

Biodiversity at 'Yallock'



Written by Cooper Glass, Jim Henry, Izak Schirmer,
Isaac Bennetts, Aiden Walmsley and Ryder McKillop

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/

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

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

Enviro-Stories

Enviro-Stories is an innovative literacy education program that inspires learning about natural resource and catchment management issues. Developed by PeekKdesigns, 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

Biodiversity at ‘Yallock’

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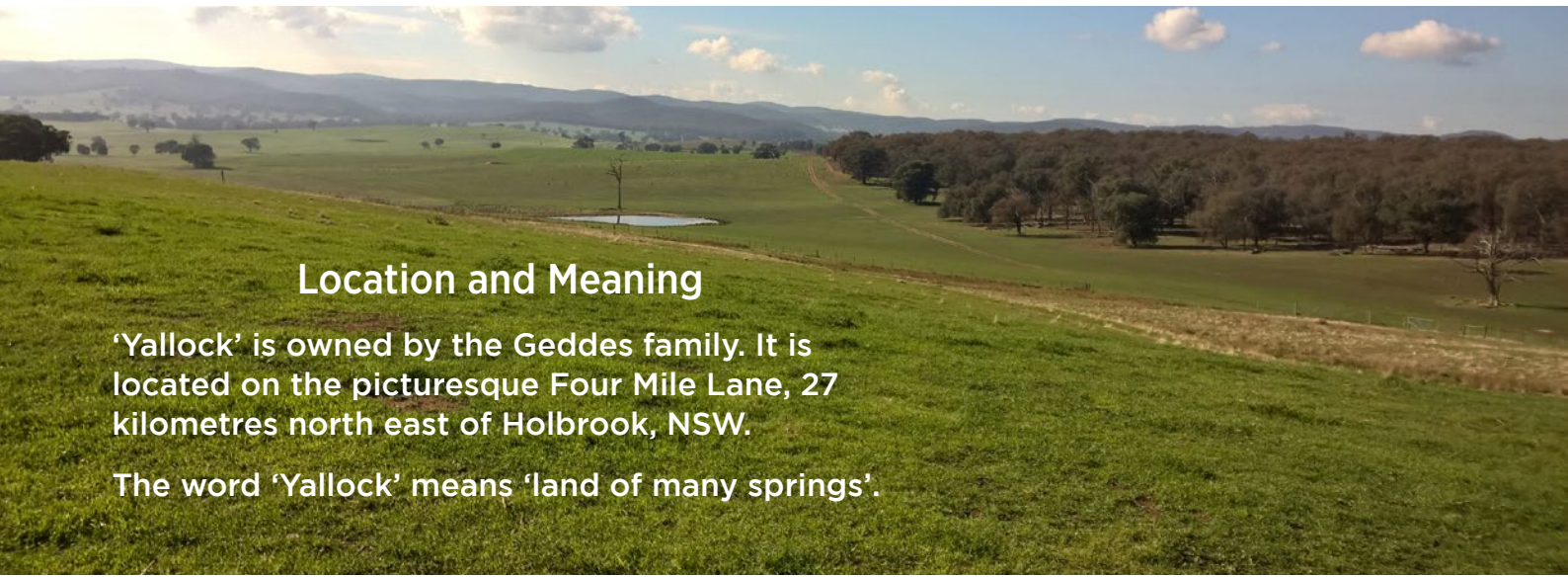
Acknowledgements: The Year 4, 5 and 6 English class from Holbrook Public School, along with their teacher Miss Chrissy Lavis and Holbrook Landcare Network, would like to thank Tony, Vicky and Marg Geddes for sharing so much of their time and experience with us. We really enjoyed the visit to the farm.

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.



