



Yass Valley Paddock Tree Project

Case studies

Establishing the next generation of paddock trees in the Yass Valley

The issue

Scattered paddock trees play a vital role in rural landscapes. About one third of agricultural land in the Australian temperate zone contains scattered paddock trees. Paddock trees benefit wildlife as well as the health and productivity of farms. The problem is that many of the scattered paddock trees in Australia have reached the end of their lives, and there are not enough young ones to replace them. There is a big concern that in 40 years all of these paddock trees could be gone.

The solution

At the end of 2019, Yass Landcare Group offered 1-24 paddock trees with stock-proof guards per property in the Yass Valley Local Government Area. Yass Landcare administered the grant on behalf of YAN for members within any of the Yass Area Network of Landcare Groups. The project was supported by South East Local Land Services through funding provided by Catchment Action NSW.

The trees were grown in the Yass Landcare Nursery, and the sturdy guards were prepared by Yass Landcare volunteers. Participants co-invested \$15 per sheep-proof guard, \$20 per cattle/horse-proof guard, and provided three steel posts per guard.

The impact

The project has resulted in 420 new, safely protected, paddock trees planted in the Yass Valley. These new paddock trees will ensure that in the decades and centuries to come: there will be habitat hollows for numerous species including birds, micro bats, reptiles, frogs and spiders; native animals will be able to move safely across the landscape; and there will be tree-based food sources, such as nectar, foliage and insects.

It also means that productive farms will benefit from pest control; stock and crops will have protection from harsh weather; and soil structure and salinity will be improved. The increased number of paddock trees will also increase species' and the landscape's resilience to a changing climate.

The funds raised through co-investment helped to cover costs and has allowed the Yass Landcare Group to start thinking about the next round of getting paddock trees back into the landscape.

Learnings

This was a highly successful project. There was a lot of community interest, and most people were very willing to co-invest. The very hot, dry conditions over the 2019-20 summer meant that a few people were unable to commit to looking after young trees. But most went ahead with the planting in autumn 2020, and there has been positive feedback from participants.



Key facts

- Over 400 scattered paddock trees have been planted across the Yass Valley
- Sturdy stock-proof tree guards were provided with every tree
- The new trees help to replace the many old and dead paddock trees across the region
- The project was supported by Local Land Services, with funding from Catchment Action NSW

Project Partners



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