

# Profit

Matching environmental action  
with economic sustainability

by Amy Jansen and Michael Askey-Doran



**pro'fit** *n.* 1. Advantage, benefit; pecuniary gain, excess of returns over outlay (usu. pl.); ~ *and loss account*, (book-keeping) account in which gains are credited and losses debited so as to show net profit or loss at any time; change in management leading to profit; stock benefit. 2. ~ to a community; pride; belonging; cooperation; knowledge. 3. ~ sharing demonstrating richness in spirit, connection, memories and love of place.

"There are other drivers that give far greater satisfaction than money. But the trouble is that they are few and far between. There are no banks in heaven. So much more joy comes from one's success just through one's abilities than one's bank account."

**SUE RAPLEY**

Rivers, creeks and wetlands are the focal points of our landscapes. They provide the water to sustain not only wool growing and other agricultural industries, but also support many different plant and animal communities. They are highly productive and provide many benefits for humans and their activities. However, they are also increasingly under threat, having been damaged by past clearing of vegetation, overgrazing, weed infestation, channelisation and dam construction. In this section we outline some of the many benefits that flow to woolgrowers and the wider community from well-managed riparian areas. More detailed information on the processes which lead to these benefits can be found in the following chapter on Proof.



Photo Laura Eves.



### WOOLGROWER PERSPECTIVES

Andrew and Diana Cameron, Marathon

“...the other reason for fencing off the river is to maintain good water quality because both Deddington and Nile directly take water out of the river. It is a good idea if those people can drink the water without having cattle in the river and that sort of thing.”

**These riparian zones are in healthy condition and are providing a range of benefits including clean water, stable banks and healthy ecosystems.** Photos Roger Charlton (left), Tim Cohen (right).

Some of the many benefits of well-managed riparian areas include the following.

#### 1. Clean water

- safer water for domestic use
- healthier livestock
- more fish and platypus.

#### 2. Healthy floodplain soils

- better retention of water, nutrients and sediment
- improved agricultural production
- healthier soil organisms.

#### 3. Stable banks

- less erosion of land and productivity
- retention of fences, infrastructure and stock.

#### 4. Flood control

- slow down and reduce “flashiness” of floods
- erosion problems reduced
- fewer losses of stock and infrastructure.



Photo Laura Eves.



### WOOLGROWER PERSPECTIVES

Lindsay and Rae Young, Lewisham and Green Valley

“The floodplains add real balance to the grazing because if you have two or three beneficial floods over them in the spring time you get tremendous summer grazing at a time of the year when the rest of the farm is closed down basically. It adds real balance. Five per cent of our land is floodplains so it is significant beneficial grazing that we get over the summer time. The pastures on the flats are mainly ryegrass and annuals and the silver tussocks are definitely coming back in one section of the floodplain. It seems to provide a good balance of pasture feed. At certain times of the year they really eat *Poa*, especially the heavier black soils which hold on into the summer. With careful management, with short grazing and long rest, they seem to get plenty of green leaves on them and sheep eat them readily at certain times of the year.”

**Riparian areas remain green longer, providing a store of feed for drought periods when other parts of the property are becoming dry — however, they must be used with care, so that overgrazing does not occur.** Photo Michael Askey-Doran collection.

## 5. Healthy plant communities

- good shade and shelter for stock, particularly off shears and during lambing
- good stock fodder during less productive times
- good habitat for birds and other animals
- control of weeds
- perennial plants help stabilise banks
- woody debris and leaf litter provide habitat for fish and other in-stream wildlife
- moderate stream temperatures
- trap carbon
- create corridors across the landscape.





Photo Andrew Tatnell.

## 6. Healthy animal communities

- birds and bats help control crop pests
- insects provide pollination and help control pests and diseases
- fish for recreation and tourism opportunities
- greater biodiversity overall improves farm productivity.

## 7. Better stock management with fenced riparian areas

- losses of stock, either into the river or over to the neighbours, are minimised by the additional fencing
- reduced mixing of stock with that of your neighbours can reduce disease transmission across properties
- mustering stock is easier.

### Controlled stock access and a protected riparian zone.

Photo Jenny O'Sullivan.



Woolgrower photos this page and opposite Laura Eves.

## WOOLGROWER PERSPECTIVES

### Tim and Jane Parsons, Curringa

"It is my view that anything that we do and touch, if you are going to plant a tree somewhere or divert a bit of water to prevent erosion, or pull out some weeds it is a universal thing. It is doing good and fitting in. What we are doing on this farm and the farm next door and the farms right through, it is generational contracts. It is lifetime stuff. So I think if somebody wants to plant some trees somewhere, be it on that hill or down in that gully or whatever there is a benefit. Even if it is just a benefit for bees or butterflies or insects and ants or birds. It is just a little toe hold."

### Fencing around the Blackman River.

Photo Laura Eves.





#### WOOLGROWER PERSPECTIVES

**Adam Greenhill, Gala, Glen Gala, Riversdale**

“Biodiversity on the farm is really important, for hundreds of reasons that I can’t even see or tell you about, but there is always an imbalance in something. If you have something in its natural state next door it tends to even things out. If you have a reserved forest you are unlikely to have an insect plague start in the paddock next door because you have a population of birds. With the vegetable seed crops we certainly notice the pollination is a lot better around the reserved areas because the native insects do a better job than the bees. Last year we paid \$10,000 to hire bees to pollinate our crops. That’s a big deal. You think you are doing a better job with the native insects anyway, so what’s reserving a bit of bush?”



#### WOOLGROWER PERSPECTIVES

**Tom Dunbabin, Bangor and The Quoin**

“If you are going to fence off a streamside for example or a riparian area, you think there is a whole lot of things that are going to be important as outcomes, including water quality and habitat, stock management is easier. Certainly in terms of business, I didn’t appreciate how big the gains were going to be for grazing management and productivity of pastures once you start putting up fences.”

#### 8. Aesthetics

- diversity of plants and animals contribute to a unique and special environment
- recreation
- increase in land value.

**Healthy riparian areas are beautiful places.** Photo Guy Lampert.

