



Chapter 16: Getting Fencing Right

Fencing

Fencing on your property is a crucial part of its management and provides a number of functions and benefits. You need to think about a range of issues when making decisions about fencing on your property. Key functions of fencing generally include:

- Delineation of property boundaries and creating privacy
- Providing barriers to the movement of livestock and domestic animals, such as cattle or dogs
- Allowing or preventing the movement of native wildlife, such as kangaroos
- Excluding pest animals, such as foxes and rabbits
- Protecting native vegetation and waterways—particularly near farm dams, creeks, wetlands and other water supplies and around native vegetation remnants and regeneration areas.

Fencing of native vegetation and waterways is an important land management tool contributing to the maintenance of water quality and soil health, reducing soil erosion and protecting native vegetation from grazing and other damage.

Impacts of Fencing on Neighbours and Wildlife

When making your decision about what type of fencing to use, keep in mind that your neighbours, and yourself, are likely to have been attracted to the area by the scenic rural landscape and native birds and animals. Choose a fence design that fits in with the area and allows the safe movement of native wildlife through your property. Fencing that allows wildlife to pass through safely will help reduce fence damage and associated repair costs. A good option for creating privacy and habitat is close plantings of native shrubs— this can be a lot cheaper than other types of fencing and will also help to reduce dust from roads and other properties. Talk to your neighbours, especially about fencing along shared boundaries, before you start work.

Plan Your Fences

The type of fencing you choose for your rural residential property will depend on how you use your property and varies greatly depending on what you are trying to achieve. Protecting chicken coops from foxes, native vegetation from livestock and vegetable gardens from kangaroos and rabbits will all require different types of materials and construction methods. The type of fencing used to contain livestock will also be influenced by the type and number of stock and the size of your property.

Also see:

- Chapter 3 - Being a good neighbour
- Chapter 11 - Where the Water Flows
- Chapter 12 - Attracting Wildlife to Your Property
- Chapter 13 - Managing Livestock and Pets
- Chapter 15 - What about “Pests”?

Key Contacts:

- Local Council
- Local Rural Suppliers
- Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority



Fence Construction

The two most common types of fences include conventional wire fencing, and electric fencing. Both types have their advantages and disadvantages in relation to cost, maintenance, and their impacts on native wildlife:

- Conventional wire fencing is more costly and labour intensive to construct than electric fencing
- Electric fencing can be easily moved and repaired
- Electric fencing requires more regular maintenance
- Wildlife can get caught in both conventional barb-wire fencing and electric fencing, particularly when the strands are close together. Apart from the (often fatal) injuries, this also causes damage to the fence.

When constructing fencing on your rural residential property you can reduce the materials (and costs) required by reusing old fence posts and using standing dead trees (which provide habitat for wildlife) as part of your fence. You can incorporate live trees into your fence, but be careful to leave room for the tree to grow - don't circle the trunk with wire and add padding to reduce damage (you will also need to insulate electrical wires).

Key Resources

Reference Name: *Land for Wildlife Notes: Fencing Wildlife Habitat* (2002)

Agency: Department of Natural Resources and Environment - Victoria (currently Dept. of Sustainability and Environment)

Contact Details: GPO Box 440, Melbourne, VIC, 3001. 136 186. www.dpi.vic.gov.au

Comment: Comprehensive overview of what to consider in relation to wildlife welfare and habitat including; effective placement, priorities for wildlife habitat and environmental issues, type of fences, fencing difficult area, estimates of cost, and fencing dos and don'ts.

Website: [http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/dpi/nreninf.nsf/9e58661e880ba9e44a256c640023eb2e/30ee71606863b4ccca256e72002260f3/\\$FILE/ATTU2Z6A/Lw0029.pdf](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/dpi/nreninf.nsf/9e58661e880ba9e44a256c640023eb2e/30ee71606863b4ccca256e72002260f3/$FILE/ATTU2Z6A/Lw0029.pdf)



Reference Name: *Fencing and gates to reduce kangaroo damage* (2006)

Agency: Department of Conservation and Land Management - Western Australia (Dept. of Environment and Conservation)

Contact Details: Locked Bag 104, Bentley Delivery Centre, WA, 6983. 08 9334 0333. info@dec.wa.gov.au

Comment: Outlines fencing options for reducing damage to kangaroos and exclusion from your property. Discusses the technical consideration of suitable fences and gates, cost and other management options.

Website: http://www.naturebase.net/pdf/plants_animals/living_with_wildlife/3206_fencing_kangaroos.pdf



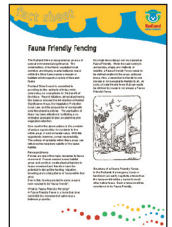
Reference Name: *Fauna Friendly Fencing* (October 2003)

Agency: Redland City Council

Contact Details: PO Box 21, Cleveland, QLD, 4163. 07 3829 8999. www.redland.qld.gov.au

Comment: Discusses guidelines for fencing which does not inhibit the movement of native wildlife between properties, including guidelines for fencing, suitable materials and designs, and modifications you can make to existing fencing.

