

Review of Dog Fence rateable area

Consultation summary



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Information current as of 31 October 2021

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All Enquiries

SA Dog Fence Board

E dogfence@sa.gov.au

Executive summary

Under the current Dog Fence funding model, the Dog Fence Board will not have the ability to fund the replacement of the Dog Fence when it reaches the end of its serviceable life.

To increase its funding, the Board carried out a review of Dog Fence rates, which are one of the Board's main funding sources. The Board proposed to expand the Dog Fence rateable area by two Hundreds to the south, to all Hundreds within 150 kilometres of the Dog Fence, and to not extend beyond the River Murray.

The proposed areas would result in about \$350,000 of additional revenue, which would fund the replacement of the fence before it reached the end of its serviceable life.

The Board conducted extensive public consultation between 14 May and 9 July 2021 on their proposal to expand the rateable area. The Board ensured that all stakeholders who would be impacted by the proposal were consulted. Consultation was hosted via the YourSAy online platform, direct mailouts to impacted stakeholders, public information sessions in the proposed expansion area, and several media articles.

A total of 88 responses was received by the Board. Most respondents were in favour of the proposal (35), and many suggested that rates should be paid by all livestock producers inside the fence (28). In total, 81 responses supported some form of expansion to the rateable area.

Background

The South Australian Dog Fence runs for 2,150 kilometres from Fowlers Bay to the SA/NSW border near Broken Hill. The Dog Fence prevents incursions of wild dogs and benefits all land managers inside the fence.

The Dog Fence is the most important asset protecting the sheep industry in South Australia, which generates \$1.5 to \$2 billion per annum.

Under the current funding model, the Dog Fence Board receives a combined annual income of \$1.17 million from three sources:

- Annual Dog Fence rates
- The Sheep Industry Fund
- The Government of South Australia matching the above two sources

Each year the Board spends around \$1.13 million to ensure the fence is inspected every 14 days, repaired as required, and to ensure that wild dogs in its vicinity are destroyed. The remaining funds of around \$40,000 are spent repairing the fence and its access tracks following flood, fire and sand drift.

Under this funding model, the Board does not have the capacity to invest in the replacement of the Dog Fence at the end of its serviceable life.

The Board's proposal

The current funding model resulted in a deteriorated Dog Fence that, for the past decade, has been prone to breaches by wild dogs. The condition of the Dog Fence contributed to the spread of wild dogs from the pastoral zone and into the agricultural areas of the state.

The \$25 million Dog Fence Rebuild Project, which is funded through an industry and State and Commonwealth governments partnership, is bringing the Dog Fence's condition back to a standard that will re-establish land manager confidence in the structure.

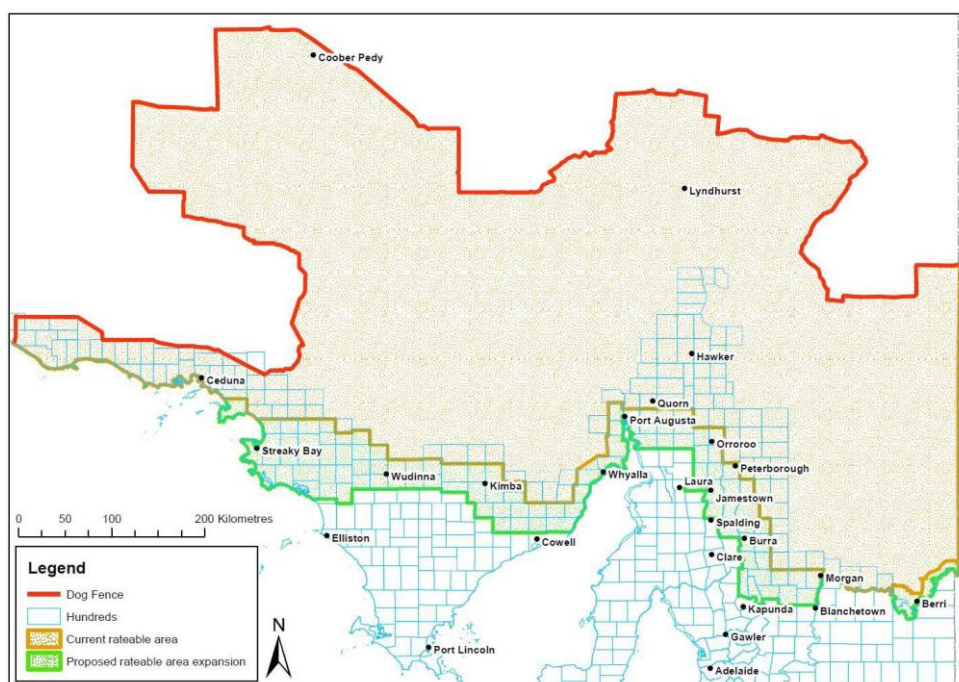
The scale of the current rebuild of the Dog Fence highlights the main issue with the funding model for the maintenance of the Dog Fence – its depreciation has not been costed into the rates. Instead of funding, planning and building small sections of the Dog Fence each year, about 1,600 kilometres of the 2,150 kilometre long fence is being rebuilt in five years.

