

Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement Plan

Project Exclusion Fence Restitution Program

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1.0 Executive Summary Rounds 1,2&3

Executive Summary

The Western Queensland Surface Trough and Associated Rainfall and Flooding event in March 2025 caused significant damage to communities, housing, roads, regional infrastructure and livestock. Estimates from the Queensland Government, reported in Hansard were that there was approximately 3,500 km of fencing and 4,500 km of local roads affected and an estimated 144,000 livestock dead or missing. The Queensland Department of Primary Industries subsequently estimated that the Western Queensland Surface Trough event affected approximately 646 primary producers and caused approximately \$592 million in agricultural production damage across nine activated local government areas. The Queensland and Australian Governments subsequently established a \$105 million Exclusion Fence Restitution Fund, with grants of up to \$500,000 per producer to rebuild damaged or destroyed exclusion fencing.

Approximately half this funding was allocated to RAPAD to manage under service delivery contract with QDPI for the Exclusion Fencing Restitution Program (EFRP). Expressions of interest were received from 69 landholders and there were 59 applications that proceeded to the full review process. These applicants had approximately 4,150km of exclusion fencing infrastructure asset on their properties with a replacement cost in 2026 dollars of approximately \$62,250,000. Of this there was damage to approximately 922 km, with an estimated restitution cost of \$12,500,000. The total area of the approved applicants properties is estimated at 20,000,000 ha. Without restitution of the damaged fencing the reduction in Gross Regional Income per annum, is estimated at \$62,250,000, based on the RAPAD QFPI MERI data. The regional benefit of the restitution funding is expected to be approximately \$5.00 per year for every \$1.00 of Australian Government funding provided for the EFRP.

Exclusion fencing in the RAPAD region is a key multi-generational infrastructure asset that enables diversity of enterprise mix and stronger more resilient enterprises. The restitution of effectiveness of this asset will deliver long term economic and social benefits to the region.

2.0 MERI Plan Purpose

The continuous and integrated cycle of **monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement** is referred to as **MERI**.

A project MERI plan articulates all the different aspects of MERI that will be needed and how they will be implemented over the life of the project.

This project MERI plan:

- Guides MERI for the Exclusion Fence Restitution Program (EFRP)
- Provides a base from which to review the progress the project is making towards the agreed targets and outcomes, and from which to learn about successful implementation strategies and to adapt in response to lessons learnt.

2.1 MERI stages

MERI planning covers the three-phase cycle of preparation, implementation and review:

- i. **Preparation** — involved first developing the project Program Logic and using it to develop the MERI Plan. This occurred before project implementation.
- ii. **Implementation** — of the plan provides for ongoing monitoring of progress, periodic evaluation of impact and achievements, and reporting to all Stakeholders. The evaluation process has been developed to suit length of the project and provides for progress reporting.
- iii. **Review** — of the MERI plan will occur at the end of the project. This will enable: project assumptions to be tested; an assessment of progress in delivering the targets identified in the funding Deed; a review of management and delivery processes/ techniques; identification of recommendations for improvement; and assessment of the effectiveness of the project in delivering against its objectives.

3.0 Scope

The box below contains a brief project description that includes an outline of the EFRP Project and the rationale for investing in the project, and the boundaries of the project. RAPAD has been engaged as a service provider to deliver the ERFP Project in the Central West of Queensland. The background to the funding agreement is shown in the box below.

- A.

The Australian and Queensland Governments have agreed to jointly fund the Exclusion Fence Restitution Fund (the **Program**), an extraordinary assistance package under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements for communities impacted by the Western Queensland Surface Trough and Associated Rainfall and Flooding commencing 21 March 2025.
- B.

The objective of the Program is to provide grants to assist graziers in re-establishing their networks of exclusion fencing damaged or destroyed by the disaster, and contribute to short, medium and longer-term disaster recovery needs.
- C.

The Program is administered by the Queensland Reconstruction Authority (**QRA**) and the Department has been nominated as the delivery agency for the Program, in accordance with the Joint Guidelines.
- D.

QRA intends to provide funding for the Program to the Department under a Project Funding Agreement established under the existing Head Agreement between QRA and the Department.
- E.

Subject to receiving the funding from QRA under the Project Funding Agreement, the Department wishes to engage the Service Provider to administer grants to eligible applicants in specified local government areas, on the terms of this Agreement.

Table 1 shows the primary users or the key people who will use this MERI plan to organise data collection, analysis and reporting. The secondary users are people who may benefit from understanding and being aware of this MERI plan.

Table 1 Key users of this MERI plan

Primary users: who will reflect and adapt	RAPAD Board and management, cluster group participants
Secondary users: who need to be aware of this plan	Queensland Department of Primary Industries Queensland Reconstruction Authority Australian Government

4.0 Program Logic

Program logic is a key element of an evaluation process as it shows a series of expected consequences, not just a series of events, at different outcomes levels within the logic. The program logic describes the relationships between activities and desired outcomes.

See Attachment 1 to this document for the EFRP Program Logic.

