



Department of
Agriculture and Food



Esperance extension to the State Barrier Fence consultation timeline

**Report prepared by the
Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia**

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Background

A 660km extension of the State Barrier Fence (SBF) is proposed around the Esperance agricultural area to offer the same level of protection to the south-east agricultural area from wild dogs, emus and kangaroos that the rest of the agricultural land in WA receives. The Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia (DAFWA) on behalf of the agricultural industries in the south-east of the State has been working as the lead agency to deliver this important Royalties for Regions funded project.

Significant consultation, planning and biological studies have been undertaken to avoid or mitigate potential ecological and cultural impacts of the proposed Esperance Extension (EE) and to involve stakeholders in developing the project.

Consultation

The following table provides an overview of the key consultation events undertaken for the proposed EE involving the community, regulatory agencies and key stakeholders.

Table 1 Consultation timeline for the Esperance extension

Timeframe	Consultation
2010/2011	The Northern Mallee Declared Species Group ran information days about the proposal to extend the SBF across the Esperance Shire at Cascades, Condingup and Salmon Gums in late 2010 and early 2011. Newsletters were circulated to landholders by the group. The meetings were well supported with good numbers of farmers attending as well as having Shire Council Members, State and Federal Members of Parliament and a guest speaker, Greg Mifsud, National Wild Dog Committee Facilitator. The field days also discussed support for a specified Shire area rate, which would be applied to agricultural land to help fund the extension to the SBF.
July 2011	The Shire of Esperance ran a referendum to fund an approximate \$2 million contribution towards the EE construction through raising a specified area rate on agricultural land. Of the 1350 ballot papers distributed in the Shire of Esperance, 54% were returned with 67% in support of the project.
2011-2016	The Northern Mallee Declared Species Group website provides information and updates about the proposed Esperance Extension to the State Barrier Fence. northernmalleedsq.org.au/faqs/ The Chair of the Northern Mallee Declared Species Group has provided numerous community updates on the proposed EE via local radio interviews since the projects inception.
September 2011	The Esperance Extension Reference Group (EERG) was formed in late 2011 to provide direction and advice on processes towards planning and construction of the proposed Esperance Extension to the State

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	<p>Barrier Fence. The EERG has met quarterly to six monthly since 2011 to provide advice and guidance in determining a final preferred alignment that minimises environmental, cultural or community impacts from the project. A consultation and engagement plan was developed with assistance from the EERG. The EERG is comprised of representatives from DAFWA, Ravensthorpe Declared Species Group, Northern Mallee Declared Species Group, Shire of Ravensthorpe, Shire of Esperance, South Coast Natural Resource Management Inc., WA Department of Lands, WA Department of Parks and Wildlife and the WA Department of Premier and Cabinet. Specialists in various fields or representatives from regional groups have participated on an as-needed basis.</p>
6 March 2012	<p>A workshop was held with the Great Western Woodlands Reference Group with the aim of better understanding how the various conservation groups could be engaged or consulted meaningfully on the EE project and to provide information to enable an understanding of project status and future planned stages. Attendees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andre Maynard - Goldfields Land and Sea Council • Phil Drayson – Goldfields Land and Sea Council • Peter Robertson – The Wilderness Society WA Inc. • Peter Price - Project Manager, Great Western Woodlands, Gondwana Link Ltd • Rolf Meeking – Farmer, Hyden • Nick Dunlop – Conservation Council of WA • Sue Meeking – Councillor, Shire of Kondinin • Suzanne Prober – CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems • Aleya Spencer Cotton – Conservation Council of WA • Brian Moyle - Wildflower Society of WA Inc. • Kerryn Water – PhD Student UWA studying mining impacts on the Great Western Woodlands • Keith Bradby – Gondwana Link Ltd. CEO • Cheryl Gole – Birdlife Australia • Josie Walker –Environmental Defenders Office • Viv Read – Director Invasive Species, DAFWA • Sue Middleton – Project Consultant <p>Subsequent to this meeting, representatives of conservation interest groups advised DAFWA that they did not want to receive further briefings about the proposed EE project.</p>
2 August 2012	<p>DAFWA presentation on EE proposal at the Great Western Woodlands Reference Group Meeting, Kalgoorlie. The proposed EE alignment and the outcomes from the scoping study were presented.</p>
September 2012	<p>The scoping study “Report for State Barrier Fence Esperance Extension” was prepared by <i>GHD Pty Ltd</i> for DAFWA in September 2012. The study was made publicly available on DAFWA’s website and included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field investigation to determine the status and extent of vegetation

