

# Fellow Hills



Written by Jorja Pardey, Hannah Lennon,  
Lucy de Steiger, Indi Paton, Jasmine Lieschke  
and Annie Triggs

Holbrook Public School



## Creative Catchment Kids

Creative Catchment Kids is an initiative of Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre. It aims to improve engagement between our funding partners and school students by providing opportunities for positive, cooperative activities that encourage students to learn about and respond to, natural resource management and the importance of agricultural production.

**[wirraminna.org.au/petaurus/creative-catchment-kids/](http://wirraminna.org.au/petaurus/creative-catchment-kids/)**

## Holbrook Landcare

Holbrook Landcare Network (HLN) is a Not for Profit community network based in southern NSW, established in 1989. HLN is a vibrant rural organisation managing a range of agricultural and NRM projects to deliver information and support to our community, predominantly farmers. HLN supports farmers to achieve environmental care and improved management; the adoption of sustainable and productive agricultural practices and the support of innovation.

**Vision:** An economically and socially resilient rural community demonstrating strong environmental stewardship.

**Mission:** We exist to support our rural community to achieve positive and enduring changes in agricultural productivity, environmental sustainability and social capacity in the region.

**[holbrooklandcare.org.au](http://holbrooklandcare.org.au)**

## Petaurus Education Group

Petaurus Education Group identifies, develops and delivers a range of learning and curriculum experiences, resources and initiatives for schools and community groups to connect with land, water, productive farming, sustainability and cultural issues at the local level. The group was established by Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre in late-2014 to support its operations and education activities.

**[wirraminna.org.au/petaurus](http://wirraminna.org.au/petaurus)**

## Enviro-Stories

Enviro-Stories is an innovative literacy education program that inspires learning about natural resource and catchment management issues. Developed by PeeKdesigns, this program provides students with an opportunity to publish their own stories that have been written for other kids to support learning about their local area.

**[envirostories.com.au](http://envirostories.com.au)**

# Fellow Hills

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## ***Holbrook Landcare Network celebrating 30 years of Landcare 1989-2019***

**Funding:** In 2018-19, Holbrook Public School were involved in the Creative Catchment Kids program delivered by Petaurus Education Group Inc. Creative Catchment Kids is partnered with Enviro-Stories, a Peekdesigns education program.

This project is supported by Holbrook Landcare Network, through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program Small Environmental Grants.



## Story of the Family

The original owners of 'Fellow Hills' were Ian and Prue Paton. Ian enjoyed cattle shows, so stock was his main priority. He travelled to many towns and won a lot of top prizes.

In 2004 Hamish and his wife Abby, inherited the farm from his parents, Ian and Prue. Instead of Hamish following his father's farming practices, he decided to start cropping, and have stock as another option. Hamish and Abby have a daughter, Indi, who is very involved in the farm.



## The Mulch Lady

Abby Paton started The Mulch Lady business in 2016. It has been very successful selling lentil mulch bales. Abby started off selling big bales, but now she is selling both big and small bales.

But lentil mulch bales aren't the only thing Abby sells. The Mulch Lady also sells export quality oaten and lucerne compressed horse hay.



