



# \$986,800 Grant Funds Secured for Moona – Winterbourne Predator Proof Fence

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Walcha Council has successfully secured \$986,800 in Round 2 of the Federal Government's *Communities Combating Pest and Weed Impacts During Drought Program – Biosecurity Management of Pests and Weeds*.

The project will deliver a 44km predator proof linear fence in the Moona Winterbourne area, directly protecting 110,000 hectares of livestock production in a key agricultural area, and aid on-farm biodiversity in the Walcha region. The fence will protect 150 landowners along its route from the threat of wild dogs and pests. The project will commence in July 2020 and be completed by December 2021.

All project funding will be directed to materials and labour, using local contractors to inject vital funds into drought and fire recovery. Project management will be provided in-kind by Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) and Local Land Services (LLS). There are a number of other key in-kind contributions including NSW Department of Primary Industries, National Parks and Wildlife and landowners, who will all support the project by sharing regrowth control, camera monitoring, and fence maintenance activities.

Walcha Mayor Eric Noakes says, *“Walcha Council is honoured to support the foresight shown by the landholders in the Moona - Winterbourne area that had the vision to recognise the opportunity of this grant stream. The in-kind support of so many organisations and farmers in this important project for Walcha will not only benefit them but also our local economy. With the invasion of wild dogs and the ever increasing issue of deer and other pests this fence will provide a very effective barrier.”*

*“Our Local Federal Member, Barnaby Joyce, also advocated strongly for this grant as he understands the importance of this project to the viability of this grazing area and his support is greatly appreciated.”* says Mayor Noakes.

Member for New England, Barnaby Joyce says, *“When I left Western Queensland the biggest issue was the wild dog problem, and then my first meeting at Nundle was around the same issue. Subsequent meetings in Walcha raised the same problem of feral animals and their impact on the viability of running livestock. It is great to be able to put close to \$1m to assist in the solving of this issue for Walcha graziers”.*

The linear fence will separate the highly fertile and productive land within Walcha LGA from the Eastern Escarpment. Previous Local Wild Dog Management Plans signed by producers, Local Land Services and the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service have identified the need for this comprehensive barrier fence for more than a decade.

AWI North East NSW wild dog management coordinator David Worsley will lead the project. David has been instrumental during the project's inception, and has led the project scoping and initial stakeholder consultation activities.

## MEDIA RELEASE



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David Worsley says, *"The project will provide unprecedented choice of enterprise for landholders in the area and a future in agriculture for the next generation by excluding wild dogs and other pest species from the highly fertile Moona-Winterbourne area."*

Wild dogs predate on both sheep and calves, and carry diseases such as hydatids and neospora (which causes abortion in cattle). Further exclusion of pest species will be a win for our community, local economy, and native animals including endangered species such as quolls and koalas. Every dollar spent to construct the fence is projected to return a benefit in excess of \$3.25 per year for the life of the fence.

David Worsley says, *"You cannot put a price on the mental health impacts of wild dog predation or fully understand the impact they can have unless you have directly experienced it. By controlling this threat, our sheep enterprises can generate more employment, meaning jobs for our children and a brighter future for the whole Walcha community,"* says David Worsley.

Walcha Mayor Eric Noakes says, *"This funding will provide much needed support to the farmers in the Moona Winterbourne area that are recovering from drought, fires and now enduring COVID-19."*

*"I look forward to the successful delivery of this project and to the benefits it will bring to our community,"* says Mayor Noakes.

**Picture 1: David Worsley, AWI North East NSW wild dog management coordinator**

**Picture 2: Moona Landowners attending a Feralscan Session (Feb 2020)**

For interviews phone Walcha Mayor Eric Noakes on 0428 774 504

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