5.0 Background

1. Overall scale

The Western Queensland Surface Trough and Associated Rainfall (Flooding Event) affected an area from Longreach and Barcaldine south-west through Jundah, Windorah, Quilpie and Eromanga to Thargomindah, Eulo and the NSW border, encompassing major portions of the:

- Cooper Creek
- Thomson–Barcoo
- Diamantina
- Bulloo
- Paroo
- Warrego catchments.

The Flooding Event was formally defined as Western Queensland Surface Trough and Associated Rainfall and Flooding, 21 March–19 May 2025 and ultimately involved 41 Queensland local government areas.

2. Rainfall was extraordinary

The rainfall that generated the flooding was remarkable because of both its intensity and its geographic extent.

Between 23 and 26 March, western Queensland received widespread falls of 50–200 mm, with substantially higher falls in parts of the Channel Country. At Sunbury, near the Cooper Creek system, the four-day total reached 633 mm, compared with an annual average of about 379 mm.

The BOM reported that:

- parts of the Channel Country received more than their entire annual average rainfall in four days;
- south-west Queensland experienced its wettest March on record;
- March rainfall in parts of south-west Queensland was 5–8 times the normal monthly average;
- the highest four-day rainfall total identified was 633 mm at Sunbury;
- many locations recorded their highest March rainfall on record.

This is particularly important in understanding the flood: it wasn't simply a high rainfall event around individual towns. Very large volumes of water entered several enormous catchments simultaneously and then travelled downstream through extremely flat Channel Country.

3. River flooding

The flood levels were extraordinary by historical standards.

The BOM reported:

Location	Significance
Jundah – Thomson River	Peak above the 1955 and 1974 floods
Stonehenge – Thomson River	Levels likely exceeded historical peaks
Windorah – Cooper Creek	Major flooding, approximately comparable with the 1974 event
Thargomindah – Bulloo River	6.95 m, exceeding the 1974 level of 6.78 m
Eulo – Paroo River	Likely exceeded historical peaks
Wanaaring – Paroo River	Major downstream consequences in NSW

The BOM subsequently concluded that there was major to record-breaking flooding across multiple western Queensland catchments.

4. Livestock losses

This is one area where the estimates changed substantially as properties became accessible.

The early Queensland Government damage assessments on 1–2 April were already reporting:

- more than 144,000 missing or deceased livestock;
- approximately 69,000 cattle;
- approximately 69,000 sheep;
- approximately 7,800 goats and other livestock.

By August 2025, the Department of Primary Industries reported that more than 110,000 livestock had been killed¹.

5. Fencing damage

The fencing damage was enormous and potentially one of the most economically significant long-term consequences.

The Queensland Parliamentary Hansard of 2nd April 2025, recorded an estimate of approximately 3,500 km of fencing and 4,500 km of local roads affected².

The Queensland and Australian Governments subsequently established a \$105 million Exclusion Fence Restitution Fund, with grants of up to \$500,000 per producer to rebuild damaged or destroyed exclusion fencing³.

6. Agricultural economic damage

The Queensland Department of Primary Industries subsequently estimated that the Western Queensland Surface Trough event⁴:

- affected approximately 646 primary producers; and
- caused approximately \$592 million in agricultural production damage across nine activated local government areas.

7. Significance for the Western Queensland economy

The most striking feature of this disaster is the combination of very large geographic extent + livestock losses + loss of productive infrastructure.

This wasn't primarily an urban flood. It was a flood across an enormous pastoral production system. Consequently, the damage has a multi-year economic tail:

Flood → livestock deaths → immediate loss of production/income → fencing destroyed → exposure to wild dogs → restocking constraints → infrastructure reconstruction → reduced carrying capacity → prolonged recovery.

¹ <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-08-18/outback-queensland-flood-recovery-continues>

² <http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/work-of-assembly/hansard/2/04/2025>

³ <https://www.qra.qld.gov.au/funding-programs/event-specific-exceptional-circumstances-assistance/2025-western-queensland-surface-trough-exceptional-circumstances-packages/exclusion-fence-restitution-program-western-queensland-surface-trough-march-2025>

⁴ QLD Government Estimates, 6th august 2025, Primary Industries and Resources Committee

8. Significance for RAPAD

One of the significant agricultural impacts for the RAPAD region is the fact that over the last 10 years, primary producers have invested in exclusion fencing to protect properties from wild dogs and other pests and improve biosecurity management. The Queensland Feral Pest Initiative (QFPI) cluster fencing program involved around 4,000km of fencing protecting approximately 2,250,000 ha. In addition to the QFPI program, there was an initiative implemented by the Longreach Shire Council to support exclusion fencing and there has been significant private fencing without any financial support. Estimates of the total area now protected with exclusion fencing in the RAPAD region is 6,000,000 to 8,000,000 ha involving perimeter fencing of 8,000 to 10,000 km of exclusion fencing. The estimate of exclusion fencing is based on the following areas and estimates of exclusion fencing by LGA. (Estimates by Andrew Perkins, Hall Chadwick).

