

Murrumbidgee Landcare's Cross Property Planning project

Land holder case study: Tracey and Bruce MacLeod

Name:	Tracey and Bruce MacLeod
Location:	"Carinya", Wantabadgery Road Wantabadgery
Property size:	556 ha
Farming enterprises:	Livestock dominated mixed farming
Soil types:	Granite and sandy loams
Rainfall:	640 mm

How long have you been farming in the area?

25 years.

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

I think we've just always been interested in it - you need everything for the flow.

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

We've done a lot of fencing to protect water flow and erosion. Keeping groundcover has been a big goal, to minimise erosion, and obviously keeping groundcover helps with our paddock rotation too. Getting trees back is a long, slow process though!

The work we've done has also helped improve our management of the property, with increased sub-division of paddocks for stock movement, and managing different soil types.

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

We thought it was important to be able to have continuity of habitat.

What work did you complete as part of the CPP project?

We sub-divided a paddock, and planted a tree line along the length of the new fence.

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

We haven't really noticed any benefits of the tree line yet; I think it will be a few years until they get established, and we can start to notice the interactions happening.



Above: The tree line the MacLeod's planted through the Cross Property Planning project was designed to connect with an existing tree line on their property

Have you learnt anything new as a consequence of being part of the CPP project?

We were quite amazed at the impact of Lucerne on our tree line! The bottom half of our tree line had some Lucerne come up, and the impact of that in taking moisture away from the trees was pretty incredible. We won't make that mistake again!

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

Trial and error! It's that old phrase, if at first you don't succeed... I think you learn the most from your mistakes.

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

Well our weed kill never seems to be quite good enough. I think we need to do multiple hits to really make sure we take out all the weeds.

With fencing off our creeks, we've had a lot of problems - our creek crossings get ruined with any rainfall. We can't make the fence too solid or it catches everything in a rain event, but then if we don't make it solid enough the sheep get out!

We also tried direct seeding along the creek, but found that only the wattles came up, and a lot of them are dying off now. In hindsight I think it would probably have been better to fence the creek off, then revegetate in patches, rather than trying to do the whole lot at once.

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

We still have changes we'd like to make to better utilise our paddocks and continue habitat connections. For example we'd like to sub-divide the paddock with the dam and put a trough in the top paddock. This would help with our grazing management too.

We'd also eventually like to fence off the opposite end of the creek and do revegetation and erosion control along it over time - not try to tree it all at once!



Above: A beautiful double rainbow over the back hills of "Carinya"



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