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Wanneroo Council Trials Virtual Fencing for Wildlife

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The City of Wanneroo in Western Australia is exploring the use of virtual fencing as a possible solution to reduce wildlife-related vehicle collisions. The decision follows a council motion passed in July to investigate the effectiveness of the technology, particularly in areas that have seen frequent incidents involving native animals such as kangaroos.

Virtual fencing is a technology that uses solar-powered roadside sensors to detect oncoming vehicles and trigger a series of lights and sounds. These alerts are designed to deter wildlife from crossing the road at dangerous moments. Unlike physical fences, which

can restrict animal movement and become hazardous during emergencies such as bushfires, virtual fencing provides a non-invasive method that maintains environmental connectivity.

During the council meeting, ten councillors voted in favour of developing a project proposal, while three voted against the motion. Eleven local roads were identified as potential trial sites, including Flynn Drive, Wanneroo Road, Marmion Avenue, and Pipidinny Road. A formal proposal is now being prepared for possible inclusion in the 2026 to 2027 city budget, with preliminary estimates placing the cost of installation at around 10,000 Australian dollars per kilometre.

Councillor Jacqueline Huntley, a licensed wildlife carer who introduced the motion, said the technology offers a safer and more adaptable option for wildlife protection compared to traditional fencing. She explained that permanent barriers can trap animals during natural disasters and often fail to reduce roadkill in bushland regions.

“Conventional barriers can block escape routes and cause harm during emergencies,” Councillor Huntley said. “Virtual fencing offers a modern, flexible alternative that helps protect both wildlife and motorists.”

Councillor Paul Miles seconded the motion, citing support for technology-driven solutions to improve public safety and reduce environmental harm.

Similar systems have been trialled in other parts of Australia with encouraging results. A 2023 pilot program in Eurobodalla Shire, New South Wales, reported a sharp reduction in animal collisions following the installation of virtual fencing, with incidents reportedly falling from an average of five per week to five across an entire year.

The City of Joondalup is also considering the technology for use near areas with high wildlife activity, including Pinnaroo Memorial Park.

Animal-vehicle collisions remain a widespread issue in Australia. National data indicates that kangaroos are involved in the vast majority of wildlife-related crashes, which make up around five percent of all road accidents. Thousands of insurance claims are lodged each year due to such incidents, often resulting in significant vehicle damage and injury.

Council officers in Wanneroo are now preparing a detailed proposal outlining the scope, budget, and expected outcomes of a potential trial. If implemented, the city could become

one of the first local governments in Western Australia to deploy virtual fencing across multiple roads.