To ensure the rebuilt Dog Fence does not deteriorate back to the previously seen condition, the Dog Fence Board proposed to expand the Dog Fence rateable area. The proposed expansion would better align with the areas that benefit from the Dog Fence.

The proposal included expanding the rateable area from the 2021/22 rates year:

- By two Hundreds to the south
- To all Hundreds within 150 kilometres of the Dog Fence
- To not extend beyond the River Murray

South Australian Dog Fence current and proposed rateable areas



It is proposed that about 600 landowners, who have more than 10 square kilometres in the expanded rateable area, pay \$1.70 per square kilometre with a minimum rate payable of \$245 each year. About 98 per cent of these landowners would be on the minimum rate of \$245.

It is proposed that landowners in the current rateable area would continue to pay \$2 per square kilometre with a minimum rate payable of \$475.

At the completion of the Dog Fence Rebuild Project in June 2024, the Board proposed this two-tiered model would be replaced by a single rate that would apply to all landowners in the rateable area.

Under the proposal, ratepayers in the expanded area would contribute \$174,000, which when matched by the Government of South Australia, would provide a total of \$348,000 to the Dog Fence Board. This would result in funding of around \$390,000 available for Dog Fence replacement each year.

Consultation approach

The Dog Fence Board ran a public consultation from 14 May to 9 July 2021. While the consultation was open to all members of the public or anyone with an interest in the proposal, the Board took additional steps to target its core stakeholders, its current and proposed rate payers.

Media

The Dog Fence Board issued a media release on 17 May 2021, providing background and directing stakeholders to the YourSAY consultation page.

Media summary		
Date	Agency	Description
18 May 2021	Stock Journal	Online article. Summary of proposal and how to provide feedback. Online poll asking who should pay for fence maintenance (PIC holders – 7 votes, SA Govt – 3 votes, current ratepayers – 2 votes, and proposed ratepayers, 3 votes)
20 May 2021	Stock Journal	Printed article. Summary of proposal and how to provide feedback.
21 May 2021	Stock Journal	Description of current funding model.
27 May 2021	Stock Journal	Current ratepayer support, but suggestion some think rates could be charged to all PIC holders in state
5 July 2021	ABC Country Hour (SA)	Interview with Board Chair talking about proposed rateable area being aligned with current dog predation area and the Board's current income not permitting fence replacement.
1 July 2021	Stock Journal	Printed article and reminder of consultation closure date.

YourSAy

The South Australian Government's YourSAy platform was used by the Board to provide stakeholders with information on the proposal and details of how to provide feedback.

