

Queensland – Fencing Northern Basin Riverbanks Program

PROJECT SCHEDULE FOR THE DELIVERY OF THE FENCING NORTHERN BASIN RIVERBANKS PROGRAM IN QUEENSLAND

1. This Schedule has been developed consistent with the Project Agreement for Delivery of Environmental Measures in Northern Murray-Darling Basin (the Agreement).
2. This Schedule provides for Queensland's delivery of the Commonwealth-funded Fencing Northern Basin Riverbanks program (the program).
3. This Schedule C varies the previous Schedule C under the Agreement.
4. The program is intended to involve the implementation of a series of projects which will reduce the impact of livestock on environmentally sensitive parts of the northern Murray-Darling Basin, and provide landholders with a practical means to contribute to the restoration and protection of native fish habitat.
5. In accordance with the Agreement and this Schedule, Queensland will deliver the program in three stages, with Stages 1 and 2 commencing from execution of this Schedule and Stage 3 commencing in accordance with the requirements of this Schedule:
 - (a) Stage 1 — Commencement of early project delivery
 - (b) Stage 2 — Submission of a proposal to support Queensland's long-term delivery of the program
 - (c) Stage 3 — Implementation of Queensland's long-term delivery of the program.
6. In relation to Stage 1:
 - (a) Queensland has advised that it has in place existing state-based arrangements to support delivery of riparian fencing activities which could be utilised or leveraged for early project delivery and enable the enhancement of these existing arrangements in terms of providing native fish outcomes while long-term program delivery arrangements are proposed and agreed
 - (b) Queensland will, in delivering Stage 1 utilise or leverage off such existing arrangements to commence delivery of projects which meet the requirements set out in this Schedule and Attachment A
 - (c) Projects are expected to be completed by 30 November 2020.
7. In delivering Stage 2, Queensland will develop and submit a proposal to the Commonwealth for its agreement outlining its proposed three year delivery of the program.
8. The proposal is to have regard to the matters set out in this Schedule including the program priorities and proposal requirements set out in Attachment A.

9. In delivering Stage 3, Queensland will undertake the program in accordance with this Schedule and the Agreed Proposal (Attachment B), the Agreement and any other agreed requirements.
10. In accordance with the Agreement, milestones for the program, their relationship to outputs, expected completion dates and expected payments are set out in Table 1 and are to be completed to the Commonwealth's reasonable satisfaction.
11. The Commonwealth and Queensland agree that estimated costs for the activities and outputs described in Table 1 is up to \$7.5 million over three years GST exclusive.
12. The Commonwealth and Queensland also agree that subject to the Agreement and this Schedule, the Commonwealth will provide a total financial contribution of up to \$7.5 million GST exclusive for activities under this Schedule, and as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Milestones, reporting and payment summary

Output	Performance milestones	Due	Payment
Preliminary — Evidence of arrangements in place to support commencement of Stage 1 and 2 activities	1. A report submitted to the Commonwealth that provides evidence that Stage 1 and 2 activities have commenced	30/11/2020	\$50,000
Stage 1 — Evidence of early project implementation	2. A report on progress of Stage 1 project implementation (from 15/11/2019) submitted to the Commonwealth	31/01/2020	\$250,000
Stage 2 — Submission of proposal to deliver Stage 3	3. Proposal for program delivery submitted to the Commonwealth	31/07/2020	\$50,000
Stage 1 — Implementation complete	4. Stage 1 performance report 1 submitted to the Commonwealth which details completion of Stage 1 projects, including actual expenditure incurred to date, among other things.	By 22/03/2021	\$150,000
Stage 3 — program delivery	5. A report submitted to the Commonwealth that provides evidence that management arrangements are in place to deliver Stage 3 of the program, including a contract executed with the delivery partner.	Within ten business days of Schedule variation execution	\$711,000
	6. A report submitted to the Commonwealth that provides evidence that contracts for at least 30 km of fencing in riparian areas has been executed.	30/04/2021	\$917,000
	7. A report submitted to the Commonwealth that provides evidence that contracts for at least 160 km (in total) of fencing in riparian areas have been executed.	29/10/2021	\$1,988,000
	8. A report submitted to the Commonwealth that provides evidence	29/04/2022	\$2,410,500

