

Fauna Friendly Fencing

Redland City is recognised as an area of special environmental significance. The combination of bushland, vegetated creek corridors and fringing coastal wetlands found within the Redlands have created a mosaic of habitats which support a variety of flora and fauna.

Redland City Council is committed to providing for the residents of today while conserving our ecosystems for the benefit of the future. Recent initiatives aimed at achieving this balance include the introduction of Habitat Significance Areas, the Vegetation Protection Local Law, Koala Conservation Policy and Strategy, and the preparation of other ecologically sensitive planning policies.

The application of these has been effective in facilitating a co-ordinated approach to land use planning and vegetation retention.

One result of the above actions is the provision of unique opportunities for residents to live within areas of environmental value. With this opportunity, however, comes responsibility. The actions of residents within these areas can influence the long-term viability of the fauna habitat.

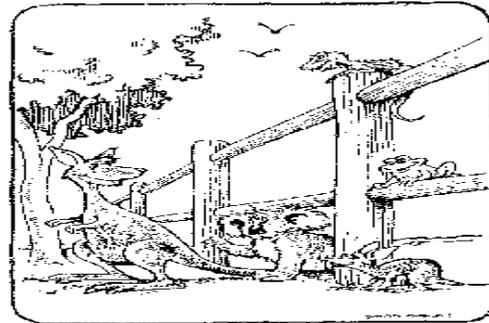
Fence problems

Fences are one of the major obstacles to fauna movement. Fences erected across habitat areas and corridors create physical barriers to fauna movement and therefore have the potential to disrupt the feeding, migration, breeding and social patterns of fauna within that area. Due to this, fencing erected in some areas is now required to be "fauna friendly".

What is fauna friendly fencing?

A fauna friendly fence is a fence that does not inhibit the movement of native fauna between properties.

No single fence design can be classed as fauna friendly. Given the vast variety in animal size, shape and methods of mobility, a fauna friendly fence needs to be defined relative to the areas particular fauna. Also, a fence that is friendly to one species is not necessarily friendly to all. As such, a koala friendly fence that can easily be climbed by koalas is not always a fauna friendly fence.

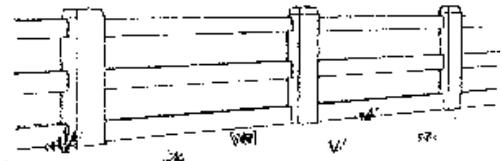


Structure of a fauna friendly fence

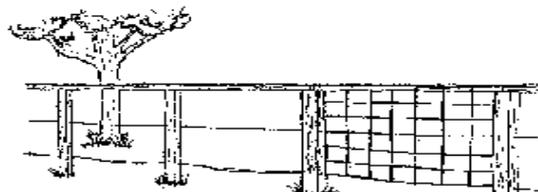
In the Redlands, if a kangaroo, koala or bandicoot can easily negotiate a fence then the fence would not be a barrier to most other native fauna. Such a fence would be considered to be fauna friendly.

Ideally a fauna friendly fence should have either:

- A 50cm gap between ground level and the first rail or strand. Spacing above this level is at the owner's discretion.
- A series of 30cm gaps between the rails or strands (*the first gap should be no higher than 30cm above ground level*).



- A 30cm gap between ground level and the first rail or strand followed by a series of 30cm gaps.
- Box wire mesh (*squares of no less than 15cm*) may be used provided that there is a 30cm gap between the ground level and the mesh, and provided the fence is not more than 1.2m in height. A capping rail along the top allows for easy movement.



Note: Rails should not be in excess of 15cm wide.
Wire strands should not be too tightly strung.

Fencing materials

When choosing your fencing materials, consider the environment in which it will be situated. The character of an area, whether it is of a rural, bush or park nature, attracts residents to live within its boundaries and as such should be taken into account when designing fences.

Wood, brick, metals and wire can be combined in a variety of designs to create an effective and unique fence while maintaining the character of the area. Slight variations in the materials and design of these fences can create an individual look for your property.

Barbed wire and electric fences of any description are definitely NOT fauna friendly!

A fence for all reasons

Property boundary definition, security, privacy and the containment of livestock can all be achieved while meeting the fauna friendly fencing objectives.

Property definition

A constructed fence may not be necessary to define your property boundary. Consider using garden edges or low wooden posts to subtly define boundaries. Where not possible, the old rural style fence of plain wire strands and wooden posts allows for the uninhibited movement of native fauna while defining boundaries.

Privacy

The privacy of your property can be enhanced through the use of vegetation. A combination of native trees, shrubs and ground covers can effectively screen areas while enhancing the amenity and habitat value of the area. If the alignment of the property were such that privacy is a great concern, a solid fence with a 50cm gap at the bottom would be considered fauna friendly.

Dogs

The presence of a dog does not deter native fauna from entering a property. To assist dogs and native fauna to live in harmony, dogs should be confined to an area in the vicinity of the house. A fence erected around the house provides room for exercise and retains the dog near the house for safety and security, and allows fauna to move freely through the property

Fauna proof fencing should be used to separate dogs from wildlife. The safest fauna proof fence is a solid, vertical, 2 metres high fence, free of vegetation within 3 metres of the fence and with the bracing on the inside. Most fencing other than this would allow some fauna movement. Fencing similar to chain wire can allow small animals to move through and can be climbed by koalas and other mammals. Owners should be aware of this and be watchful of dogs when fauna is on the property.

Dog enclosures

When confining your dog you will need to ensure koalas do not end up in your dog's enclosure. Dog enclosures should be located away from koala food trees and can be:

- at least 1.5 metres high and made of solid material (e.g. *tin, colourbond, brick, glass*) with no gaps, toeholds or joins and the support posts located on the inside. Ensure that the fence is located or maintained so that trees and shrubs do not grow within 3 metres.
- made of chain mesh wire with a floppy top that falls to the outside of the enclosure. Ensure that the fence is located or maintained so that trees and shrubs do not grow within 3 metres.
- made of chain mesh wire with 60 cm sheet metal attached to the top of the fence on the outside. Ensure that the fence is located or maintained so that trees/shrubs do not grow within 3 metres.
- constructed from an existing fence by adding a 60cm sheet metal to the top of that fence. Ensure that the fence is located or maintained so that trees/ shrubs do not grow or overhang within 3 metres.

Existing fences

The movement of animals through existing fences can be improved by planting a variety of native trees and shrubs along the fence line which allows fauna access to the vegetation on the other side until such time that a fauna friendly fencing can be erected.

The placement of a pole on an angle against the inside of the fence allows for a quick escape route. Placing a pole between two trees on either side of the fence creates a natural bridge for koalas and other wildlife. Sections of the fencing could also be removed and replanted to integrate the fence and vegetation.

Before you construct a fence first decide if you really need one and if so, make it fauna friendly. There are a variety of options available when constructing a fauna friendly fence. By choosing designs and materials carefully, fences can be created that are functional, individual and, fauna friendly.

Redland City Council is dedicated to the protection of our fauna. You can play a part by giving your fence the fauna friendly feel. Your fence will then be one less obstacle in the life of Redland's fauna.