Website: http://www.redland.qld.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/2540E0DD-4BD4-4A48-8DF9-878DAC4FE224/0/FS078_Fauna_Friendly_Fencing.pdf



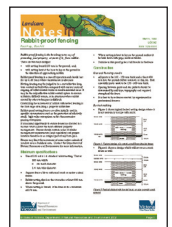
Reference Name: *Landcare Notes: Rabbit Proof Fencing* (March 1999)

Agency: Department of Natural Resources and Environment - Victoria (currently Dept. of Sustainability and Environment)

Contact Details: GPO Box 440, Melbourne, VIC, 3001. 136 186. www.dpi.vic.gov.au

Comment: Details the two main designs for rabbit proof fencing, including minimum specifications, construction methods, maintenance and other rabbit control methods.

Website: [http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/dpi/nreninf.nsf/646e9b4bba1afb2bca256c420053b5ce/2da6cd186d057835ca256e720024d71f/\\$FILE/ATTYH7E6/LC0342.pdf](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/dpi/nreninf.nsf/646e9b4bba1afb2bca256c420053b5ce/2da6cd186d057835ca256e720024d71f/$FILE/ATTYH7E6/LC0342.pdf)



Websites:

- **New South Wales Department of Environment and Climate Change** www.environment.nsw.gov.au
- **New South Wales Department of Primary Industries** www.dpi.nsw.gov.au
- **Federal Department of Environment and Water Resources** www.environment.gov.au
- **Department of Environment and Conservation - Western Australia** www.naturebase.net
- **Department of Primary Industries - Victoria** www.dpi.vic.gov.au

Other Resources

Reference Name: Cost Effective Feral Animal Exclusion Fencing for areas of High Conservation Value in Australia: Catalogue of Fence Designs

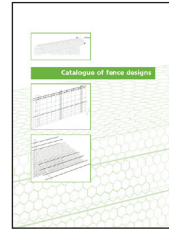
Agency: Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

Contact Details: GPO Box 787, Canberra, ACT, 2600. 02 6274 1111. www.environment.gov.au

Format: PDF / Book **Publishing Date:** 2004 **ISBN:** 0642549923

Comment: Comprehensive schematic diagrams and specifications of fences that have been used to exclude feral animals in Australian conservation projects including evaluation of effectiveness for each design and estimates of cost. Principles in this document can be applied to rural residential fencing.

Website: <http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/invasive/publications/fencing/pubs/catalogue.pdf>



Reference Name: Cost Effective Feral Animal Exclusion Fencing for areas of High Conservation Value in Australia

Agency: Federal Department of Environment and Heritage (currently DEWR)

Contact Details: GPO Box 787, Canberra, ACT, 2600. 02 6274 1111. www.environment.gov.au

Format: PDF / Book **Publishing Date:** 2004 **ISBN:** 0642549923

Comment: Comprehensive assessment of feral animal exclusion fencing, including fence features, environmental and landscape considerations, and maintenance. Principles in this document can be applied to rural residential fencing.

Website: <http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/invasive/publications/fencing/pubs/fencing.pdf>



Reference Name: Fencing / Electrical Fencing

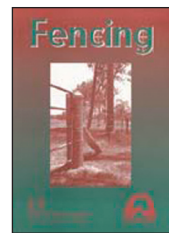
Agency: New South Wales Department of Primary Industry -Tocal College

Contact Details: Tocal College, Paterson, NSW, 2421, 1800 025 520. info@tocal.com

Format: Book **Cost:** Yes **Publishing Date:** 1998 / 1997

Comment: Details step by step guide to building a fence including fence types, methods and materials, safety and legal regulations and policies. / Details the advantages of electric fencing, step by step construction, materials, safety, testing, and animal control.

Website: • <http://www.agric.nsw.gov.au/reader/tocal-publications/fencing-book>
• <http://www.agric.nsw.gov.au/reader/tocal-publications/electric-fencing-book>



Reference Name: *Boundary Fencing Policy*

Agency: New South Wales Department of Environment and Conservation (currently DECC)

Contact Details: PO Box A290, Sydney South, NSW, 1232. 1300 361 967. info@environment.nsw.gov.au

Format: PDF **Cost:** No **Publishing Date:** 2005

Comment: The policy covers fencing and related issues where land reserved under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 share a terrestrial boundary with private property, leasehold or Crown land, including circumstances in which the Department may contribute to fencing, fencing agreements, and relevant legislation, policies and procedures.

Website: http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/PDFs/Boundary_Fencing_Policy_Jan05.pdf



Reference Name: Goat Fencing - Agfact A7.2.1 (November 2003)

Agency: New South Wales Department of Primary Industries

Contact Details: Locked Bag 21, Orange, NSW, 2800. 02 6391 3100. www.dpi.nsw.gov.au

Format: PDF **Cost:** No **Publishing Date:** 2003 **ISSN:** 0725-7759

Comment: Discusses fencing in relation to goats, including goat behaviour, conventional fencing, electrical fencing and upgrading existing fences.

Website: <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/livestock/goats/mgt/general/fencing>