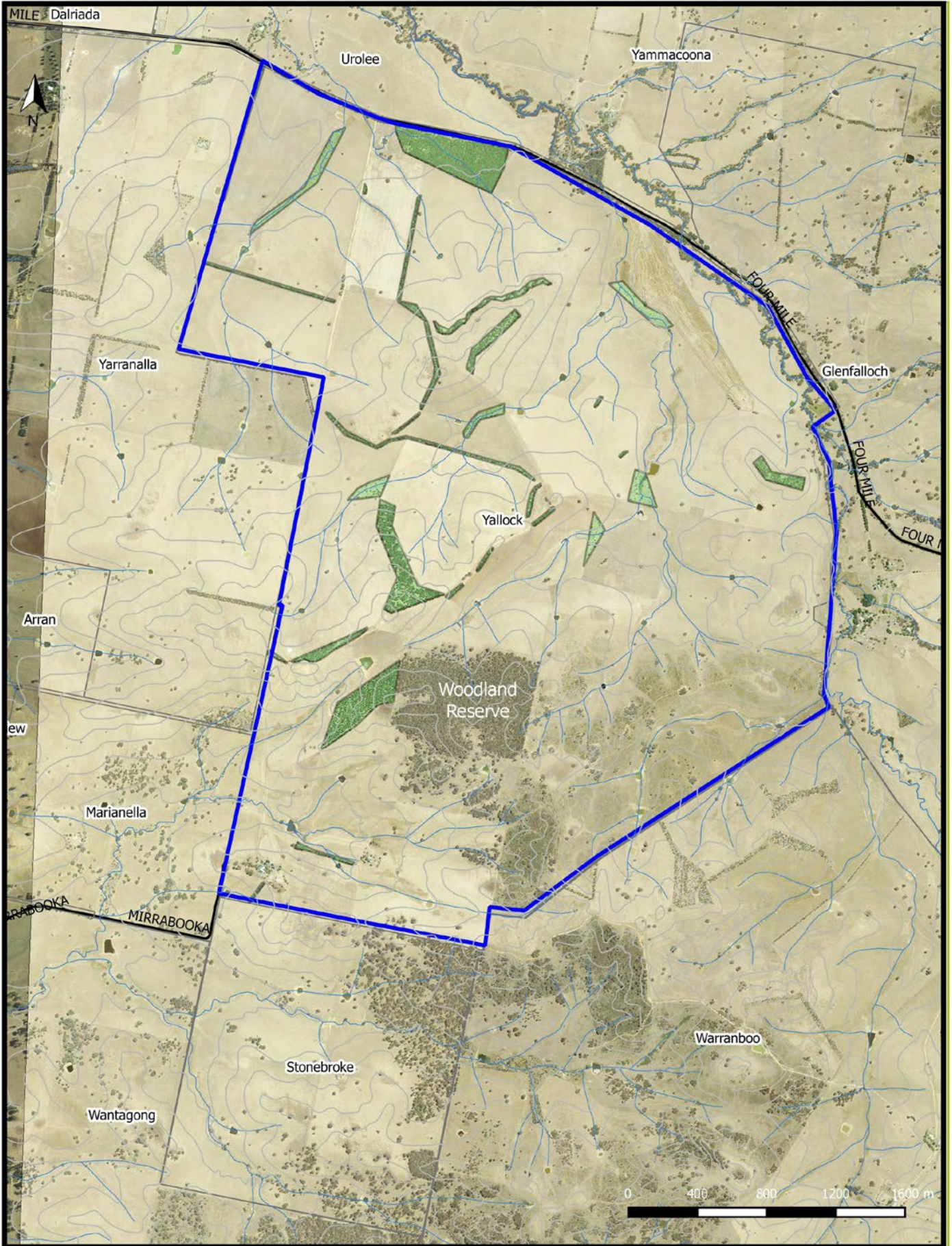


Location and Meaning

'Yallock' is owned by the Geddes family. It is located on the picturesque Four Mile Lane, 27 kilometres north east of Holbrook, NSW.

The word 'Yallock' means 'land of many springs'.





