

CASE STUDY

Northern Agricultural Catchments Council



Bushland and Business Benefit From Fencing

Local farmers, Suzanne and Mark Wilson have worked with the Northern Agricultural Catchments Council (NACC) for the past six years. And thanks to NACC's Biodiversity Program, they have undertaken fencing works on their property, Beryl Hill, located at East Maya.

The property provides vital habitat for the Western Spiny-tailed Skink (*Egernia stokesii badia*), which is listed as Endangered under the *Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act), and also potential habitat for Malleefowl (*Leipoa ocellata*) which are listed as Vulnerable.

NACC's Biodiversity Program works with local land managers to protect and preserve remnant vegetation in the Northern Agricultural Region, with the intent to increase connectivity at the local, catchment and landscape scale. While threatened species are the flagship of this project, there are numerous other species that benefit from the improved habitat.



Grevilleas in flowers at Beryl Hill.



Western Spiny-tailed Skink (*Egernia stokesii badia*) at East Maya.

Suzanne and Mark's Story

The primary reason for fencing this area is to create wildlife corridors. "There are large areas of bushland on the property that we enjoy spending time in, just looking at the wildlife and flowers," Suzanne said. "Since destocking six years ago when we took over the property, the bushland has really come alive!"

Before we undertook the NACC fencing project, we were very vulnerable to the impacts of high numbers of emus in our crop,

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Passionate farmer Suzanne Wilson.

particularly during drought years. The old boundary fence was once part of the government maintained emu-proof fence but has since been decommissioned due to being very rundown. Emus would come into our property through the bushland area, from the station and the lake in the east. We would regularly see 50 to 100 emus at one time entering the crop, eating it and flattening it. We would have lost hectares of crop because of them.

After using the NACC funding, we constructed a very substantial fence along the eastern boundary and around the bushland area, with two barb wires on the top. It is not completely emu-proof, but very resistant to them.

The fence has given us the option to be able to run stock on the property in the future if the opportunity arises, while still protecting the bush. The most significant change resulting from the project has been the decreased number of emus entering the

property. We feel more secure now, that if there was another drought we'd have much less crop loss from emus. We also feel the bush has been protected from future stock and natural regeneration is occurring. We are still a bit vulnerable to emus coming in on the north side of the current fence and we plan to extend it further north.

We love the bush. The conservation side of everything is very important to us. However, we are also trying to run a viable business and as such we need to protect the arable land. The emus were having a big impact on the viability of our business and this change directly helped solve this problem.

We appreciate that NACC receives funding from the government and we have access to that funding.

It would be great to be able to apply for funding for more specific things that we require on our property. For example, we have a site that is affected by salinity and waterlogging. The water is coming from neighbouring land, as it tries to get to Lake Mongers. We'd like to be able to apply for funding to drain this water off our land into the lake so we can reclaim health of the property, and maybe subsequently plant some fodder shrubs to rehabilitate areas that had previously been degraded due to water logging.

For more information:

Please contact NACC's main office on (08) 9938 0100, or via the website on <http://www.nacc.com.au/contact-us/>

For Biodiversity Program enquiries refer <http://www.nacc.com.au/biodiversity/>

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