

Murrumbidgee Landcare's Cross Property Planning project

Land holder case study: Fiona and Daniel Rankin, Bethungra

Name:	Fiona and Daniel Rankin
Location:	"Glen Iris", Bethungra
Property size:	2,023 ha
Farming enterprises:	Sheep, some cattle and some mixed cereals/grazing crops
Soil types:	Clay loam
Rainfall:	Around 550-600 mm

How long have you been farming in the area?

I (Fi) grew up here, but we've been back on the farm for about ten years now.

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

Ever since we came back to the farm, really. I think you need to have a good balance - with a healthy system, everything is more productive.

What first got you interested in NRM?

I love the country, so want to look after it so that it stays good for our kids. As a farmer, it'd be pretty silly to not look after your most valuable asset.

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

We planted out a salt scald, and have also put in a few tree lines.

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

We wanted to further our treed areas, and also thought the project could help us to create a more sustainable environment here.

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

We fenced off and planted out two areas that had been pretty severely affected by salinity. We included a number of species which would also provide some feed for the livestock once they're established, so in the future this might be a useful area for us.

Has any aspect of your management changed as a consequence of being part of the CPP project?

We've changed our grazing management, through learning about the importance of groundcover for land management. The things we learnt through the project stimulated our interest, so since then we have learnt a bit more ourselves and applied that to our grazing management.

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

I think you need to go through a thorough planning process, to decide where to put your plantings in relation to land use. Using non-arable country to plant out can help with stock management in the future, so it's helpful to try to make it sustainable in that way.

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

We weren't able to spray early enough because it was so wet - it wasn't anything we could help, but it was disappointing.

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

We still have some areas of erosion, and some hills need more shelter. Also we've started fencing off our creeks - there are lots of old trees there, but not many young ones, so it would be good to put some new seedlings in now, to plan for the future.



Above: A beautiful panorama of 'Glen Iris', showing a healthy stand of native vegetation