

Murrumbidgee Landcare's Cross Property Planning project

Land holder case study: Peter and Kellie Crawford, Wantabadgery

Name:	Peter and Kellie Crawford
Location:	"Terlinga", Wantabadgery
Property size:	404 ha
Farming enterprises:	Livestock - sheep
Soil types:	Grey loams and sandy loams
Rainfall:	500 mm

How long have you been farming in the area?

We've been here for 12 years now.

How long have you been interested in natural resource management (NRM)?

Probably about 10 years.

What first got you interested in NRM?

When my [Peter's] mum and dad first came to the property, there were no trees on it at all. They started planting a lot of trees, and since we've been working here we've really seen the importance of that.

What are some of the environmental improvements you have completed, and what led you to undertake these projects?

We've done a lot of tree planting - even through the drought! We've also focussed on groundcover retention, that's been a big thing for us.

We also had a lot of gullies, so we've done a lot of erosion control work - soil works, managing tracks and banking the creek up.

More recently we've been clearing out springs in the creek to try and hold the water more, and give it time to soak into the soil, sort of in the Peter Andrews-style.

Why did you join Murrumbidgee Landcare's Cross Property Planning (CPP) project?

We thought it was good encouragement to get more trees in!

The project looked more attractive than a lot of other projects which have been on offer in previous years, because it allowed us to put trees where we think we need them, rather than being required to plant in a pre-determined location. We wanted to be able to scatter trees all over the property, rather than doing a single mass planting, which is what most projects require

you to do. Scattered trees are far better for us, because we don't have the land to set aside to big planting areas, but by putting in scattered trees we can still get the benefits for stock protection and also beautification of our property.



Left: Mature kurrajongs growing amongst the rocky outcrops, with a revegetation site visible further down the hill

Have you noticed any benefits (expected or unexpected) from your NRM work through the CPP project?

Increasing groundcover across the property has had enormous benefits in slowing the gullies and improving erosion, but it has also stopped runoff - which means we now need to rely more on troughs. It stands to reason, but we didn't really think about that consequence when we set out! We've also noticed a lot of benefits from having trees across the property in terms of shade for the stock, and of course habitat for birds and animals.

What are your 'keys to success' when undertaking NRM work?

Make sure you actually DO it!! There are always so many jobs to do around the place, but you have to make sure that you set the time aside to do your NRM work too.

Preparation is important, especially for tree planting - you can't leave it to the last minute, or you just won't have any success.

Are there any changes you've made that you would do differently in hindsight?

I think we would have gone out of cropping ten years ago!! [The Crawford's are in the final stages of moving from a mixed farming enterprise to livestock only].

My [Peter's] parents put a lot of tree lucerne's in, which are now all dying; if they'd put more long-lived trees in, we would have some really well established, mature trees across the property now. My parents also put a lot of English softwoods in, which we wouldn't have chosen.

We would also have planted the rocky areas more, and put more scattered trees in rather than tree lines. My parents did a lot more cropping than we do, so they preferred the tree lines, whereas with our livestock we prefer the scattered trees.

Do you have any remaining NRM concerns that you would like to work on?

We'd still like to put more trees in, using scattered and small block plantings.

Also, we're losing a lot of the old Kurrajong's in the rocky areas, so we'd like to replace them. We've collected seed from the trees on our property, and we'd like to propagate them and plant more of our own seedlings one day - maybe when the kids grow up!