 Revegetation zones

Aerial photo:2014

"Yallock" Geddes

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 - 20.6.2019

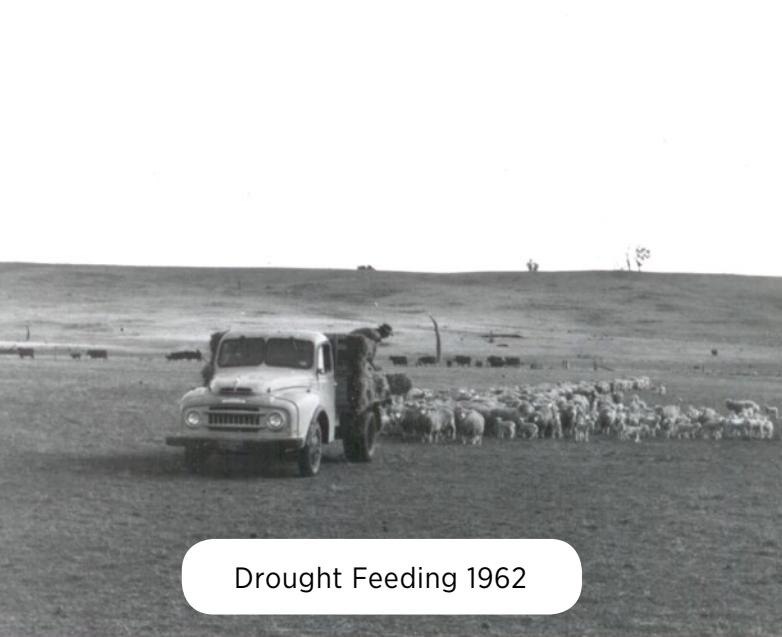


Family History

'Yallock' was bought in 1949 by Ian and Bev Geddes. It was originally 2,777 acres (1,124 hectares). Over the years, the family has purchased neighbouring blocks and, at one point, it was just under 6,000 acres. It was later divided between brothers, David and Roger.

The current 'Yallock' property was passed down to Roger and Marg Geddes and then to their son, Tony, and his wife, Vicky. It is 3,192 acres (1,292 hectares). Tony and Vicky also lease 'Stonebroke', adding another 649 acres (262 hectares) on to the southern boundary.

In the 1952 fires, many acres of the property were burnt, including the house. Since then, the house has been rebuilt.



Drought Feeding 1962



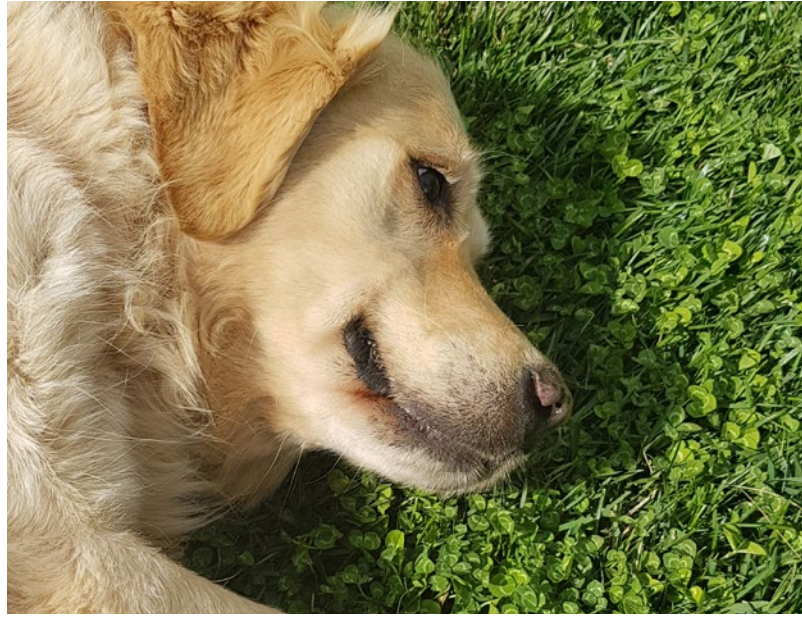
Tony and Marg Geddes



Family Pets

The Geddes family have some pets. They have a Golden Retriever, named Izzy, who loves to play fetch and run around with the children. She also enjoys lazing in the sun near the house.

