

Case study | North Coast

Fence rebuilding support allows for quicker recovery

Property location: Ulmarra
Owners: Annette and David Smith
Enterprise mix: Beef cattle
Property size: 75 acres (22.5ha)
Not-for-profit engaged: BlazeAid

Ulmarra graziers Annette and David Smith believe the fence rebuilding support provided by not-for-profit (NFP) BlazeAid following the 2022 floods allowed for a quicker recovery and considerably helped them financially.

After doing some work on the neighbouring property, two BlazeAid volunteers approached the Smiths, realising they may need some support with rebuilding fences following the floods.

The Smiths applied and were successful in receiving a flood grant to cover the cost of fencing materials. Funded through the Early Needs Recovery Program, BlazeAid then supplied the labour to have 2.7km of fence rebuilt.

The Early Needs Recovery Program is designed to assist primary producers in the most flood-impacted regions and industries in their recovery from the severe weather storms and flooding events that occurred in early 2022 along the east coast of NSW.

The NFP fence-rebuilding program is one of four streams of the program and is aimed at supporting NFPs to assist local landholders in flood impacted areas. Three NFPs have been awarded grant funding to support teams of

volunteers to clear debris, remove, repair and replace damaged fences to assist primary producers to regain productivity sooner.



Figure 1. Damage to fence.

Impacts of the flood

After building up an excellent breeding herd, the Smiths had to sell all their stock following the floods.

In addition, David had to get a part-time job to supplement income for a period of time.

“While we trucked out the stock before the floods and put them on agistment, due to fences being down, we had to sell them a short time later,” David said.

“The flood also impacted our shed and we lost all our hay.”

Support in recovery efforts

“Receiving this fence rebuilding support was crucial in helping our recovery efforts following the 2022 floods,” David said.

“This grant and fence rebuilding support provided by BlazeAid allowed us to buy in new stock, which has been a big relief financially and allowed us to regain productivity quicker.

“While we cleared the debris and damaged fences before BlazeAid arrived, having their labour support to rebuild relieved our anxiety of having to rebuild fences by ourselves.

“Having secure fences is critical to the success of our enterprise. It allows us to keep stock contained, out of creeks and neighbouring paddocks.”

BlazeAid rebuilt 2.7km of fencing in two weeks. The Smith estimate it would have taken them 6 months to rebuild the fences themselves.

“This grant and fence rebuilding support provided by BlazeAid allowed us to buy in new stock, which has been a big relief financially,” David said.



Figure 2. Flood debris on the Smith's property.

Working with BlazeAid

The Smiths said they thoroughly enjoyed working with NFP BlazeAid.

“BlazeAid has an excellent team who worked efficiently and effectively,” David said.

“We wanted to support BlazeAid as best we could, so we allowed them to store gear at the property. We also catered for them while they were rebuilding the fence, putting on morning and afternoon tea and BBQs.

“BlazeAid has an excellent team who worked efficiently and effectively, David said.



Figure 3. Completed fence.

For more information

Contact your nearest Local Land Services office on 1300 795 299 or visit our website <https://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/what-we-do/our-major-projects/early-needs-recovery-program>