Timeframe	Consultation
	<p>and fauna potentially impacted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desktop assessment of Landuse and Planning policy documents (Federal, state and regional). • Desktop assessment of natural resource matters listed along the alignment as held by the Department of Parks and Wildlife, Environmental Protection Authority and Commonwealth Department of Environment. • Desktop assessment of registered Aboriginal Heritage matters listed for each alignment. • Desktop assessment of extent of dieback and propensity for the spread of dieback in the area.
22-24 October 2012	DAFWA arranged industry meetings in Condingup, Ravensthorpe, Salmon Gums and Cascades explaining the EE project and seeking industry input.
1 and 28 March 2013	Further DAFWA arranged industry EE briefings in the Esperance Shire including question and answer sessions.
31/7/2013 to 2/8/2013	DAFWA presentation at the WA State Coastal Conference in Esperance on the proposed EE proposal.
September 2013 to October 2015.	EERG meetings continued with discussions held regarding Level 1 fauna and Level 2 flora reports, dieback surveys, weed management plans, erosion studies, cultural heritage surveys, fence construction design changes and alignment alterations onto private land. Significant alterations to the original scoping studies preferred (least constrained) alignment were recommended by the EERG and made by DAFWA to further minimise environmental and cultural impacts of the project.
2012-2016	<p>DAFWA website publicly available updates at key stages of the EE project. Information on other Royalties for Regions funded components of the SBF upgrades completed in 2013 and 2014 have also been provided (i.e. lapwire upgrades to the SBF and the 170km Yilgarn Gap construction project). Key documents uploaded to DAFWA's website: agric.wa.gov.au/invasive-species/state-barrier-fence-esperance-extension-update</p> <p>DAFWA has provided documents on the EE to stakeholders on request and assisted the Minister for Agriculture's Office with numerous requests for information on the project or responses to concerns raised.</p>
2013-2016	<p>Meetings were held with the Goldfields Land and Sea Council Aboriginal representative body, the Esperance Tjaltjraak Native Title Aboriginal Corporation and Ngadju Native Title holders regarding the proposal between 2013 and 2016. A comprehensive description of the proposed project and preferred alignment was provided to the Goldfields Land and Sea Council via the 'Activity Notice' process required under the Esperance Nyungar Government Standard Heritage Agreement. Archaeological and ethnographic surveys were subsequently completed by the Esperance Nyungar and Ngadju Native Title holders on the proposed alignment in mid-late 2015. Detailed</p>

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	reports and recommendations on the findings of the archaeological and ethnographic reports have been considered by DAFWA, the WA Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the EERG. Alterations have been made to the final alignment to minimise any impacts to Aboriginal places in consultation with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Traditional Owners.

Conclusions

DAFWA has consulted broadly in an open, transparent manner about the proposed EE and will continue to do so if the project is approved and progresses to construction. Consistent with the consultation and engagement plan developed for the project, DAFWA and the EERG have listened to the various stakeholders' views on the proposed EE and significantly altered the proposal in response to concerns raised and advice provided. This has resulted in a revised final alignment, fence structure and clearing practice that minimises or avoids potential environmental or cultural impacts. The EE will provide significant benefits to agriculture and have other associated positive impacts for the region, which have been endorsed by the agricultural industry in the Esperance community and the WA Government.