	that contracts for at least 350 km (in total) of fencing in riparian areas have been executed.		
	9. A report submitted to the Commonwealth that provides evidence that contracts for at least 510 km (in total) of fencing in riparian areas have been executed.	28/10/2022	\$534,500
	10. A report submitted to the Commonwealth that provides evident that at least 510 km (under contracts executed for Milestones 6 – 9) of fencing in riparian areas is complete, and complementary activities have been completed as required.	28/04/2023	\$439,000
Total			\$7,500,000

ATTACHMENT A

PROGRAM INFORMATION

1. The program is intended to fund implementation of individual fencing projects in the northern Murray-Darling Basin which will satisfy one or more of the following objectives:
 - (a) provide a direct contribution to the enhancement of native fish outcomes from northern Basin 'Toolkit' measures proposed to be undertaken by the NSW and Queensland governments
 - (b) provide a direct contribution to the enhancement of native fish outcomes from other Australian Government commitments in the northern Basin, for example those made in response to the Vertessy report on the 2018/19 fish death events
 - (c) contribute to priorities identified in other state or regional strategies which work to improve native fish health. This could include documents such as native fish strategies, catchment management strategies or river strategies prepared by local or state government bodies or in Murray-Darling Basin Long Term Watering Plans prepared for relevant Basin Plan water resource plan areas
 - (d) connect riparian corridors along whole waterways and/or multiple properties
 - (e) protect and improve existing healthy riparian areas with remnant native vegetation
 - (f) add value to other measures in the northern Basin aimed at protecting and improving native fish health, for example state managed fishway construction, and/or
 - (g) an objective agreed with the Commonwealth,and involve one or more of the following activities:
 - (h) fencing for gully, creek or streamside fencing that enables the control of stock access to riparian areas. Stock need not be permanently excluded, however projects need to demonstrate a commitment to managing the timing, duration and intensity of stock access to avoid damage to soil, groundcover and vegetation and water quality impacts
 - (i) weed removal/control for fenced riparian areas where stock access is minimised or excluded
 - (j) native revegetation for fenced riparian areas where stock access is minimised or excluded
 - (k) restoration of instream woody habitat ("re-snagging")
 - (l) land manager engagement
 - (m) stock water supplies (off-stream watering infrastructure) where the works compensate for water access lost by fencing
 - (n) minor erosion control e.g. minor rock stabilisation work, and stock crossings where riparian areas have been fenced and protected
 - (o) other activities as agreed by the Commonwealth.

2. The program is not however intended to fund:
 - (a) retrospective activities for Stage 3 (activities that have been completed or have commenced prior to signing this Schedule), unless otherwise agreed by the Commonwealth
 - (b) activities funded through other Commonwealth or State Government investment
 - (c) “business as usual” activities for which other Commonwealth, state or local government bodies have primary responsibility
 - (d) “business as usual” operation and administration costs of the organisation delivering the project, including maintenance, repairs, utilities and staffing
 - (e) activities located on riparian land outside northern Murray-Darling Basin catchment/s unless otherwise agreed by the Commonwealth
 - (f) activities related to labour, operational and maintenance costs post project completion
 - (g) projects requiring recurrent funding from the Australian Government once completed
 - (h) projects that only benefit private individuals or enterprises within the community
 - (i) projects involving financial or debt restructuring
 - (j) research and development projects
 - (k) purchase of land, and
 - (l) any activity which is contrary to the objectives and intent of the program.
3. A proposal for program delivery should include the following information:
 - (a) the target catchment areas for Stage 3 program delivery
 - (b) an outline of proposed activities to be carried out as part of any Stage 3 projects
 - (c) a description of how implementation will enable program objectives to be met
 - (d) the estimated number of Stage 3 projects proposed to be carried out each year over the three year life of the program and their mean estimated value
 - (e) the anticipated date on which the first project under Stage 3 will commence
 - (f) a proposed delivery schedule and milestone table which includes proposed timeframes for Stage 3 project delivery, anticipated milestones and proposed funding amounts for each milestone having regard to the available funds allocated for Stage 3
 - (g) proposed service delivery agents and details on any existing arrangements which could be utilised to enable efficient and effective service delivery
 - (h) a description of how delivery will provide public benefit, not solely improve private interests
 - (i) how risk to native species will be managed, e.g. where management of feral animals is also proposed

