

## Murrumbidgee Landcare's Cross Property Planning project

### Land holder case study: Sue Dunn, Book Book

Name:	Sue Dunn
Location:	"Book Book South", Book Book
Property size:	325 ha
Farming enterprises:	Beef cattle
Soil types:	Fertile loams, ridge gravel, and dispersive soils along the creeklines
Rainfall:	625 mm

*How long have you been farming in the area?*

I've lived in the area all my life.

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

Since I was a kid, seeing the birds and wildlife around the property.



*Above: Sue inspecting some recent plantings on "Book Book South"*

*What first got you interested in NRM?*

I think I was just keen to try to enhance the birdlife, and overall flora and fauna. I also wanted to try and stop the erosion, which is pretty significant in some areas.

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

I've fenced out a lot of erosion gullies, and planted a lot of trees! I've also fenced off sensitive areas of the property to keep the stock off; I fenced off half a dam that was eroding, to keep the stock out and only give them access to one side.

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

I liked the holistic approach to the valley - it's really good to see it all join up in the big picture. Also the project gives you exposure a bit more to other people in the valley, and I like meeting the new people the project brings in. I also like the opportunity to learn more about the environment and how it works.

*What work have you completed as part of the CPP project?*

The first thing I did was fence off both sides of the creek, and plant scattered trees at about 30 metre intervals, to provide a link from the large remnant area at the back of the property with the remnants further down.

Later on, I fenced out an old dam with lots of mature trees around it, and put in a second dam further down. The original dam was the only water source for the whole paddock, and since it's been fenced off there's been a lot of natural regeneration, which is really exciting to see. It's a beautiful spot up there now - I might build a little cabin up there!



*Above: The dam which Sue fenced off through the Cross Property Planning project*

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

I've seen bird species coming back that I haven't seen on the property before, which is fantastic.

I also get compliments on the property - of course, that's not why I do it, but it is nice that people appreciate that you are trying to work with nature, rather than just flogging the land.

*Have you changed any aspects of your management as a consequence of the things you have learnt through being a part of the CPP project?*

I try to rotationally graze now, instead of set stocking, to give the native pastures a chance to recover.

I also try to stock at more sustainable levels, and basically just try to look after the country more.

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

Do little bits, often! You need to make educated decisions, not be greedy or push too hard. When you've done lots of little bits, you find you can drive around one day and see all you've done. It's a long term thing.

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

There's nothing that I wouldn't do again, I just find that if I do something wrong I try to do it different next time. The farm is very quick to let you know when you've done something wrong! It can deal you some harsh blows, but it's very rewarding. I'm learning the whole time - I call it a long term work in progress.

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

The erosion problem is still there - it's not going to go away, but I plan to just do little bits where I can.

I'd also like to protect more paddock trees. I think I have enough tree cover, but maybe I might plant more flowering shrubs, to attract more birdlife.



*Above: A small remnant which Sue has fenced off as part of the Cross Property Planning project*



MURRUMBIDGEE  
**Landcare**  
INCORPORATED

