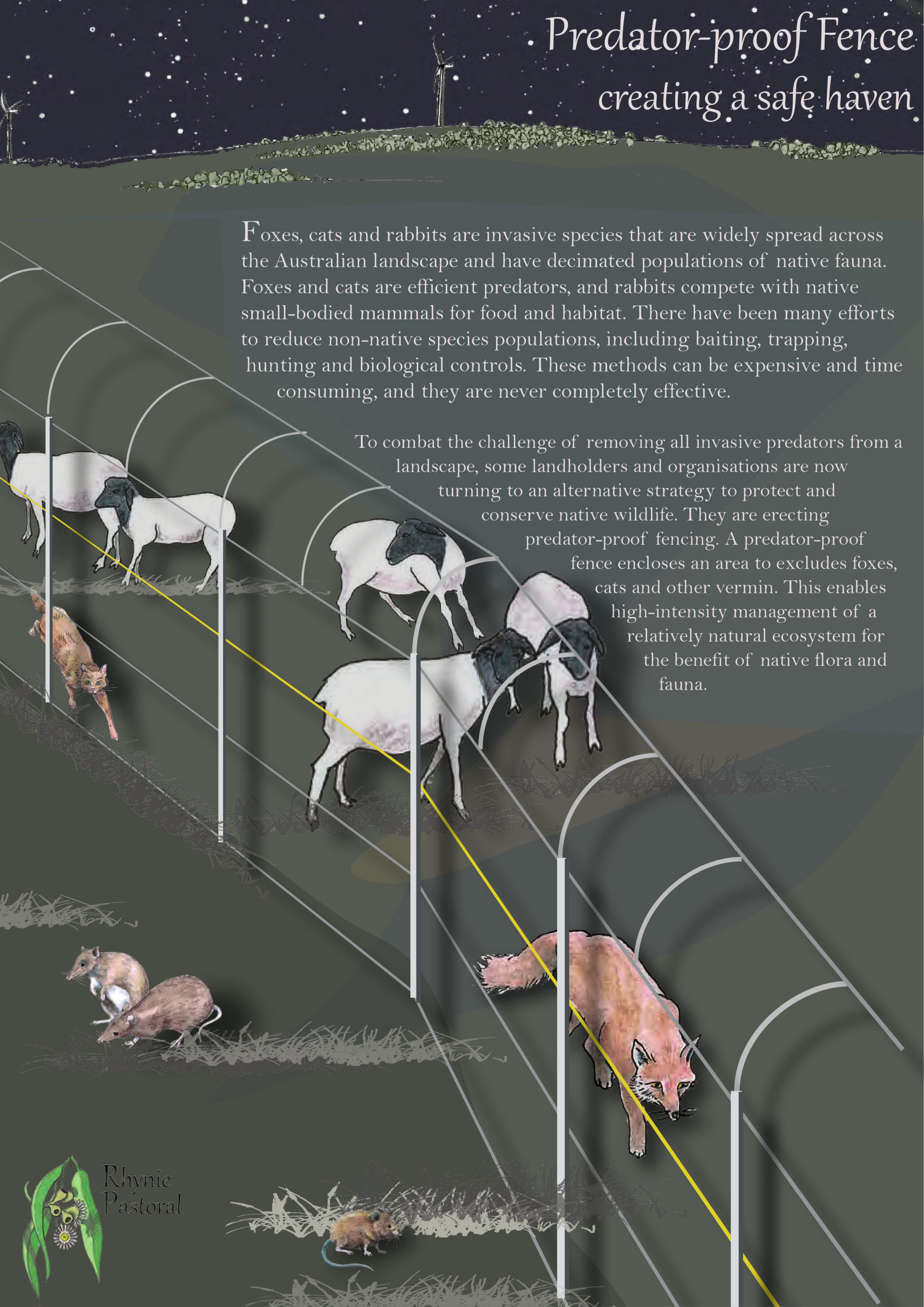


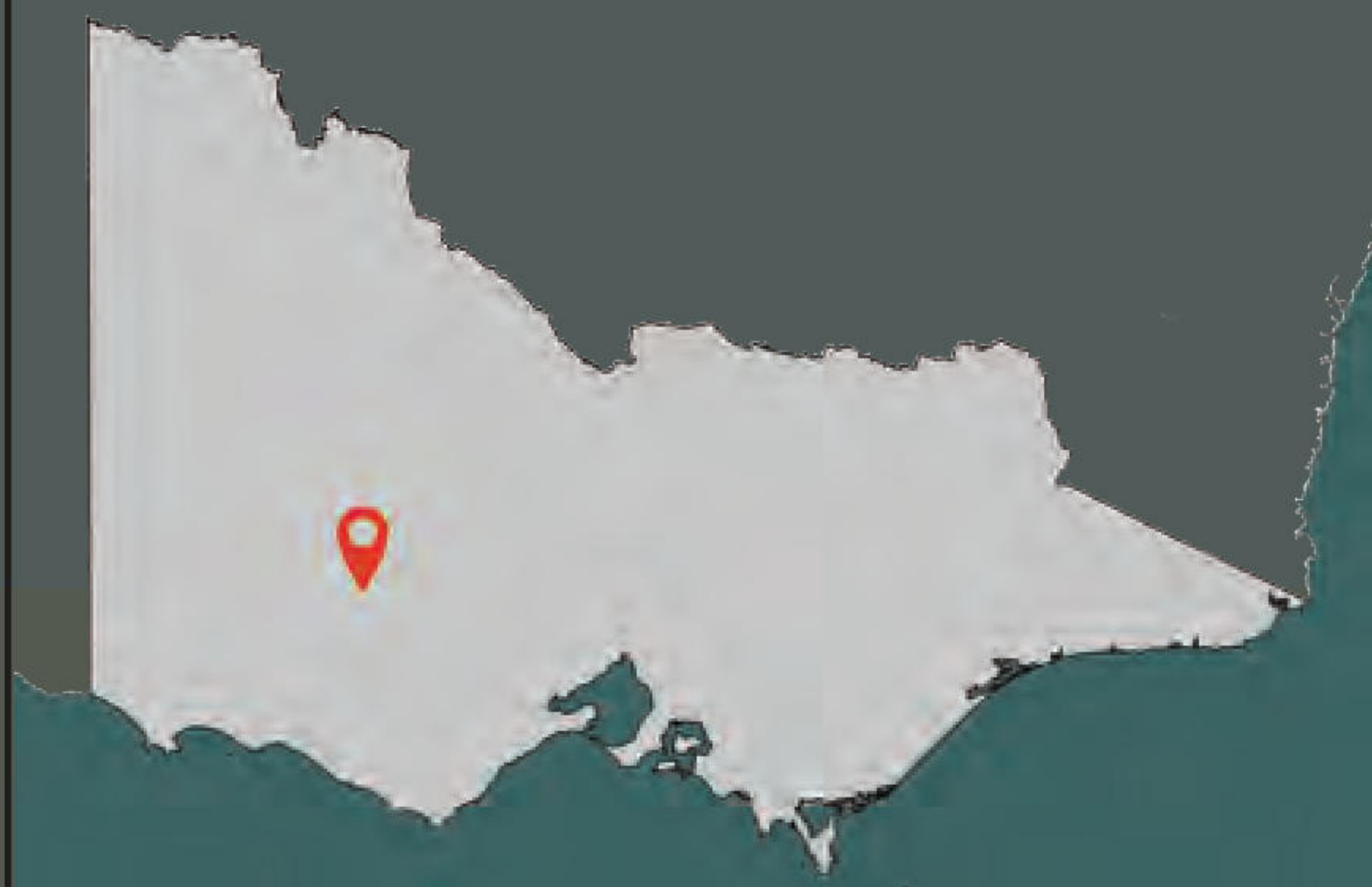
Predator-proof Fence creating a safe haven

Foxes, cats and rabbits are invasive species that are widely spread across the Australian landscape and have decimated populations of native fauna. Foxes and cats are efficient predators, and rabbits compete with native small-bodied mammals for food and habitat. There have been many efforts to reduce non-native species populations, including baiting, trapping, hunting and biological controls. These methods can be expensive and time consuming, and they are never completely effective.