There are also six kelpie work dogs on the farm. They help Tony and the workmen move the stock.





Farming on 'Yallock'

At 'Yallock', the Geddes' farm sheep and crops. They used to farm cattle, but when the Millennium Drought hit, the cattle needed too much water and feed, so they sold them. Now, their main enterprise is sheep.

The Geddes' have 15,000 Merino sheep, which are sought after for their quality wool and lack of wrinkles. Their wool is super fine, with a measurement of 17 microns, and is used for clothing. China buys the bulk of the wool, however, Italy buys the finest wool.

Initially, perennial pastures were difficult to establish, but now, using direct drilling techniques and better knowledge of species and nutrient requirements, there is a much better pasture establishment rate. Good pasture increases water retention and reduces damaging run-off that causes erosion and dam contamination.

The Geddes' also farm crops. They plant canola, wheat, Triticale and oats. Once the crop is harvested, some of it is sent to the Henty silos, some sold for seed, and some is kept until the supply decreases and the price in the market increases.

They also grow forage brassica for autumn stock feeding as it can provide quick and abundant feed, with high digestibility, energy, and protein. It also helps get the paddock ready for the next grain crop, or pasture improvement programs.

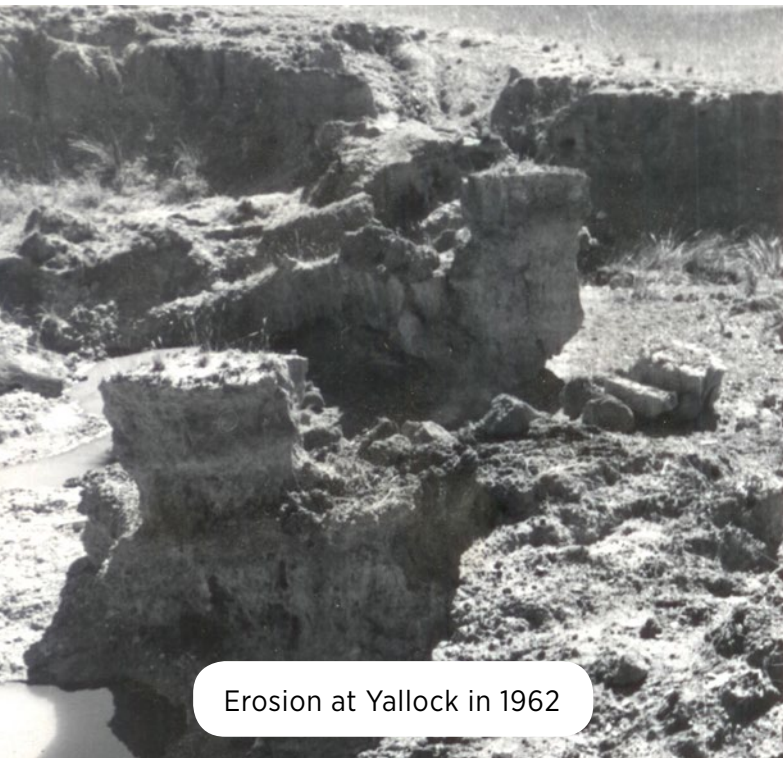


Landcare

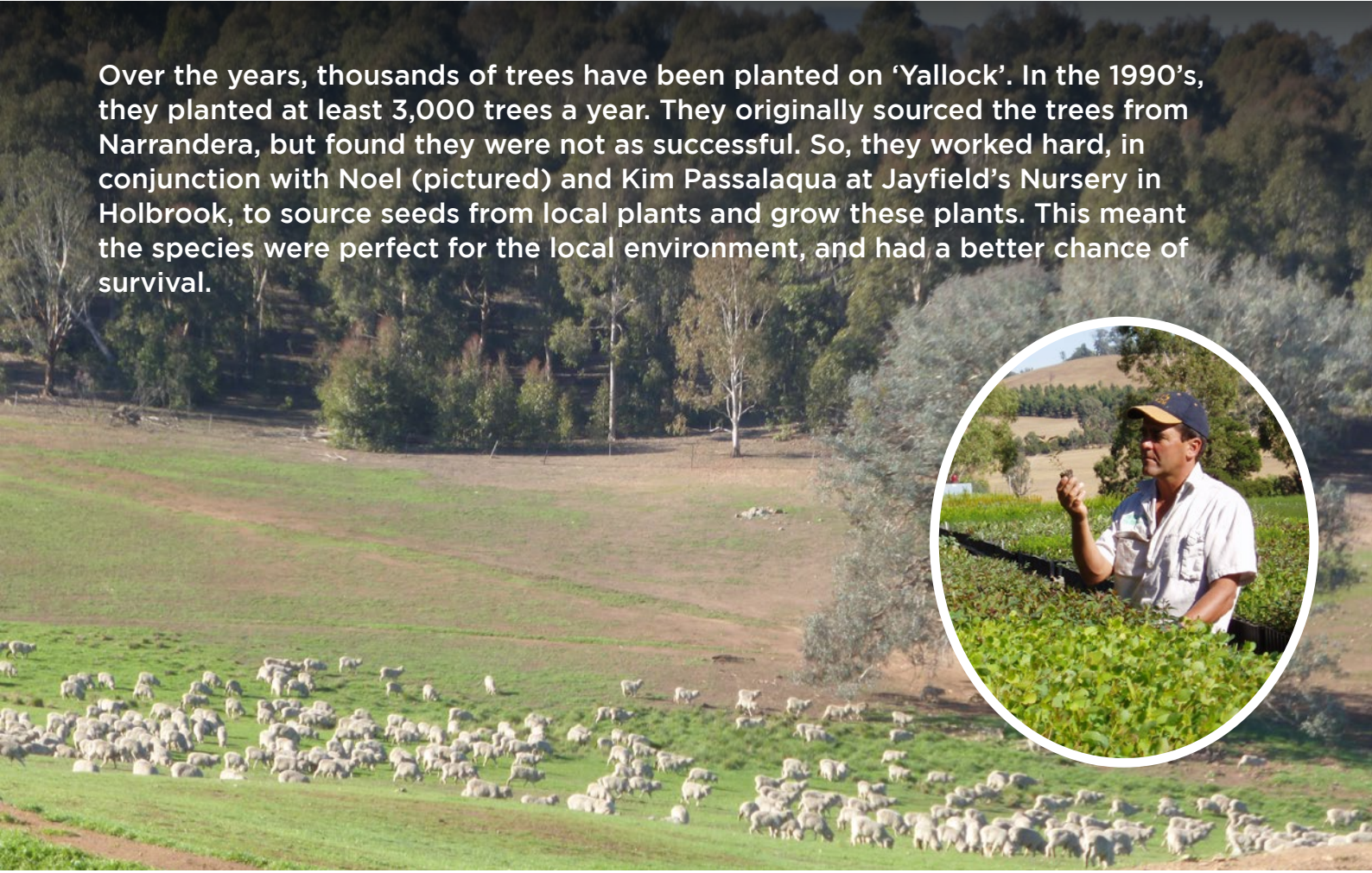
Since 1949, the Geddes' family has been caring for the land. Their goal has always been to leave the land in a better condition than when they bought it.

When they first bought 'Yallock', there was a lot of erosion and salinity. It only ran 50 head of cattle and 200 sheep on 2,500 hectares. The undulating country was severely degraded with massive sheet and gully erosion. There were deep crevices in the land, and nothing would grow in the soil. A lot of the original native vegetation had been cleared away for pasture.

