

Wild Dog and Kangaroo Exclusion Fencing – a case study at “Banff Downs”, Morven

Why is it good for my business?

- The fence has been very effective in preventing wild dogs entering “Banff Downs”
- The fence has also reduced grazing pressure from kangaroos
- Now have the ability to run sheep in all the paddocks on “Banff Downs”, without worry of wild dog attacks
- Able to run goats in all paddocks on “Banff Downs”, which helps with the control of woody weeds and regrowth

Background

- “Banff Downs” is 21,000ac (8,700ha), predominately brigalow, mulga, box and yapunyah
- The exclusion fence encloses 20,000ac (8,300ha)
- The total length of the exclusion fence constructed is around 45km
- Some internal fences have been constructed with goat Ringlock™ over the years
- Currently runs cattle, sheep and goats
- Fence was erected to control the wild dogs population and reduce the number of kangaroos passing through and therefore reduce the grazing pressure
- The fence also helps keep control of goats in certain paddocks to control re-growth and woody weeds
- Wild dogs hadn’t been a huge problem but there had been increased numbers of sightings and wild dogs caught in the area, so it was bound to become a serious problem
- The first exclusion fencing began 6 years ago and has been happening gradually since then, it has now been completed for 6 months

Cost to Build

- Where needed old fences were cleared with their own machinery and the construction of the new fence was done by owner, family and some neighbours
- Construction and clearing costs are not included in the following costing as these would vary for each property, depending on equipment owned, time, resources, etc.
- The prices quoted are what it cost “Banff Downs” and will vary in different circumstances and over time
- Prices quoted are a guide and cover new fencing materials purchased only, some old materials were used which are not included in the price



Photo 1: Costs quoted are a guide and only cover new fence materials



Photo 2: The fence was constructed and cleared by owner, family and some neighbours

Fence Type

- 2 different fences have been constructed, Fence 1 is an old dog netting fence with new wire run next to it and Fence 2 is a totally new fence

Fence 1

- **Materials used**

- Stocksafe™ wire which is 115cm high, with 11 horizontal running wires and 15cm gaps between vertical wires
- 1 new plain wire
- 240cm high steel pickets

- **Cost**

- Fencing materials cost \$2300/km
- Barbed wire was used from old existing fence
- The barbed wire was tied at the top of the post
- Plain wire was put at the bottom to strengthen the Stocksafe™ wire
- The existing dog netting was tied to the steel pickets where possible
- 10 metre spacing's between steel pickets
- In-line strainer posts are 800 metres apart
- Total height of new wire is 115cm, but the actual fence height varies due to the higher old wild dog netting fence



Photo 3: Fence 1 - The existing wild dog netting was tied to the new steel pickets



Photo 4: Fence 1 - The new fence was run alongside and tied to the existing old wild dog netting fence



Photo 5: Fence 1 - A plain wire was run along the bottom of the fence for extra strength

Fence 2

- **Materials used**
 - Fixed Knot™ wire which is 150cm high, with 14 horizontal running wires and 15cm gaps between the vertical wires
 - 1 barbed wire
 - 1 plain wire
 - 210cm Clipex™ steel pickets
- **Cost**
 - Fence materials cost \$4000/km
 - All material used in this fence were new
- 1 barbed wire at the top and 1 plain wire at the bottom to help strengthen the Fixed Knot™ wire
- 8 metre spacing's between steel pickets
- In-line strainer posts are 800 metres apart
- Total height of the fence is 150cm



Photo 6: Fence 2 – Total height of the fence is 150cm



Photo 7: Fence 2 – 1 barbed wire at the top of the fence



Photo 8: Fence 2 – Clipex™ post were used which made it easy to attach the wires

Maintenance

- Maintenance has not been a problem so far, it will be checked routinely every 6 months
- Maintenance in the first 3 months had to be more regular as there was more pressure from animals not familiar that the fence existed
- There has been more pressure on Fence 1 as animals still see the old kangaroo/pig holes in the old wild dog netting fence as a way through, whereas as Fence 2 is a whole new structure and animals can't find holes to get through
- The start of Fence 1 that has been erected for 6 years is still fine and has required no extra maintenance
- Creek crossings and flood ways need to be checked after rain, as with any boundary fence
- Due to the 8 metre steel post spacing's, no extra maintenance is required where pre-existing depressions/holes existed when the fence was built



Photo 9: The gates needed netting to be added on top of the gates for extra height

Effectiveness

- Since the fence has been completed there has only been one wild dog sighting, which may have already living inside the fence
- It has reduced the amount of kangaroos passing through
- The fence has reduced the grazing pressure from kangaroos, this is evident where improved pastures (buffel, urochloa) have been planted, the improved pasture inside the fence responds quickly to rain whereas on the outside of the fence there is little response
- There is now the ability to use paddocks that previously haven't been used due to wild dogs roaming in these areas
- Recently had confidence to let shorn sheep into a paddock that hasn't had sheep in it for a couple of years and all sheep have since been mustered without losses

Challenges

- The fence crosses a creek a number of times which can cause problems after floods
- In the creek crossings netting was suspended from a cable secured between 2 trees, it was essential the netting was long enough to overhang along the ground to stop animals getting through after flooding
- A 1000ac (415ha) of “Banff Downs” was fenced out as the old fence line followed a creek along and crossed it 5 times, redirecting the fence line meant no creeks had to be crossed and this would reduce the amount of maintenance required
- This area outside the exclusion fence is used for cattle grazing
- Creek crossings don’t take long to fix up if they are damaged, as long as they are checked quickly
- The gates used needed extra height, so some 30cm chicken wire was attached to the top of the gate
- Originally used a wire that only had 8 horizontal wires, but this was not effective as animals (e.g. piglets) could stretch the wire and make bigger holes to get through
- Financing the fence is the biggest problem, if possible, erecting it all with a 150cm wire and a top and bottom barbed would be ideal
- If this can’t be done then it just needs to be done when it can be afforded



Photo 10: Cable was suspended between 2 trees and the netting was tied to the cable



Photo 11: Some creeks were crossed

Producer thoughts!

- The fence has been very successful and the owners are extremely happy it has been done
- It is peace of mind, when sheep are put into a paddock with confidence that the sheep can graze without losses until next muster
- Paddocks that have been traditionally better lambing paddocks can be used again without a worry
- Can now utilise all paddocks inside the fence on Banff Downs for sheep, goats and cattle without fear of wild dog attacks
- Can now graze goats in all paddocks again to control woody weeds/regrowth
- Grazing pressure from kangaroos has definitely been reduced due to the effectiveness of the fence
- Would recommend using a bottom barbed instead of plain wire for effectiveness, however a plain wire was used on Banff Downs as it fit into the Clipex™ post better with the Fixed Knot™ wire
- Probably wouldn't use in-line strainer post in future, not sure they are really needed
- 'Banff Downs' have coordinated with neighbours and adjoined existing exclusion fences that the neighbours have completed, to help reduce costs
- Participation in individual and coordinated baiting programs, also chair person of the local Wild Dog Management Advisory Group
- For further information please contact Tim Williams (Banff Downs – 0746 548 204) or Alex Stirton, (DAFF – 0746 544 212)



Photo 12: The netting is left long to overhang along the ground to stop animals getting through after flooding