



Australian Government

**Department of Agriculture
and Water Resources**

**National Landcare Programme –
Sustainable Agriculture Small
Grants 2015-16**

Case Study

SGR1-0647

**“Moore Knowledge and
Opportunities: Review and Share
Learnings from Ten Years of
Sustainable Agriculture Projects”**

1. “what was the problem/issue for this project and how did you identify the issue?”.

Over the past 10 years or so, many thousands of dollars from Australian Government and farmers has been invested in sustainable agriculture-focused natural resource management projects on hundreds of farms located in the Moore river catchment and the Yarra Yarra region of the Northern Agricultural Region, WA. These projects aim to mitigate environmental issues on-farm including salinity, waterlogging and wind/water erosion as well as providing potential economic gains through grazing or harvesting. These projects included:

- o Brushwood – Environmental benefits: wind/water erosion, waterlogging control, Economic benefits: harvesting for brushwood fencing;
- o Saltbush - Environmental benefits: wind/water erosion, waterlogging and salinity control, Economic benefits: fodder and shade for stock;
- o Tree crops - Environmental benefits: wind/water erosion, waterlogging control, water harvesting, Economic benefits: carbon; fodder and shade for stock; harvesting for oil, nuts, wood;
- o Strategic revegetation - Tree crops - Environmental benefits: wind/water erosion, waterlogging and salinity control, water harvesting, cooling soil, Economic benefits: carbon; fodder and shade for stock, harvesting for oil, nuts, wood;

Post project completion, minimal monitoring and review has been carried out so no-one really knew what projects worked or failed, or improvements which could ensure better outcomes down the line. This project was set up to address these issues and ultimately help plan future projects based on findings and recommendations.

2. work/workshops/begin trials.

The main part of the project involved a dedicated officer visiting farms around the region and interviewing 77 farmers about their projects. Information captured included their thoughts on whether the project worked, what could have been done better, and what they would recommend going forward. Photo monitoring points were revisited to compare establishment photos vs today. 6 farmers were video interviewed about their projects and these are posted online for wide coverage. A comprehensive booklet was compiled of all findings (also online) and recommendations for future plantings. A field day was also held to show off some of these projects first hand to local farmers.

3. How did you measure/record your project activities?

An important part of this project was listening to farmers and recording their opinions of each project. This was done by spending quality time with each farmer discussing the ups and downs of each project, and then recording in a final report booklet. Farmers will listen to farmers, so it was important to spend enough time with each so the information was captured competently. 6

farmers were selected to record video interviews. A variety of projects were chosen and farmers interviewed. Again the choice of interviewer was important to ensure the farmer was put at ease and shared good information. The report and videos are available on the MCC website. They have been shared on various social media sites and via the local papers.

4. What do you think was the most significant outcome of your project?

The most significant outcome was the amount of useful information shared by farmers. The monitoring information is vitally important in planning future projects to help avoid mistakes and wasted funding. Another outcome was the importance of on-ground local officers who help the farmers through their projects and provide on-going advice. Of the projects, significant outcomes included:

- o Brushwood – had good environmental outcomes; only a few had been harvested due to hand harvesting. Need for a mechanical harvester to be developed;
- o Saltbush – multi beneficial, very successful on environmental and economic levels. An important NRM tool which should continue to be funded;
- o Tree crops – oil mallees: none harvested for oil but good environmental benefits, end market of oil means trees are in demand for future; sandalwood: too long a return;
- o Strategic revegetation – good environmental benefits, more such subsidised projects needed.

5. any unexpected outcomes of the project

This project's findings has generated lots of ideas for future projects which MCC have already pursued funding for. The eucalyptus oil and brushwood panel industries are excitingly 'on the up' which will help encourage more farmers to take part. These projects are multi-beneficial as they tick all the boxes (good for the degraded land and farmer's wallet), and should be supported.

Farmers involved with the project showing off their projects