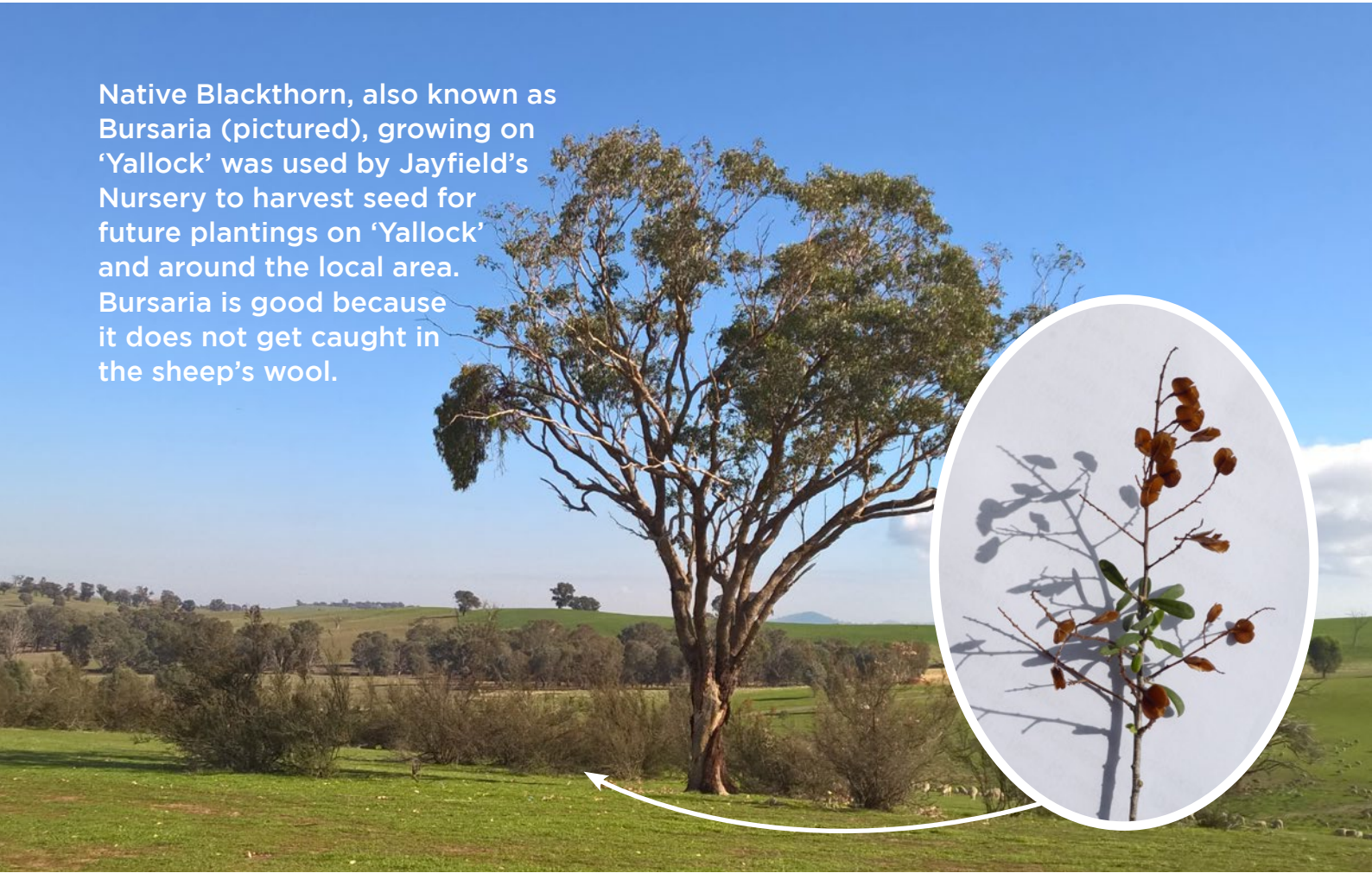
To help rectify this, the Geddes' family filled in the deep gullies, ploughed the ground to plant trees and fenced off all the trees that they planted. They also fenced off the only original woodland left on the property, that had not been removed.



