

A long-term approach to riparian restoration



Project name: Caring for the Campaspe
Financial year story collected: 2016-17

The North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) delivers the Caring for the Campaspe project through funding from the Victorian Government's Regional Riparian Action Plan. Since 2012, the project has been protecting and enhancing the vegetation on private and public land along the length of the Campaspe River to improve its health.

Karen Coffield and David Feith bought land adjacent to the Campaspe River at Redesdale at the end of 1999.

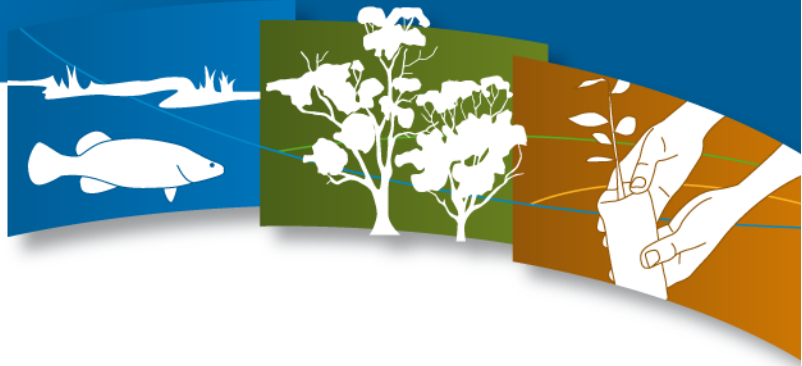
They described the property as previously being *"part of a sheep farm, and most of the trees had been cut down, and the land had been severely overgrazed, so it looked pretty bare, with lots of rocks protruding from bare ground. Remnant vegetation existed along the river and creek, and in some very steep areas. Along the river there was extensive gorse, preventing access to the river."*

Karen and David have been very grateful for the assistance from the North Central CMA over many years, including more recently through the Caring for the Campaspe project.

"In April, 2000, Matt Kennedy of the CMA came to see our land, and walked around it with us, and advised us both on things we could do, and how the CMA could assist us in restoring the land and the riparian zone. He pointed out to us native grasses which were still growing in areas on the property, including 'red legs', wallaby and kangaroo grasses. He was very enthusiastic and encouraging, and helped to inspire us with the possibilities of the land," Karen and David explained.

"In July, 2000 the North Central CMA arranged for a groomer to come and cut down the gorse along our side of the river bank; this was significant assistance, as we could not have done that ourselves. This was very satisfying."

Since then, the North Central CMA has, on several occasions, re-sprayed the gorse regrowth – most recently through the Caring for the Campaspe project.



"We applied for support from the North Central CMA to revegetate the land, and they arranged for tree seedlings to be planted along the river, where the gorse had been removed. Many of these seedlings survived, and are now well developed trees along the river," they said.

Karen and David explained: "Assistance from the North Central CMA helped in revegetating the land along the river, while we focussed on revegetation of the land higher up, a bit further away from the river. It was tremendously helpful for us, because it has been a big revegetation project, and the assistance gave us a considerable sense that we were making progress in weed control and revegetation".

Karen and David are proud of what has been achieved on their property. "We can see the difference, and we have photographic evidence of the changes that have been made in the past 17 years. Where the land was once bare or infested with gorse, there are now thousands of well-established trees. Seeing all the trees planted by the North Central CMA grow up has been very enjoyable."

Unfortunately there have been some setbacks. "In recent years some more planting were done by contractors organised by the North Central CMA. However the contractors did not put guards around the seedlings, and most of them did not survive. This was disappointing."

"At times we have felt overwhelmed by the number and severity of the weeds on our property, and the advice and encouragement we received from the North Central CMA, and in particular the early discussions we had with Matt Kennedy, were pivotal in keeping us going when we sometimes felt like giving up," Karen and David said.



Karen Coffield and David Feith at their property on the Campaspe River at Redesdale (April 2017)