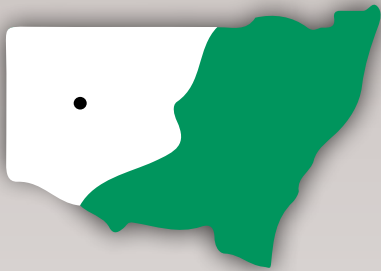


Land Services Program

James and Kimberley McClure

CASE STUDY



Location

Wilcannia

Property names

Netallie, The Strip and Riverside

Owners

James and Kimberley McClure

Enterprise mix

Merino sheep, goats and cattle

Property size

66,000 ha

Average annual rainfall

254 mm



Figure 1: James and Kimberley McClure.

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?

James and Kimberley McClure sought to achieve a better understanding of the mechanics of their business, primarily the financial aspects.

James and Kimberley were influenced to participate in the program to help improve business management, repair degraded landscapes and improve pastures.



Local Land Services



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Program participation

Throughout the program, there were four key workshops where James and Kimberley were able to identify opportunities and limitations in resources, understand their financial performance and execute their long-term plans. The program also allowed James and Kimberley to consider the 'human aspect' of running a business. They gained understanding on how their values shape the business, which was an aspect they had not previously considered.

Having a physical look at the country with Hugh Pringle from Ecosystem Management Understanding (EMU™) helped enhance James and Kimberley's understanding of the natural processes of the landscape and how to work with their country to heal it, as opposed to losing fertility after rain events. This was achieved by building the resilience of the landscape to capture as much moisture as possible.

As a part of the program they also received a three-year subscription to FarmMap4D and a 50 per cent subsidy for training activities and consulting services.

Implementing change

James and Kimberley worked with program mentor Gus Whyte from Wyndham Station for daily advice, one-on-one support and to discuss enterprises and opportunities.

The McClure's undertook a benchmarking course, which allowed them to break down the business into nuts and bolts, highlighting strengths, weaknesses and potential opportunities. They also made record keeping a priority and are using a number of technologies to do so. Using MaiaGrazing they can access real-time stock numbers and movement. James and Kimberley have also been implementing FarmMap4D for the day-to-day running of the property. They found it especially useful for waterpoint monitoring and setting water circles to determine where the best utilisation of country will occur and where they are missing out on good potential grazing.



Figure 2



Figure 3

Benefits to the business

Following the Land Services Program and EMU™ workshop with Hugh Pringle, James and Kimberley received funding for ponding works to help alleviate large scalds on their river country. The ponding works assisted in stopping some degradation occurring around large gullies. While the process has been slow, there have been signs of definite improvements, with vegetation slowly returning to the scald sites.

Improved bookkeeping has allowed James and Kimberley to start building a better profile as to where the business is tracking financially. This provides them with more freedom in making decisions moving forward and has improved their profitability substantially.

Working with mentor Gus Whyte was a highlight of the program for James and Kimberley. They were able to learn from his own personal pitfalls in transitioning from a set grazing enterprise to a managed grazing enterprise.

"Gus put a strong emphasis on the things that were being done well at Netallie and recommended strategies to keep on improving those elements," James said.

"The program and Gus's years of valuable experience helped us build the confidence to not only improve our business, but to get involved in joining other programs."



Figure 4

The future

After finishing the Land Services Program, James entered the Young Farmer Business Program to further develop his office skills. He believes he wouldn't have had the confidence to do so without the backing of the Land Services Program.

The program also highlighted to the McClure's that they needed to know a lot more about the business.

"While we learnt a lot during the program, it really highlighted just how far behind we really were," James said.

Striving to enhance their professional development, James and Kimberley will continue to learn and implement new strategies into their business. They will monitor their stock and country using MaiaGrazing and FarmMap4D and seek assistance from Local Land Services for projects in the future.

Figures

Figure 2: The start of ponding works at Riverside.

Figure 3: An aerial view of the ponding works.

Figure 4: Vegetation growth after ponding works.