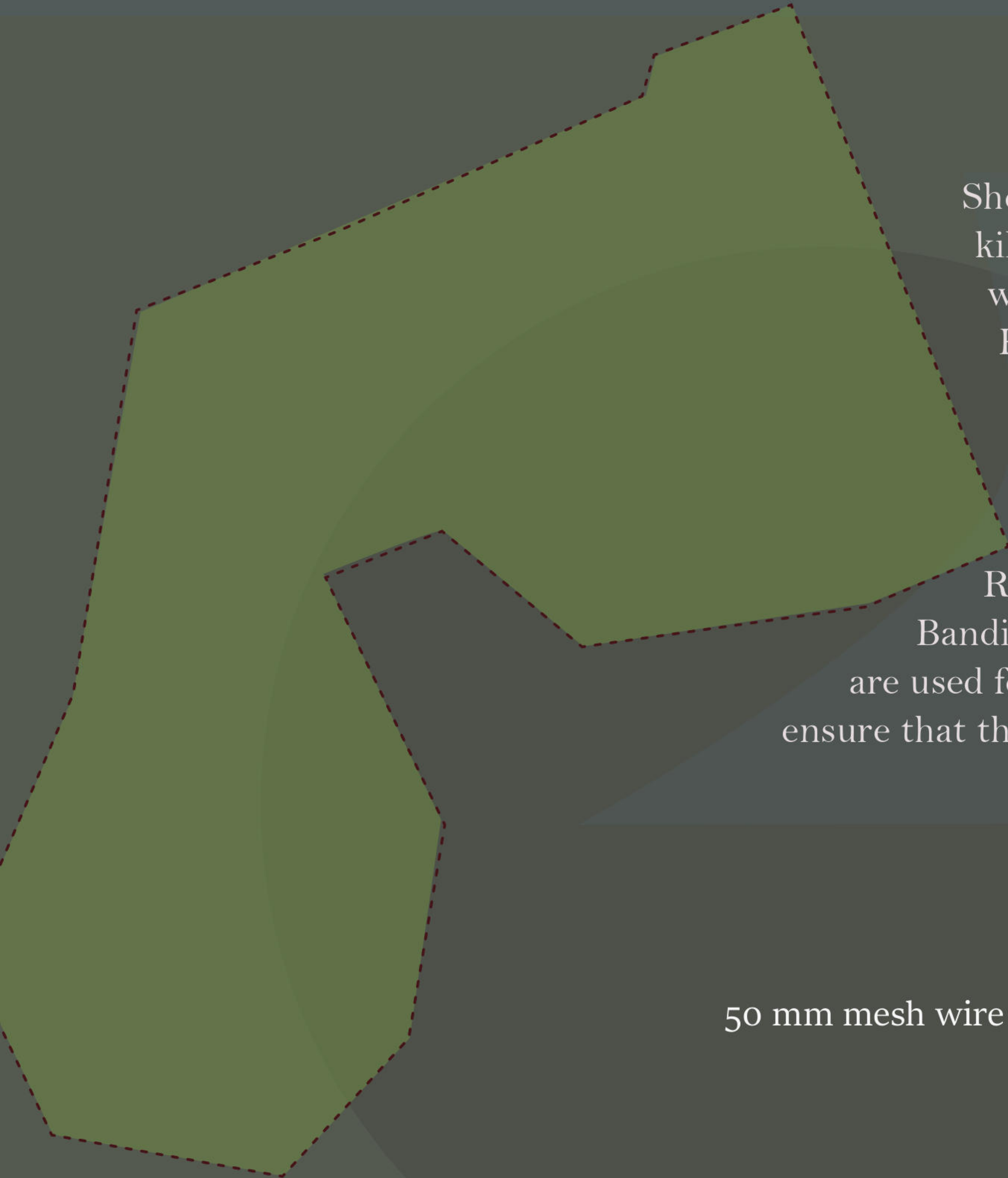
To combat the challenge of removing all invasive predators from a landscape, some landholders and organisations are now turning to an alternative strategy to protect and conserve native wildlife. They are erecting predator-proof fencing. A predator-proof fence encloses an area to exclude foxes, cats and other vermin. This enables high-intensity management of a relatively natural ecosystem for the benefit of native flora and fauna.



In the past decade, there has been an increase in the use of predator-proof fences to protect fragile habitats and species. Reports and studies from these protected sites indicate that small marsupials, including Southern Brown Bandicoot, respond well to the lack of predation and competition when foxes, cats and rabbits are excluded.



