

Story of Change

Kerry and Grant Connoley, Barfold

Caring for the Campaspe

June 2020



Kerry and Grant Connoley are newcomers to the Barfold area and despite having little knowledge about farming or natural resource management, their efforts over the past 12 months are already making a big difference to the health of the Campaspe River.

“We’re pretty much city people. We have never farmed so this is a bit of a big change for us. We have about 200 acres and the river was the main reason we purchased the property. It has some good remnant native growth, but there are quite a lot of weeds and it’s largely unimproved.

“We could see there was a fair amount of erosion down there, animals had been accessing the river and we wanted to give it a chance to regenerate and to prevent any further damage from them having access. We could see the bones of the natural environment. The river is in quite reasonable condition but there was plenty of room for improvement,” Kerry said.

With support from the North Central Catchment Management Authority’s (CMA) Caring for the Campaspe project, Kerry and Grant are ahead of where they thought they’d be in improving the property. They’ve received much-needed advice to not only improve the health of the river but have also gained confidence to make a change.

“I’m not sure we would have managed to do the work ourselves given our lack of background. We got river fencing done to the specifications we wanted which was really good along with woody weed control,” Grant said.

“We also received incentives for off-river watering so we can fence off the river and the cattle can’t get down there now.”

“The manual removal of the gorse has definitely opened up the area and that has allowed us to see some of the trees that were otherwise hidden so it’s quite nice looking back on that area now. Involvement in the project has also given us an opportunity to do some other things to improve the whole farm,” Kerry said.

The couple said working with the CMA has given them the knowledge to continue to improve the environment while also learning the ropes of sustainable farming.

“The support has been good, and we are well ahead of where we otherwise would have been if we were doing it all ourselves partly because we didn’t know what we were doing. It would have taken us a long time to work out what to do,” said Grant

“We’ve learnt a lot and have been able to piggy-back off the work of the CMA while learning about the environmental and farming side of things. We are quite keen on regenerative agriculture and holistic grazing and being involved allows us to do that.”



Photo: Kerry and Grant with North CMAs Emma Wolters, August 2019

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The Caring for the Campaspe project is funded through Victorian Government's \$222M initiative to improve the health of waterways and catchments.



Photos: Kerry getting involved in environmental engagement events, such as eDNA testing for platypus in the Campaspe River in September 2019 and February 2020