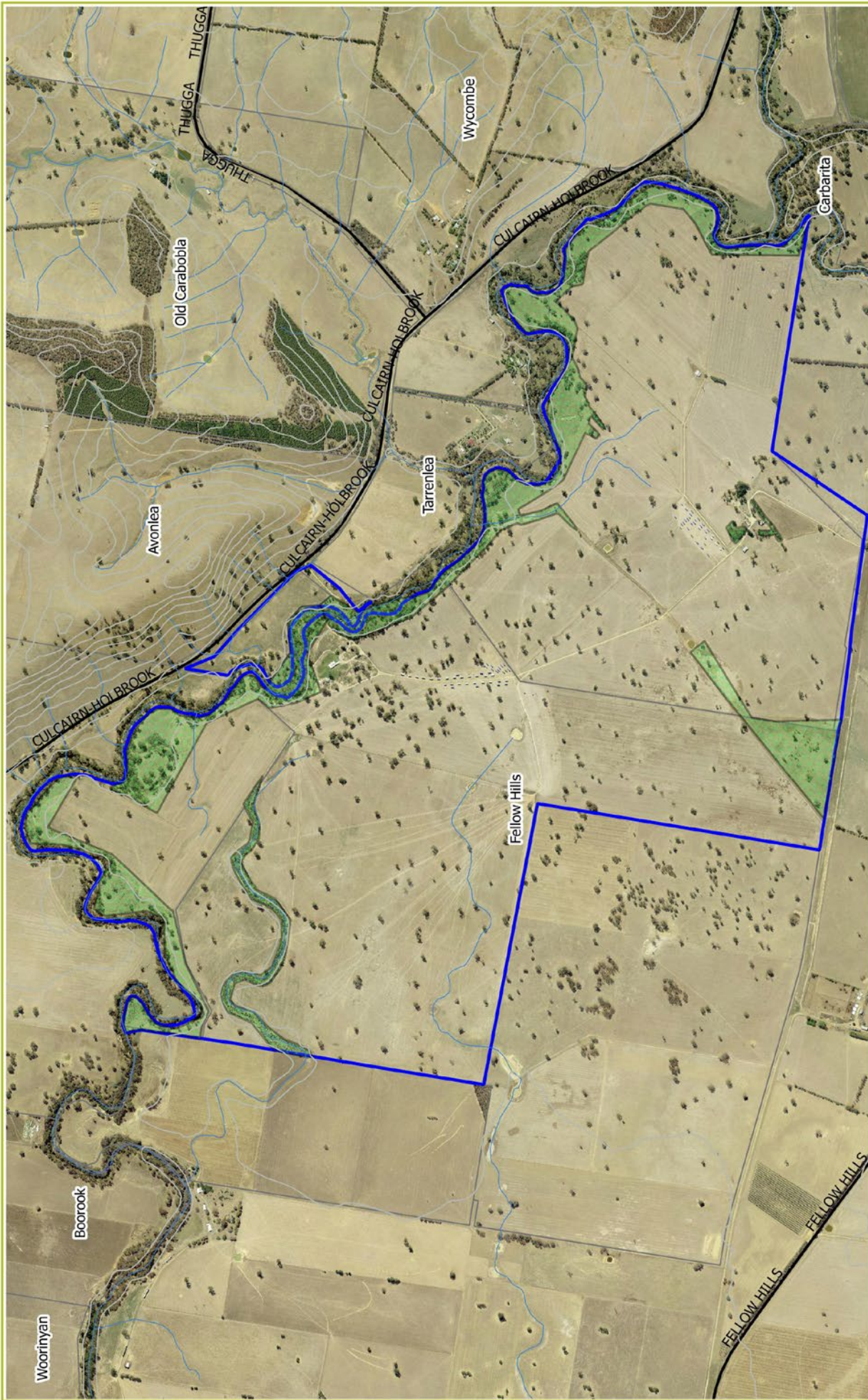


## History of 'Fellow Hills'

'Fellow Hills' is located on the Culcairn Road, Morven, and is 15.43km out of Holbrook. The name 'Fellow Hills' comes from an old railway siding that ran through the back of the property.

After Hamish and Abby inherited the farm, they bought more land along the Billabong Creek, making 'Fellow Hills' two and a half times the size of the original property. The new block had been badly overgrazed and was flogged out. All that was growing was Paterson's Curse and other weeds.





Aerial photo: 2014

## "Fellow Hills" Paton

- Revegetation zones
- Fellow Hills\_Paton

Imagery courtesy of NSW Land and Property Information.  
 Base data sourced from the Office of Environment & Heritage.  
 Holbrook Landcare does not guarantee this data is free from error.  
 Produced - 19.6.2019



## Landcare

Abby and Hamish have been a part of Holbrook Landcare for over 15 years. One of their landcare projects involved fencing off the Billabong Creek, which has helped rejuvenate the creek banks. They planted new trees, and left the older trees to regenerate.