- (j) the proposed strategy to ensure any third parties engaged to deliver projects in the northern Basin give preference to Indigenous (including small Indigenous enterprises) and local suppliers and employment, and encourage the use of Indigenous and local labour where possible
- (k) an assurance that all relevant legal requirements, including in relation to work, health and safety will be satisfied
- (l) any other information to enable the Commonwealth to consider whether to provide its agreement to the proposal.

AGREED PROPOSAL

Program background

This program is part of the Australian Government's broader program for delivery of environmental measures in the northern Murray-Darling Basin. As part of the response to the Vertessy Report into the fish deaths in the Lower Darling River in 2018/19, the program will invest in projects that provide a practical means for landholders to contribute to the improvement and protection of native fish biodiversity across the northern Basin.

The program has been agreed between the Australian and Queensland Governments and will be funded by the Australian Government for up to \$7.5 million, until 30 June 2023.

The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE) will administer the program on behalf of the Australian Government and the Queensland Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water (Qld DRDMW) will administer the program on behalf of the Queensland Government.

Program description (including funded activities)

Qld DRDMW will oversee program delivery, which will be undertaken by Southern Queensland Natural Resources Management Ltd trading as Southern Queensland Landscapes (SQL).

The main on-ground activities funded by the program will be riverbank fencing and off-river stock watering points, located in target reaches identified in line with program objectives. Other eligible activities include weed control within fenced riparian areas and fencing of gullies as part of minor erosion control works.

Priority areas for program activities (Figure 1) were identified by a spatial analysis that considered the aquatic and riparian ecosystem values. The spatial analysis included consideration of the *Environmental Protection (Water and Wetland Biodiversity) Policy, 2019*, Healthy Waters Management Plans and the SQL Regional Ecosystems dataset for remnant riparian vegetation.

Landholders located in target areas will be invited to participate in the program through a targeted information campaign and calls for expression of interest. Individual project applications will be developed by landholders—with support from SQL case officers—according to application guidelines. Landholders will provide cash or in-kind contributions of 50 per cent, as set out in the SQL published project guidelines. The published project guidelines also set out maximum funding amounts for each type of activity.

A principal project officer will be appointed to manage the day-to-day coordination and implementation of the program. The principal project officer will report to the Director Natural Resource Programs. The Executive Director, Natural Resource Operations, Resources will have ultimate responsibility for the program.

The program includes a strategy to ensure that program participants give preference to procuring labour and materials from Indigenous and local businesses. This will be achieved by providing a list of local Indigenous suppliers to program participants in the first instance and a financial incentive to project participants for the procurement of products and services through local Indigenous businesses and organisations where appropriate.

Program progress and outcomes will be reported by Resources through the provision of milestone reports to DAWE in accordance with the agreed milestone reporting arrangement.

