



Working together

Land managers band together to control wild dogs

In late 2013, Taroom grazier Don Lethbridge was experiencing significant wild dog attacks on his cattle, as were many other graziers in the area. He knew that coordinating wild dog control campaigns across multiple properties would not just be good for him—it would benefit everyone.

“We are privileged to be able to own and work on some of the best and most economical grazing land in Queensland, if not Australia,” said Mr Lethbridge.

However, for Mr Lethbridge, and many other local landowners, wild dogs were killing calves, impacting on their production and profitability.

“Fat cattle were being downgraded at the meatworks for dog bites, and they [wild dogs] were playing with our older dry cattle, which upsets them and they weren’t putting the kilos on as quickly or efficiently, again affecting our profitability and production,” he said.

To combat the problem, Andrea Beard of Dawson Catchment Coordinating Association approached Mr Lethbridge about forming a Wild Dog Group in the Taroom area. With the support of Fitzroy Basin Association Inc. (FBA) through funding from the Queensland Government’s Department of Natural Resources and Mines Investment Program, the Taroom Wild Dog Group was formed in February 2014.

The group started with eight landholders and has since grown to 24 landholders, with participation from the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Banana Shire Council. Over 450,000 hectares across 29 grazing properties plus the area’s national parks are now a part of the coordinated control campaigns.

“The project helped neighbours work together in a coordinated effort to control the wild dogs and gain training and knowledge to implement multiple control methods,” Ms Beard said.

“Without funding from the Queensland Government the wild dog numbers wouldn’t have reduced to the lower numbers they are at now. It enabled landholders to purchase wild dog traps and motion sensors and gave them the skills to use them on their properties.”

Group members now share their knowledge freely by swapping ideas and tips on wild dog control.

“It motivated them all and helped to spread the proactive attitude further to include more properties,” Ms Beard said. “Group members are all saying the same thing, ‘wild dog numbers are down and cattle predation has decreased, with less wild dog activity seen.’”

“It’s a necessity to control wild dogs and get everyone on board,” Mr Lethbridge said. “I’ve already had neighbours telling me that they seem to be seeing fewer dogs lately, [which means] increased and more efficient production of beef and therefore increased profitability.”