Page 6: Fencing works and natural regeneration (bottom)

Page 7: Tree lots on 'Fellow Hills' and drawing by Jasmine





Twelve years ago, Hamish and Abby started to add tree lots with many different types of native trees and shrubs. The lots are designed to suit the landscape e.g. corridors along dry gullies and paddock corners. They have had very good survival with many of their plantings. In 2015 they were part of the 'Bushlinks' project. Hamish is currently a board member of Holbrook Landcare Network.



## Billabong Creek

'Fellow Hills' includes 12km of the Billabong Creek. The creek is filled with different species of native fish, such as Murray Cod and Yellow Belly. Different species of pest fish also swarm the creek. Abby and Hamish say the most common pests are European Carp.



Native fish enjoy the environment, as there are many reeds that provide a safe place for hiding from predators, like carp, and breeding. The trees that overhang the creek keep the temperature just right. The trees and reeds also help the creek become healthier and run more naturally.





## Wildlife

Fellow Hills is the home of many native animals such as possums, Squirrel Gliders, birds, Black Wallabies, lizards, bats, kangaroos and wombats. Native animals prefer bushland areas with large trees, hollows and lots of food like grass, seeds, pollen, flowers and sap.





Squirrel Gliders are one of the native animals on the farm. They are a threatened species in Australia. Squirrel Gliders like big hollow trees, and there are many to be found along the Billabong Creek. There are also many big, old paddock trees and tree lots on 'Fellow Hills', that animals use for their homes.

There is also a white 'Bambi' deer that loves the Billabong Creek, because it is a safe area that provides water, food and shelter.



Squirrel Glider (Peter Merritt)

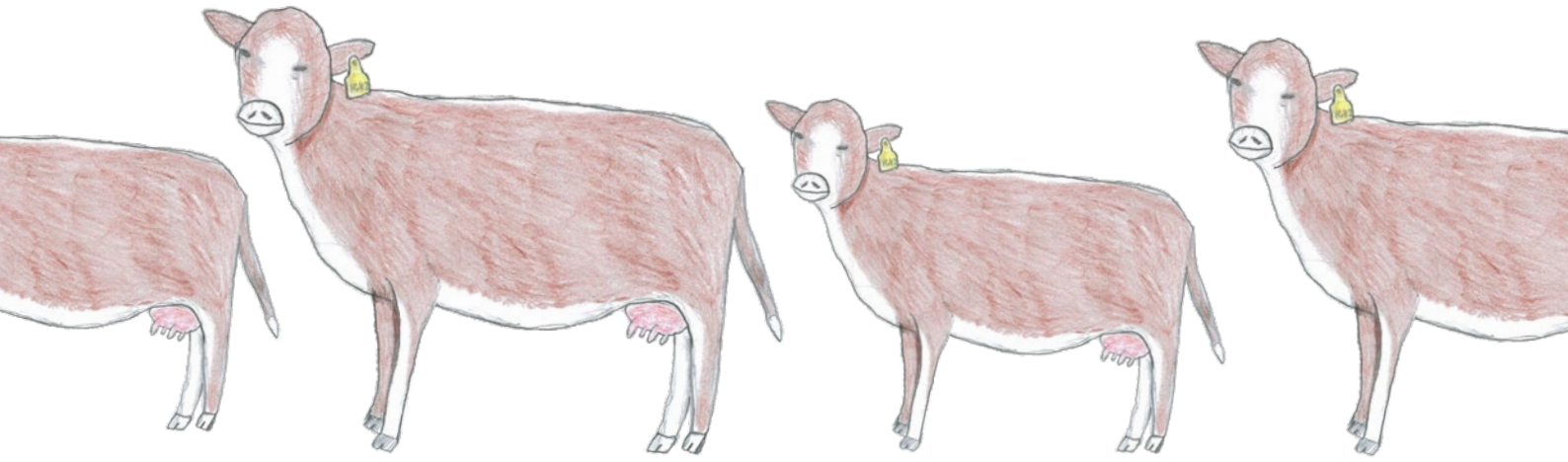
## Stock Movement

Approximately 400 heifer calves are bought each year, and are kept for approximately 5-7 months, before they are sold on. There are 700 Merino ewes for wool and first cross fat lambs from Poll Dorset rams, 5 horses and a pony.

