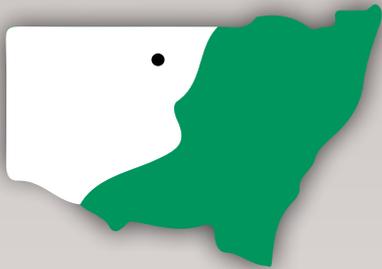


Land Services Program

Dave and Tracey Hegarty

CASE STUDY



Location

Bourke

Property name

Bellenbar

Owners

Dave and Tracey Hegarty

Enterprise mix

Sheep and goats

Property size

13,650 ha

Average annual rainfall

260 mm



Figure 1: Tracey and Dave Hegarty of Bellenbar near Bourke.

The Land Services Program has provided a new approach to property planning and rural enterprise mentoring in the Western region. Since its launch in 2018, the program has enjoyed strong uptake and has assisted land managers to build their capacity and innovation by learning from peers and industry experts.

Why the Land Services Program?

Dave and Tracey Hegarty had big plans for their property Bellenbar, located near Bourke, but weren't sure on how to execute them. Bellenbar had large amounts of invasive native scrub and scalded areas that were unproductive and difficult to manage.

The Land Services Program provided them with an array of opportunities and resources to help them develop an action plan to address and rehabilitate these areas and increase production.



Local Land Services



1300 795 299



www.lls.nsw.gov.au



[/LLSWestern](https://www.facebook.com/LLSWestern)



[/LLSWestern](https://twitter.com/LLSWestern)

Program participation

Dave and Tracey became involved in the Land Services Program through a program mentor - Glen Humbert. After a visit to Glen's property, Dave and Tracey were able to see first hand the potential benefits for their property and applied for a place in the program. Glen is one of a number of program mentors who provide advice and one-on-one support, as well as demonstrating enterprises and opportunities to the program participants.

In the first year of the two year program, Dave and Tracey attended four key workshops where they identified opportunities and limitations in resources for Bellenbar. They were able to understand their financial performance and execute their long term plans. As a part of the program they received a three year subscription to FarmMap4D and a 50 per cent subsidy for training activities and consulting services.

Implementing change

At Bellenbar there were large unproductive areas of scrub and scald. The Hegarty's aim was to rehabilitate and increase productivity in these areas.

Dave and Tracey identified that the best method to achieve this was to improve grazing and water management on Bellenbar.

Despite the drought, to improve their pastures they planted 5,000 salt bush plants that were hand watered when necessary. These have survived and will be an important feed source and provide soil protection in the future. They used their training budget to attend the KLR Marketing School, Grazing for Profit and engaged Hugh Pringle from Ecosystem Management Understanding (EMU™).

Dave and Tracey began using a number of strategies to improve their productivity. They have completed 59 km of external hinge joint fencing with an apron and three barbs on top as well as a further 53 km of internal fencing to create 16 paddocks to be rotationally grazed.



Figure 2



Figure 3

Additional water infrastructure including tanks, trough and extensive poly pipelines were also installed. This has improved their ability to manage both feral and domestic grazing pressure and prevent further degradation of their landscape. On-ground earthworks including ripping scalds, constructing contour banks and improving farm roads have been used to increase water infiltration and effectiveness of natural water flows rather than it running off and not being utilised by pasture species.

Benefits to the business

The Land Services Program has assisted Dave and Tracey by keeping them accountable and increasing their enthusiasm and ability to work towards their goals.

Completion of the Program and engaging with Hugh Pringle has increased their awareness of ecological process and the potential of their property. Dave and Tracey were also able to form connections with other like-minded landholders working towards similar goals.

There has been a noticeable increase in groundcover and pasture quality at Bellenbar since completion of the works. Over time, the number of desirable plant species and species diversity has increased, resulting in major production benefits for their business. This can be attributed to increased water infiltration and the ability to control grazing through fencing.

The fencing allows pastures to be rested, improving the ability for desirable species to spread as well as increasing the availability of quality feed for stock.



Figure 4

The improvement in pasture growth is contributing to reducing areas of scald and restoration of the landscape, soil and natural processes on Bellenbar, which is evident in the growing presence of wildlife and birdlife on the property.

The future

Going forward Dave and Tracey will be continuing to work towards their goals using the tools they have acquired through the Land Services Program. They are planning to complete additional fencing to reduce paddock sizes and hopefully see further improvements to their landscape. This will also allow them to graze more intensively and increase their production.

Figures (before and after)

Figure 2: There were large areas of invasive native scrub on Bellenbar, which has been cleared, with groundcover now growing.

Figure 3: Salt bush seedlings were planted and hand watered, that now provide groundcover and a food source for stock.

Figure 4: An example of scalded land in 2017 and successful rehabilitation of the area in 2021.