

MEDIA RELEASE

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RAPAD SEEKS TO EXPAND ON CURRENT CLUSTER FENCING MODEL WITH POTENTIAL NEW FUNDING

The Central Western Queensland Remote Area Planning and Development Board (RAPAD) is advocating for any future cluster fencing funding rounds to investigate expanding the current model to include linking existing exclusion fences either privately or publicly funded.

With the current State and Federal Governments commitment of an additional \$7m for pest and weed funding RAPAD Chair Cr Rob Chandler outlined, "I need to be clear, RAPAD continues to support the current cluster fencing model of enclosing properties as it stands now.

However we also feel, due to the success of this project and others, it would be worthwhile to consider allowing the linking of existing exclusion fences in potential future funding rounds as the more fencing that occurs in the region the better off producers and communities become".

"The fences are working it's as simple as that, and with a lot of the region getting some decent rain recently I am sure there will be even more desire for fencing from now on.

"As such I think it's important to start this conversation now with those fenced, those wanting to fence, and the Government, about how we get the best bang for our buck from here going forward".

Cr Chandler said that last year as part of the RAPAD EOI process feedback suggested those producers seeking to link existing exclusion fences, either privately or publicly funded, should be offered an opportunity to participate.

"There has been a lot of anecdotal discussion and ideas around linking existing exclusion fences and we are keen to hear more from producers on this", said Cr Chandler.

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RAPAD's 2016 cluster fencing Expression Of Interest (EOI) determined if funded, when combined with current Round 1 and 2 fencing projects, would see:

- 1,000,000 sheep in central western Queensland;
- 2.2m ha fenced;
- 174 properties involved;
- \$3.76 regional benefit per year as infinitum for every \$1 of Government expenditure; and
- \$1.18 increase in gross margin every year for every \$1 that a producer spends on CAPEX.

As such ongoing funding would provide a continued catalyst for fencing thus bringing back more sheep and continuing to grow the economic, environmental and social benefit to the region and the state. This is supported by the 2017 Regional Australia Institute report, commissioned by RAPAD, which highlighted bringing back the sheep as one of six priority areas for RAPAD and the region.

The RAI report indicated cluster fencing could provide, "potential regional economic growth to \$38.8m annually through increased gross margin from sheep production, stimulating jobs for an additional 158 people in the industry".

RAPAD continues to advocate to the Queensland and Australian Governments for the progression of strategic cluster fencing in the local government areas of Barcaldine, Longreach, Blackall-Tambo, Winton, Barcoo, Boulia, Richmond, McKinlay and Flinders shires.

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 and the Australian Government Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper, the Australian Government's plan for stronger farmers and a stronger economy.

Ends

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