

Creating New Paddock Sentinels in The Kyeamba and Tarcutta Valleys



Background

Paddock Trees are the remnants of once extensive woodlands and are often the oldest living things in the landscape. Across our rural landscape, paddock trees stand out as an iconic image, providing shade and shelter for livestock and helping to maintain the productive capacity of the land. Paddock trees also provide an immense benefit to biodiversity by providing food, shelter and nesting sites for a large number of birds, bats, insects and small mammals. Landholders can make a huge difference towards the sustainability of their farm and to the broader landscape by protecting and encouraging paddock trees.

Why are Paddock Trees Disappearing

Scattered paddock trees overlap with the most productive areas of our grazing landscape, making them particularly vulnerable to grazing pressures.

These large trees are disappearing due to:

- **Senescence** - Many large trees are at the end of their lifespan and if regeneration is not encouraged these trees, their genetics and their habitat value will be lost from the landscape.
- **Mistletoe and Insect Damage**: Stressed trees are in more danger of being attacked by mistletoe and insects such as Christmas beetles, sawfly larvae and lerps.
- **Clearing** - for firewood, fences and access for wider machinery.
- **Fertilisers and herbicides** change soil nutrient levels and herbicide drift can slowly kill seedlings and mature trees. Seed germination is also significantly reduced in highly fertilised soil as it is unsuited to native species.
- **Livestock** contribute to paddock tree decline by ringbarking rough-barked trees such as Stringybark as well as eating seedlings. Their impacts can also be indirect through camping under trees, which changes soil fertility, and causes soil compaction and degradation.
- **Bushfire** - The vulnerability has been further compounded by the January 2020 Dunns Road Bushfire which has burnt many of these old trees.

How can paddock trees be saved?

In recognising the importance of paddock trees on farms, landholders can protect and encourage paddock trees through:

- Fencing around selected trees to prevent damage and encourage regeneration,
- Avoiding fertiliser and cultivation near trees,
- Avoiding herbicide spray drift onto paddock trees,
- Leaving fallen timber on the ground as habitat
- Including paddock trees when designing revegetation sites
- Managing grazing to help young plants survive, and
- Controlling herbivores such as rabbits and hares.

Who is involved in the project?

This project is a partnership between the Murrumbidgee Landcare Inc, Kyeamba and Tarcutta Landcare groups and NSW Wires Inc. The aim of this project is to help 10 landholders in each valley to reinstate paddock trees on their farms.

What incentives are available?

Each landholder will be reimbursed for planting and protecting 10 advanced tubestock across approximately one hectare of land:

- Reimbursement for individual guards to be constructed of a cylinder of sheep mesh or equivalent, 1.6m high and 1m wide and to be secured with 4 steel pickets.
- Advanced tubestock using species such as Blakelys red Gum, yellow box and white box.

All landholders participating in the project will sign a management agreement detailing the works required and their ongoing responsibility to manage the sites for 10 years.

How can I become involved?

Landholders wishing to participate in the project will need to complete the Expression of Interest application form below and return to David Waters, dwaters@mli.org.au 0438 406 417.



Name:

Address:

Planting Site:

Are you a landcare member of Tarcutta or Kyeamba Valley: