

# Transformation of a waterway



Project name: Caring for the Campaspe  
Financial year story collected: 2013-14

Caring for the Campaspe is a four-year (2012-16) project delivered by the North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) aiming to protect and enhance 400ha of vegetation along the Campaspe River, improving aquatic and riverside ecosystem health.

Carl and Silvana Phillips with their four children own a cattle property along the Campaspe River at the northern outskirts of Kyneton.

“The river was completely choked with willows. Environmentally, it was seriously degraded and a haven for foxes,” Mr Phillips explained

“We had talked to our neighbour about the willow problem along the river and both agreed we wanted to do something about it. But with permits, etc, it was going to take three to four years to tackle.”

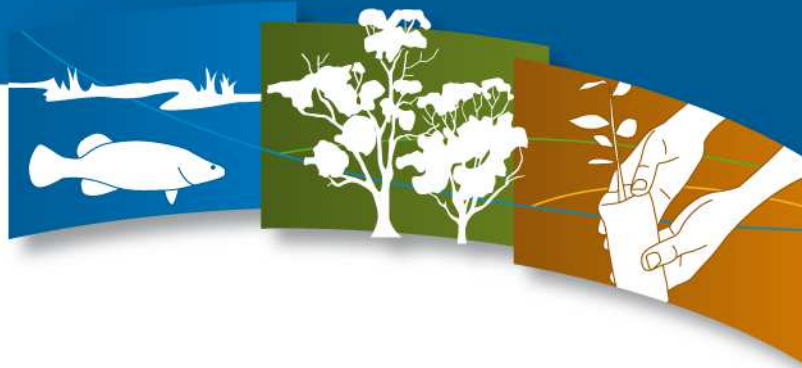
In April 2013, the Phillips and a neighbour received a letter from the North Central CMA seeking landholder interest in willow removal works, fencing and revegetation along their frontage, to be funded through the Caring for the Campaspe project.

Keen to get on board, they registered their interest. A plan for willow and hawthorn control, fencing and revegetation was negotiated. Mr Phillips said working with the North Central CMA was a positive experience.

“Emma (Emma Wolters, North Central CMA Catchment Restoration Officer) managed the project very collaboratively. She was approachable and listened to our ideas. We discussed the planned works and we trusted things would occur as planned, and they did. For Emma: a big thumbs up.”

The removal of 500 metres of willows commenced in January 2014 as part of a longer two kilometre section of willow removal, including adjoining public land managed by Parks Victoria.

Mr Phillips said he and his family could not have been happier about the results.



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“We were thrilled with the work: with the help of the North Central CMA the willows were removed in a week!

“Given we had such heavy machinery along the riverbank, there is surprisingly very little damage. The contractors were fastidious with how they entered and exited the property. They worked well and were very efficient.

“We also received fencing through the project. Having grown up farming, fencing is one of my most hated jobs so I really appreciated that,” said Mr Phillips.

“The removal of willows and hawthorn, new fencing and revegetation has created a clear boundary for the property making upkeep easier and reducing hiding spots for vermin.

“Overall it has led to easier farm management —it feels like a big piece of work has been taken off my shoulders and we can now concentrate on other projects around the property,” Mr Phillips said.

Mr Phillips described the difference the project has made to vermin on his land.

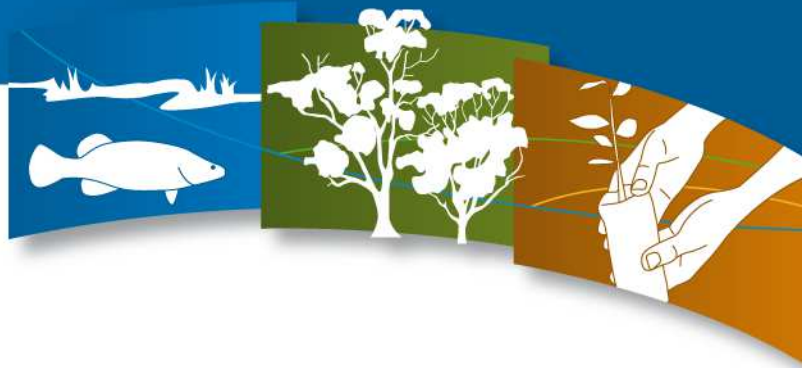
“Since the removal of willows five months ago, I haven’t seen one fox on the property. Particularly in the heavily willow infested area down by the bridge.

“The visual change with the willows removed has been the most significant change. Now a path has been cleared for the river to flow freely again. The transformation has been out of this world,” Mr Phillips said

The \$3.73M Caring for the Campaspe project is funded by the Department of Environment and Primary Industries.

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**Before willow and hawthorn removal**



**After weed removal and fencing**



**Isabella, Orlando and Sofia Phillips explore the changing river on the weekend**



**Orlando, Matthaus and Sofia Phillips are excited by the willow clearing works**