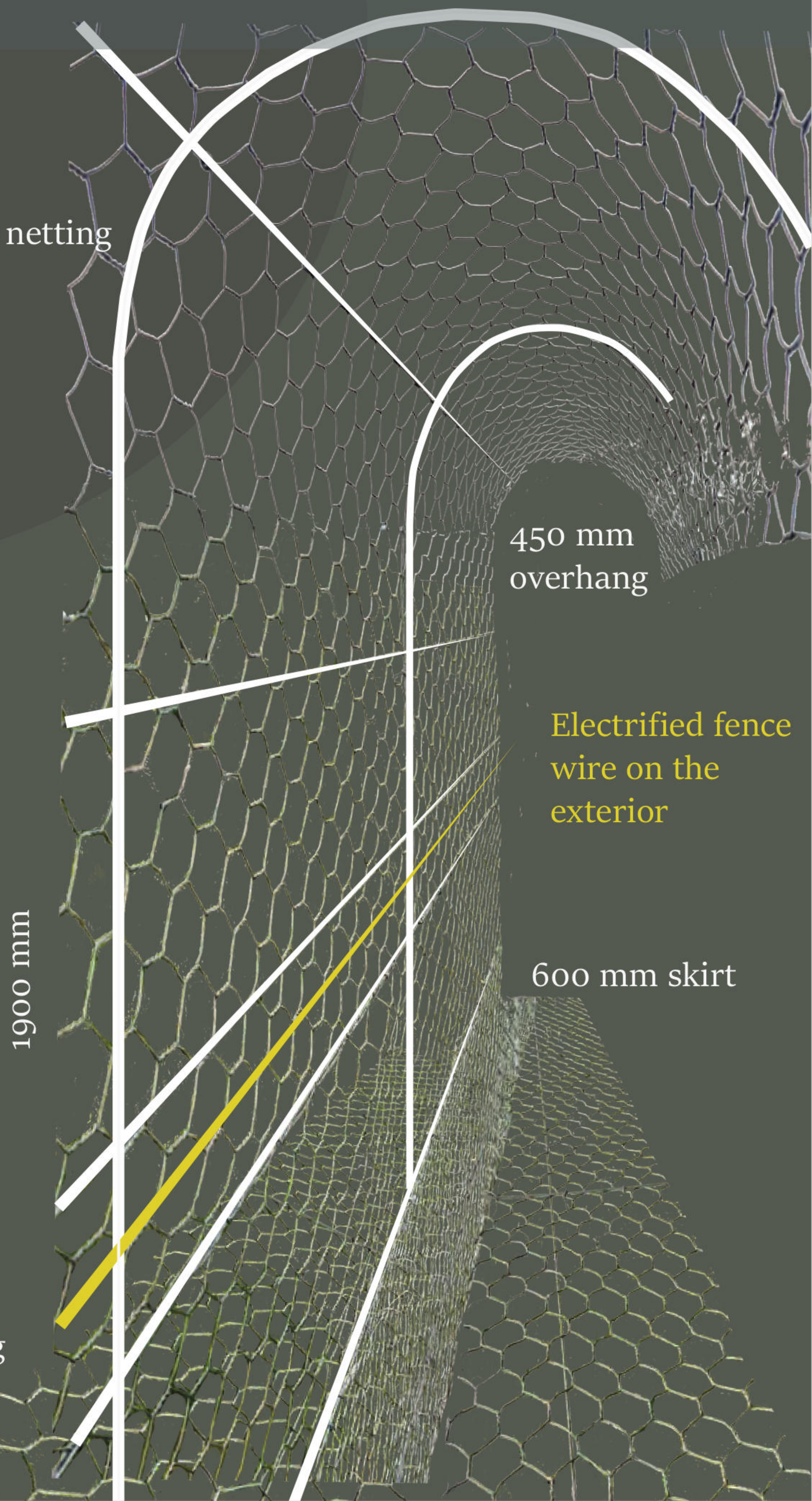
Shepherd's Hut Sanctuary was enclosed by a four kilometre predator-proof fence in 2016. The fence was built in collaboration with the Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority and funding sourced through the Grampians Pyrenees Biolink Project. The populations of native mammals have responded well in the predator free environment – Eastern Swamp Rats have become abundant, and Southern Brown Bandicoots are successfully breeding. Wildlife cameras are used for regular monitoring of native fauna and to ensure that the sanctuary remains free of invasive pests.



The predator-proof fence has an overhanging top that secures the sanctuary from predators attempting to climb the fence. The custom fence has a skirt along the ground on either side so animals cannot dig under the fence. The bottom layer of fencing is constructed with smaller wire mesh size to keep young rabbits out.

Inside the sanctuary, there are small fences around revegetation plots. These fences were constructed to keep livestock out of the revegetation areas. The sanctuary is part of a working farm, and sheep occasionally graze the grassland areas to reduce biomass and promote healthy groundcover growth.

50 mm mesh wire netting



450 mm overhang

Electrified fence wire on the exterior

600 mm skirt

1900 mm

40 mm mesh wire netting

600 mm skirt