The Review of Dog Fence rateable area page (<https://yoursay.sa.gov.au/dog-fence-rateable-area>) contained:

- summary of the proposal
- detailed consultation paper
- frequently asked questions
- copy of the media release
- detailed map of the current and proposed rateable area
- online forum for stakeholders to provide feedback
- Links to further details on the regional public information sessions
- Contact details for further information and to provide feedback

Public information sessions

Public drop-in information sessions were run from 2:30 – 7:00pm at:

- Wudinna Telecentre – Monday 31 May
- Orroroo Golf Club – Tuesday 1 June
- Burra Townhall – Wednesday 2 June

Each session was attended by a member of the Dog Fence Board and by the Dog Fence Program Manager. The sessions provided stakeholders with an opportunity to hear more about the Dog Fence and the Board's proposal, and to provide feedback.

Direct mail out

Using the 'address for notices' details linked to Land Services SA's property ownership database, the Board sent a letter to all owners of land greater than 10 square kilometres in the current and proposed rateable areas. A total of 1,275 letters were sent to landowners containing:

- letter from the Chair of the Dog Fence Board inviting participation in the consultation
- copy of the consultation paper
- flyer for the public information sessions

Public response

In total, 88 responses were received during the consultation.

A vast majority were supportive of the Board's proposal, but many commented that they would like to see Dog Fence rates paid by all livestock producers or by all land holdings of 10 square kilometres or more, state-wide (inside the fence).

In general, most respondents agreed that funding was needed and were happy to hear of the Board's vision for the maintenance and replacement of the Dog Fence.

YourSAy

The YourSAy page summary statistics included:

- 325 people visited the main page
- 112 people opened a secondary page or document
- 78 people downloaded the consultation paper
- 7 people posted a comment or asked a question on the online forum

Public information sessions

Public attendance at each session was:

- Wudinna Telecentre – 3 people
- Orroroo Golf Club – 11 people
- Burra Townhall – 1 person

Attendance at the public information sessions was lower than the Dog Fence Board expected.

Three apologies were received from potential attendees for the Wudinna session, each citing difficulties getting to the session due to on-farm seeding activities.

Orroroo had the highest attendance, with all those who attended, supportive of the proposal. This was expected by the Board, with many land managers in this area encouraging the Board to increase the rateable area over the last few years.

The session at Burra was attended by one person.

Email, postal or phone responses

A total of 14 written responses, by email or mail were received during consultation. A further 7 responses were received by phone.

Stock Journal poll

The Stock Journal conducted an online poll as part of their coverage of the Board's consultation. A total of 15 people participated in the poll. Most respondents to the poll indicated they would like to see rates applied to all Property Identification Code holders.

Personal communication

During the consultation period, members of the Dog Fence Board noted 30 informal conversations with stakeholders about the proposal. Most conversations initially suggested that rates be applied state-wide or to all Property Identification Code holders. When advised that Sheep producers pay through the Sheep Industry Fund, and that the rates system applies to all land tenure types, stakeholders indicated support for the Board's proposal.

Responses recorded	
Method	Number
YourSAy forum	7
Public information sessions	15
Mail	6
Email	8
Phone	7
Stock Journal poll	15
Personal communication	30
Total	88

Responses recorded	
Response	Number
Supportive of proposal	35
Opposed to proposal	6
Rateable area should be expanded further than proposed	8
Rates should apply to all PIC holders or be production based	28
Fence should be funded by SA Government	4
Questions only	6
Comments unrelated to proposal	1
Total	88

Next Steps

Under the *Dog Fence Act 1946*, the Dog Fence Board have the responsibility to declare, the Dog Fence rateable area. The Dog Fence Board then seek the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Developments' approval to declare the amount of the rates.

The Dog Fence Board will present this report to the Minister along with a recommendation that the Board be approved to declare the 2021/22 rates at:

- \$2 per square kilometre, with a minimum amount payable of \$475 in the current rateable area
- \$1.70 per square kilometre, with a minimum amount payable of \$245 in the proposed expanded rateable area

Following a response from the Minister, the Board intend to make this consultation summary report available through the South Australian Government's YourSAy platform.