Stock are rotated between different types of feed; pasture, hay, silage and crop stubble as they are moved between paddocks to best manage the available feed and protect ground cover. During droughts the cattle are fed hay and silage in a yard, whilst sheep are fed different types of grains, and hay if needed.

Stock are fenced out of the Billabong Creek to help the trees, shrubs and wildflowers regenerate. It is sometimes crash grazed by cattle.





Drawing by Lucy





## Cropping

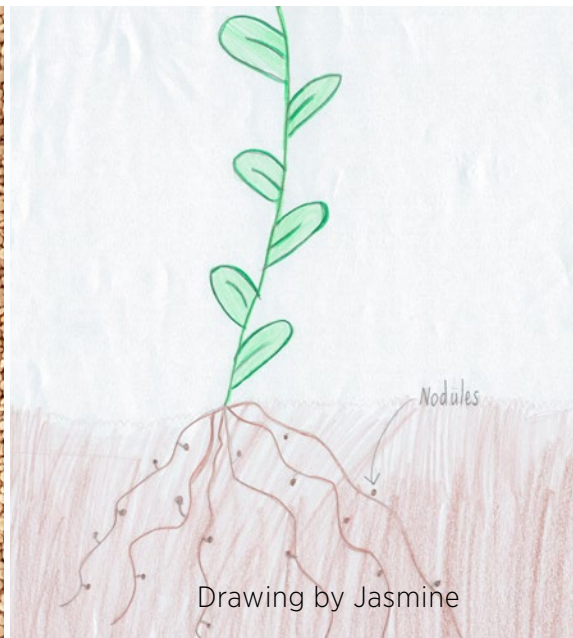
Wheat, barley, oats and lentils are the main crops grown on 'Fellow Hills'.

Cereal crops are typically dual purpose varieties. They are planted in April, and grazed by sheep and cattle from May to mid-August. Once the stock are removed, the crop will recover for either grain or hay production in November to December of that same year.

It takes 10-12 days to make wheaten hay, and in that period they do not want any rain. The 8 x 4 x 3 foot sized bales are stacked in the hay shed, up to six bales high.







## Lentils

The Paton's were one of the first people in NSW to grow lentils. They had the options to grow chickpeas, lentils, fava beans or lupins, but decided to pick lentils. Lentils are a pulse crop and a legume.

The lentil roots nodulate, which fixes nitrogen from the air. Nodules look like little white crumbs scattered among the roots (see drawing). They are really beneficial for the soil, because the nitrogen goes into the soil and plant, and there is no need to add fertiliser. The next crop also benefits, and the soil is healthy and happy.

99% of the lentils are exported to countries such as India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka for human consumption. The prices vary greater from \$400-\$1,400 per tonne, dependent upon the demand. The lentil straw is baled for mulch.



## Weed Control

Weed control is one of the many challenges on 'Fellow Hills'. Hamish uses an 3,400 litre boom spray for many types of chemicals. These chemicals are designed to eradicate weeds and previous crops that are no longer useful. The main weeds are Indian Hedge Mustard, Sour Thistles, Prickly Lettuce, Sheppard Purse, Paterson's Curse and Rye grass.

Hamish uses a wick wiper on the lentil paddocks. It glides across the top of the plants, just touching the weed and not the lentil crop, because the weeds are taller than the lentils.



## Pest Control

Maintaining their animals' health is one of Abby and Hamish's many concerns. This means managing the pests causing harm to both the stock and the farm. For example, foxes. Foxes are always a problem on farms. They find their way onto the property and kill stock, such as sheep. Therefore, shooting the foxes is a solution.





Back: Indi Paton, Lucy de Steiger and Hannah Lennon  
Front: Jasmine Lieschke, Jorja Pardey and Annie Triggs

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*We acknowledge the Wiradjuri people as the traditional  
custodians of the country on which our school stands*



National  
Landcare  
Program