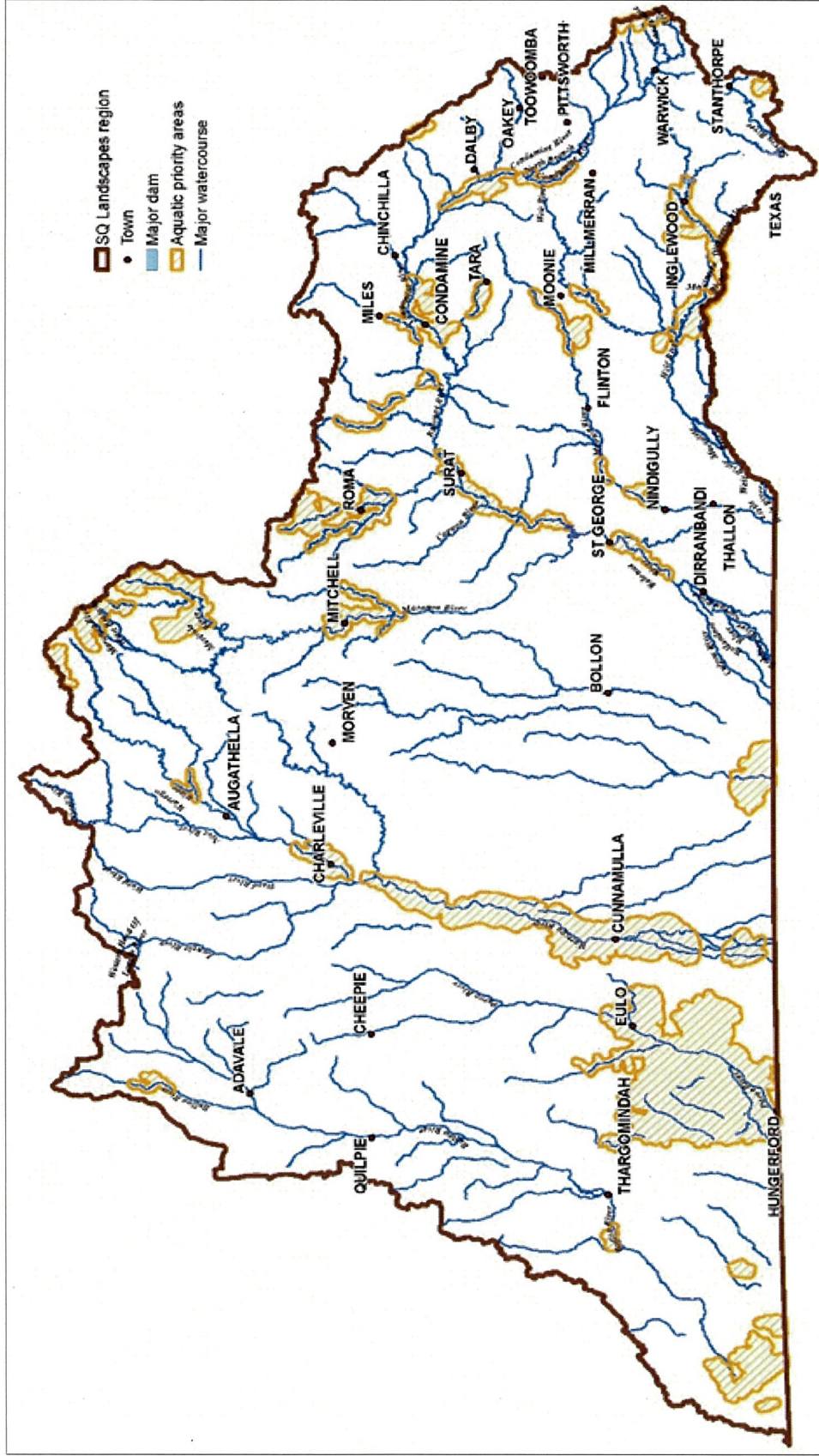
Program achievements will be shared with the community throughout the program in accordance with an agreed communications plan.

Aboriginal cultural heritage

An important part of the program will be engagement with the Indigenous community, particularly in the early stages and prior to any on-ground works. Opportunities to protect sites of spiritual importance for Aboriginal peoples will be identified during the application stage for individual projects, and outcomes realised by incorporating cultural heritage sites into project designs as part of the SQL case officer's involvement in assisting landholders preparing their applications.

Aboriginal cultural heritage sites will be identified on proposed program sites through consultation with local Aboriginal peoples, discussions with landholders and case officer site inspections. Aboriginal Cultural Heritage surveys will be conducted by Aboriginal peoples and Aboriginal communities.