RAPAD LGA's

	Area (Ha)	% fenced estimate	Estimated fenced area
Barcaldine	5,234,084	50%	2,617,042
Barcoo	6,039,425	20%	1,207,885
Blackall	2,984,399	50%	1,492,200
Boulia	5,987,370		0
Diamantina	9,255,463		0
Longreach	3,972,710	50%	1,986,355
Winton	5,283,483	10%	528,348
			<u>7,831,830</u>

Exclusion fencing has been concentrated predominantly in areas that are suitable for mixed enterprises involving large stock (cattle) and small stock (sheep and goats). The more extensive areas of Boulia, Diamantina and parts of Winton LGA's have had lower adoption of exclusion fencing. Exclusion fencing costs have ranged from \$10,000 per km to \$20,000 per km depending on topography, soil conditions, rock, waterways, vegetation, and whether the fence is erected by the landowner or by a contractor. A reasonable estimate of average replacement cost in 2026 for the Central West, excluding rock and waterways, would be around \$15,000 per km for materials and contract installation. This results in an estimate of the replacement cost of all exclusion fencing in the RAPAD region of between \$120,000,000 and \$150,000,000.

Exclusion fencing has been seen by landholders as a multi generational infrastructure asset that is critical to the sustainable management of diversified enterprises in the Central West. The difference in Gross Margin measured in the RAPAD QFPI MERI report between the Before (fencing) and After (fencing) is

\$20/ha. The increased Gross Margin is as a result of reduced livestock deaths, improved reproductive performance, improved production, improved pasture management and reduced biosecurity costs⁵.

The impact of fence damage on waterways due to flooding, causes a breach of the security of the whole infrastructure asset on a property. The damage on a property could be over 2 km of waterway, however this may compromise 40 km of fencing.

⁵ RAPAD QFPI MERI Rounds 1, 2,3, & 5 June 2026

6.0 MERI Reporting

Table 2 **MERI Summary**

That the EFRP has improved the resilience to future natural disasters through the restoration and strengthening of exclusion fencing in the region. n of the economic, social and environmental benefit of cluster fencing.			2026	Level 2 12-24 months	Level 3 Long Term Goals 5 years time 2031		Level 4 Aspirational Goals 10 years time 2036	
Targets	Notes	Measurement	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3		Level 4	
			Actual	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
Number of impacted enterprises		#						
Number of applicants		#	69					
Number of approved restitution agreements		#	59					
Number of completed agreements		#	N/A					
Kilometres of fencing on approved applicants properties		# km	4,150		4,500		4,500	
Kilometres of fencing damaged on approved applicants properties		# km	922		1,000,000		1,000,000	
Hectares on approved applicants properties		# Ha	Estimate 2,000,000		2,500,000		2,500,000	
Repair, restitution cost		\$	Estimate 12,500,000		15,000,000		15,000,000	
Enterprise diversification (% of approved applicants properties running diverse enterprises including small stock)	1	%	84%		80%		80%	

Table 3 cont'd

That the EFRP has improved hte resilience to future natural disasters through the restoration and strengthening of exclusion fencing in the region. n of the economic, social and environmental benefit of cluster fencing.			2026	Level 2 12-24 months	Level 3 Long Term Goals 5 years time 2031		Level 4 Aspirational Goals 10 years time 2036	
Targets	Notes	Measurement	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3		Level 4	
			Actual	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
Variance in Gross Margin per Ha fenced (with and without an effective fence)	2	\$/ha	\$ 20.00		\$ 20.00		\$ 20.00	
Variance in Gross Regional Income per Ha fenced (with and without an effective fence)	3	\$/ha	\$ 28.31		\$ 28.00		\$ 28.00	
Annual regional Income protected through restitution of exclusion fencing	4	\$	\$ 56,620,000		\$ 89,000,000		\$ 114,000,000	
Value of the infrastructure asset protected at current cost	5	\$	\$ 62,250,000		\$ 86,000,000		\$ 110,000,000	
Expected annual regional benefit per \$ of repair/restitution cost	6	\$	\$ 4.98		\$ 6.88		\$ 8.80	
Number of jobs saved through restitution of exclusion fencing	7	#	117		120		120	
Satisfaction with restitution fencing score	8	Survey						
Resilience score with restitution fencing	9	Survey						

Notes:

1. RAPAD application data
2. RAPAD QFPI MERI, Cost Benefit Analysis Rounds 1,2,3&5
3. RAPAD QFPI MERI, Cost Benefit Analysis Rounds 1,2,3&5
4. Gross Regional Income per Ha times Ha on approved applicants properties
5. Kilometres of infrastructure on approved applicants properties times current replacement cost
6. Expected annual regional benefit divided by total restitution cost
7. RAPAD QFPI MERI, Cost Benefit Analysis Rounds 1,2,3&5
8. Survey 2026
9. Survey 2026
- 10.

7.0 Photographic Evidence







8.0 Responses from online survey and community meetings