Scale - 1:2,000,000 printed at A3