

Paper Laneways Project

Corowa District Landcare Inc.



A collaboration of partnerships and great conservation outcomes increasing biodiversity and connectivity.

The issue

The Corowa/Federation region is in the agricultural sheep wheat belt of NSW & is a very cleared landscape, consisting mostly of degraded grassy woodlands. Wildlife surveys and expert advice indicated a continued decline in local biodiversity due to past clearing and habitat fragmentation. Continued vegetation condition decline and clearing of paddock trees is of great concern with 'biodiversity hot spots' at risk due to their isolation. If nothing is done to link these areas of high biodiversity with other isolated vegetation habitat areas, we may see a significant fall in local native woodland bird, mammal and reptile numbers. No improvement can be made in biodiversity if no action is undertaken to create wildlife corridors throughout our agricultural landscape. Declining native vegetation extent and condition and declining biodiversity are our two most significant local environmental issues.

The solution

This project aimed to engage local landholders to restore and rehabilitate the 'Paper Laneways' (disused crown lanes) that adjoin their farms and were chosen based on their ability to enhance connectivity to existing significant revegetation and remnant vegetation sites, and their current biodiversity value. Corowa District Landcare advertised an EOI to landholders across the Corowa Shire willing to fence and revegetate/manage existing native vegetation areas in crown laneways running through their properties. The project provided expert advice and incentives for fencing materials, direct seeding and/or tube stock as well as pest animal and weed control to the participants.

The impact

Based on community interest, Corowa District Landcare, applied for funding under the NSW Environmental Trust's Restoration and Rehabilitation program and was successful. With the support of Corowa Shire Council (now Federation Council), and the involvement of five farming families, the project undertook on-ground works to enhance chosen paper laneways through erecting 13kms of fencing to control grazing, planting more than 500 tube stock plants and direct seeding 7.2 kilograms of native seed to improve the understorey diversity. This work resulted in the protection of 45ha of biodiversity corridors which form a direct link between significant areas of remnant native vegetation reserves. All on-ground works were completed in 2012, with some follow up direct seeding completed in 2020. The final stage of the project saw the ownership of the paper laneways being gifted to the participating landholders based on their commitment to manage these lanes for improved biodiversity conservation in-perpetuity. This was achieved through the New South Wales and Local Government bodies use of the section 88B land title instrument included in the land title transfer which provides a covenant on the land similar to past Property Vegetation Plans. The process has been long but worthwhile, as these sites are now being managed for conservation. Natural regeneration of native plant species has been great & there are now often sightings of threatened species such as Grey-crowned Babblers and Squirrel Gliders on these sites.



Key facts

- Increased biodiversity & conservation outcomes
- Native vegetation corridors on farms & connectivity
- Collaboration of partnerships

Project Partners



This initiative is made possible by the NSW Landcare Enabling Program, a collaboration between Local Land Services and Landcare NSW supported by the NSW Government.