Individual fencing projects will not restrict existing access for Aboriginal peoples or other local communities. Program negotiations will include discussions with landholders around possible access arrangements for Aboriginal communities to important sites which may improve current access arrangements for these groups.



Program objectives and expected outcomes

The implementation of this program proposal will meet the objectives of the program (as per the Agreement), as detailed in Table 1.

Table 1. Program objectives and expected outcomes

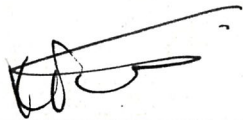
Program objectives	Program component and effect	Expected outcome
(a), (b) & (f) - Provide a direct contribution/add value to the enhancement of native fish outcomes from northern Basin toolkit measures and other Australian Government programs/commitments.	During the proposal assessment process consideration will be given to the alignment of proposals with other strategic actions in regions, including the Northern Basin "Toolkit" projects and the Native Fish Recovery Strategy.	Individual projects and the program as a whole will contribute to the improvement of rivers that are the focus of other Government programs that aim to produce positive outcomes for native fish communities.
	Riparian fencing and off-river water points will limit livestock access to riparian vegetation and riverbanks. Resulting in improved native vegetation retention and regeneration in riparian areas.	Improved riparian vegetation extent, condition and connectivity leading to a decrease in ongoing erosion and sedimentation/turbidity caused by regular stock access.
	Stock exclusion gully fencing activities will stabilise gullies and reduce the amount of sediment entering rivers.	The reduced sediment load will result in improved water quality and reduce the potential for sediment deposition in riverbed. This will contribute to abating decline in refuge pool depth and loss of longitudinal connectivity.
	Weed control delivering reduced weed densities in wetland and riparian areas.	Improved extent, condition and connectivity of native riparian vegetation contributing to improved natural functioning of adjacent aquatic ecosystems.

(c) contribute to priorities identified in State or regional strategies which work to improve native fish health.	During the proposal assessment process consideration will be given to the alignment of proposals with Queensland's Healthy Waters Management Plans and the Southern Queensland Flourishing Landscapes plan.	Individual projects and the program will contribute to achieving priority actions identified in State and regional strategies which work to improve native fish and aquatic ecosystem health.
(d) connect riparian corridors along whole waterways or multiple properties.	Project site selection will take account of landscape context and existing riparian fencing and prioritise sites that enable continuous riparian connectivity.	Connectivity of riparian corridors will increase through strategic project site selection.
	Riparian fencing projects will protect riparian vegetation and allow for the natural regeneration of native vegetation in lower quality riparian areas, increasing riparian connectivity.	Connectivity of riparian corridors will increase through improvement of the condition and/or area of riparian vegetation, at the scale of waterways or multiple properties.
(e) protect and improve existing healthy riparian areas with remnant native vegetation.	Presence of riparian vegetation was one variable used in the spatial analysis which contributed to identifying target reaches. Target reaches are therefore more likely to have healthy riparian areas with native vegetation than other areas.	Healthy riparian areas with native remnant vegetation have been given preference in the program design.
	Project site selection will take account of vegetation condition and favour sites with healthy riparian areas with remnant native vegetation.	Healthy riparian areas with remnant native vegetation will be identified and protected through strategic project site selection.
	Riparian fencing and off-river watering points will limit livestock access to riparian vegetation, decreasing grazing pressure and trampling impacts.	Riparian vegetation communities will regenerate, the most palatable plant species will increase in abundance and size, structural complexity and fauna habitat values will increase.

SIGN OFF

The Parties have confirmed their commitment to this Schedule as follows:

Signed for and on behalf of the Commonwealth of Australia by



The Honourable Keith Pitt MP

Minister for Resources, Water and Northern Australia

Date: 11/5/21.

Signed for and on behalf of the Queensland Government by



The Honourable Glenn Butcher MP

Minister for Water

Date: 7.4.2021