

Fauna Friendly Fencing

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

Redland Shire 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 includes the introduction of Habitat Significance Areas, the Vegetation Protection Local Law, and the preparation of 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

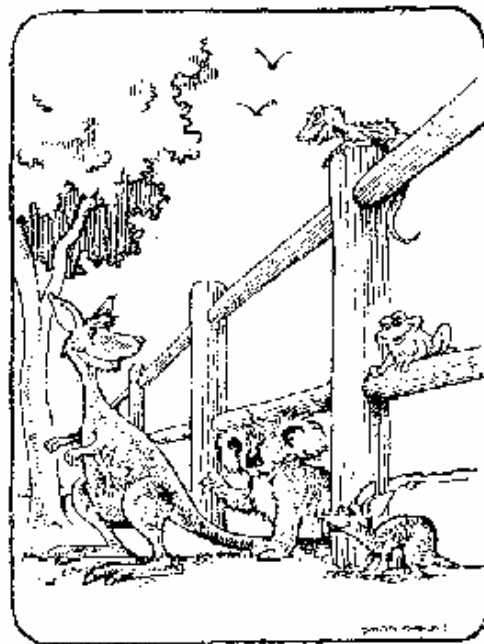
Fences are one of the major obstacles to fauna movement. Fences erected across habitat areas and corridors create physical barriers to fauna movement and therefore have the potential to disrupt the feeding, migration, breeding and social patterns of fauna within that area.

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.



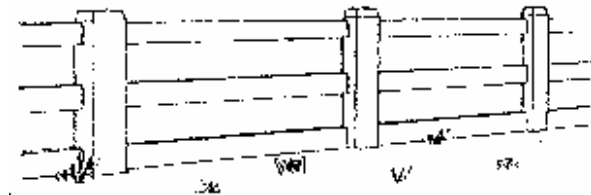
Structure of a Fauna Friendly Fence

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.

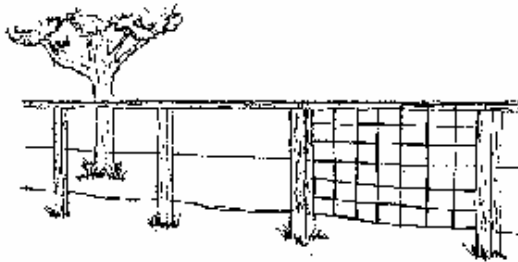


Ideally a Fauna Friendly Fence should have either:

1. A 50cm gap between ground level and the first rail or strand. Spacing above this level is at the owner's discretion.
2. A series of 30cm gaps between the rails or strands (the first gap should be no higher than 15cm above ground level).



3. A 15cm gap between ground level and the first rail or strand followed by a series of 30cm gaps.
4. Box wire mesh (squares of no less than 15cm) may be used provided that there is a 15cm 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 exposed to the public. Where this is 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 more 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 immediate vicinity of the house. A fence erected around the house provides room for dogs to exercise during the day, retains the dog near the house for added safety and security, and allows fauna to move freely through the remainder of the property.

“Fauna proof” fencing should be used to separate dogs from other wildlife. The safest fauna proof fence is a solid, vertical, six-foot high fence, free of overhanging vegetation and with the bracing on the inside. Most fencing other than this would allow some fauna movement. Fencing made of products 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 known to be on the property.



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 Shire Council is dedicated to the protection of our Shire's 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 Redlands fauna.