



# CREEK LINE REVEGETATION AND ECOSYSTEM GROWTH TO IMPROVE WATER AVAILABILITY AND QUALITY



## SNAPSHOT

Property:	Tamangunyah
Owner:	Annabelle Coppin
Manager:	Colin Lewis
Location:	Badgingarra
Soil type:	Light, white sandy soil with some good gravel underneath
Enterprise mix:	100% cattle
Property size:	2500 acres
Average annual rainfall:	450mm
Motivation for change:	To restore vegetation and water flow to creek line to prevent further erosion and degradation.

In 2019, Colin Lewis took on the challenge of fencing off approximately five kilometres of the Boothendarra creek that runs through Tamangunyah, the Badgingarra cattle finishing property he manages.

**“The aim is to slow down the water and get it to spread out and improve the paddocks either side of the creek,” Colin says.**

He explains the creek previously provided enough soil moisture to keep the surrounding paddock’s pastures healthy.

“Back in the 90’s those paddocks were full of clover. The amount of feed they produced was unbelievable. The paddocks that have just been fenced off are now some of the worst on the property in terms of feed production,” he says.

The entire creek line was cleared during the farm’s establishment leading to erosion and degradation in the waterway.

The team at Tamangunyah identified that fencing the creek line and locking the cattle out of the area will give the best chance at rehabilitation and improved water retention.

**“We want to slow down the flow enough to help the trees growing around it and support native regrowth and biodiversity.”**

Tamangunyah is a finishing property for Yarrie station owner and manager, Annabelle Coppin. Through their brand Outback Beef, they slaughter 50 cattle each month that supply the BHP mining camps, giving a constant turnover of cattle.

Annabelle Coppin identified the opportunity to fence the creek line and contacted West Midlands Group. The not-for-profit grower group applied for the grant and assisted with the delivery of the project.

The Coppin family purchased the Badgingarra property about 20 years ago as a finishing property. They have had previous success in revegetating other sections of the farm and creek line.

**“We’ve seen the Coppin family successfully fence off and regenerate creek lines nearby, so it just made sense to do something like that here,” Colin says.**

Implementing rotational grazing to optimise the pasture production was already planned for Tamangunyah in 2019 so the addition of a few more kilometres of fencing for the benefit of the creek line was an easy addition.

“We have put in over 18 kilometres of fencing this year as part of implementing rotational grazing on the property to better utilise our pastures. Our paddocks have been reduced to about 30 hectares each.

“It was cost effective to add this creek line project since we were already ordering and installing so many materials. We can already see a difference in the protected area, so it’s been worthwhile.”

Fencing the property has taken approximately eight months. Colin explains they would regularly spend a day or two to avoid falling behind on other aspects of the operation. A contractor was also hired for eight kilometres of the fencing.

**“Everything went smoothly. It didn’t affect the paddocks a great deal. If anything, it helped with the splitting of paddocks for rotational grazing,” says Colin.**

According to Colin, following the winding creek line was the most challenging part of the project and required more strainer posts than the standard fence line. It’s not all bad news though.

“That’s given us the opportunity to plant more trees that will have a better shot at a long life. Once they are mature, they will provide more shade over the fence for cattle,” he says.

Colin planned to plant trees along the newly fenced off creek line in 2019 during the project, however the season was not favourable. He hopes to start phase two of the revegetation in winter of 2020.

## MORE INFORMATION

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Colin has already seen a difference between the fenced area in comparison to pasture exposed to regular grazing.

**“We hope to find funding in the future to create a whole farm environmental plan,” says Colin.**

“We aim to strategically identify steps for the fenced creek area to ensure water spreads slowly and evenly over the whole creek area.”

One of those steps includes planting native plants and grasses, such as gums and salt bush to promote the regeneration and biodiversity of the newly fenced area. However, when considering the outcomes for the project, Colin is realistic and just hopes to see improved water retention.

“It won’t spread out too far because we don’t have the flow, and it might only run two or three times a year in the best years anyway for a day or two. But something is better than nothing,” he says.

Operationally, Colin believes it will be beneficial once the trees in the fenced off area have matured and can provide extra shade and shelter for the cattle from over the fence.

“We’re looking forward to seeing the growth of different grasses and more robust trees. Improved paddocks surrounding would be a bonus,” he says.

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