Over the years, thousands of trees have been planted on 'Yallock'. In the 1990's, they planted at least 3,000 trees a year. They originally sourced the trees from Narrandera, but found they were not as successful. So, they worked hard, in conjunction with Noel (pictured) and Kim Passalacqua at Jayfield's Nursery in Holbrook, to source seeds from local plants and grow these plants. This meant the species were perfect for the local environment, and had a better chance of survival.



Native Blackthorn, also known as Bursaria (pictured), growing on 'Yallock' was used by Jayfield's Nursery to harvest seed for future plantings on 'Yallock' and around the local area. Bursaria is good because it does not get caught in the sheep's wool.



Some of the tree plantings were originally planted for shelter for the stock. Some were carefully placed to reverse erosion through a series of dams and overflow drains leading away from gullies, whereas others were established to reduce the effects of dry-land salinity. Over the years, the Geddes' recognised additional benefits from the plantations and tree lanes, such as their ability to attract biodiversity to the farm.



Spotted Gum



Flooded Gum hybrid forestry woodlot

Habitat

The woodland and tree lots are good places for native animals to make their homes and find food. The foliage is denser, creating an environment where small birds and animals can hide from predators and have a better chance of reproducing. Sugar Gliders also seek refuge in the woodlands, finding food and safety.





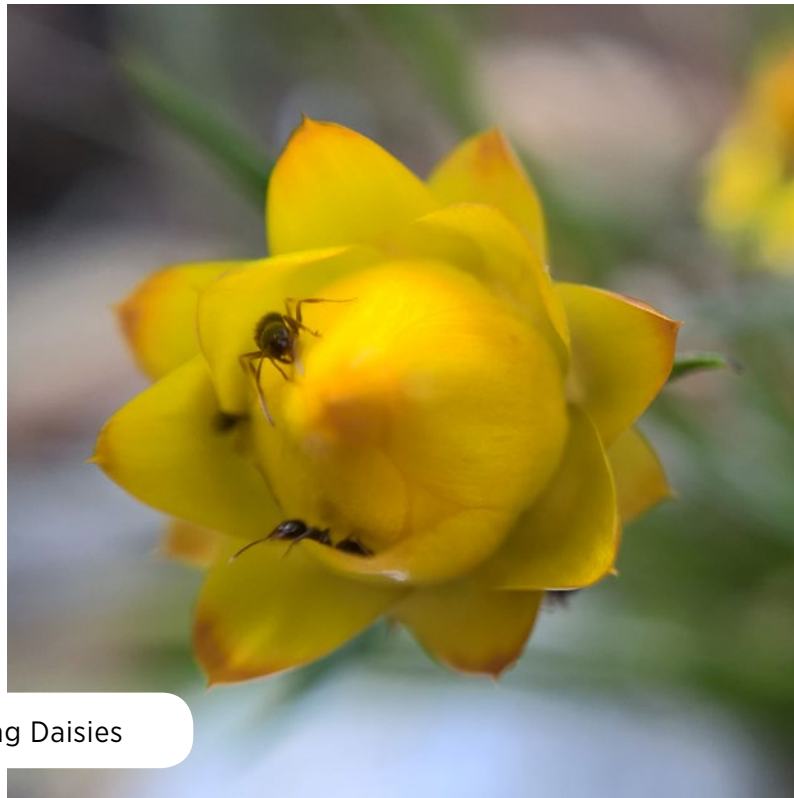
Woodlands

The 65-hectare woodlands are on a rocky hill and is mostly a Red Stringybark and Red Box dry forest. During the January 1952 bushfires, all the understorey was burnt away. It has since regenerated.

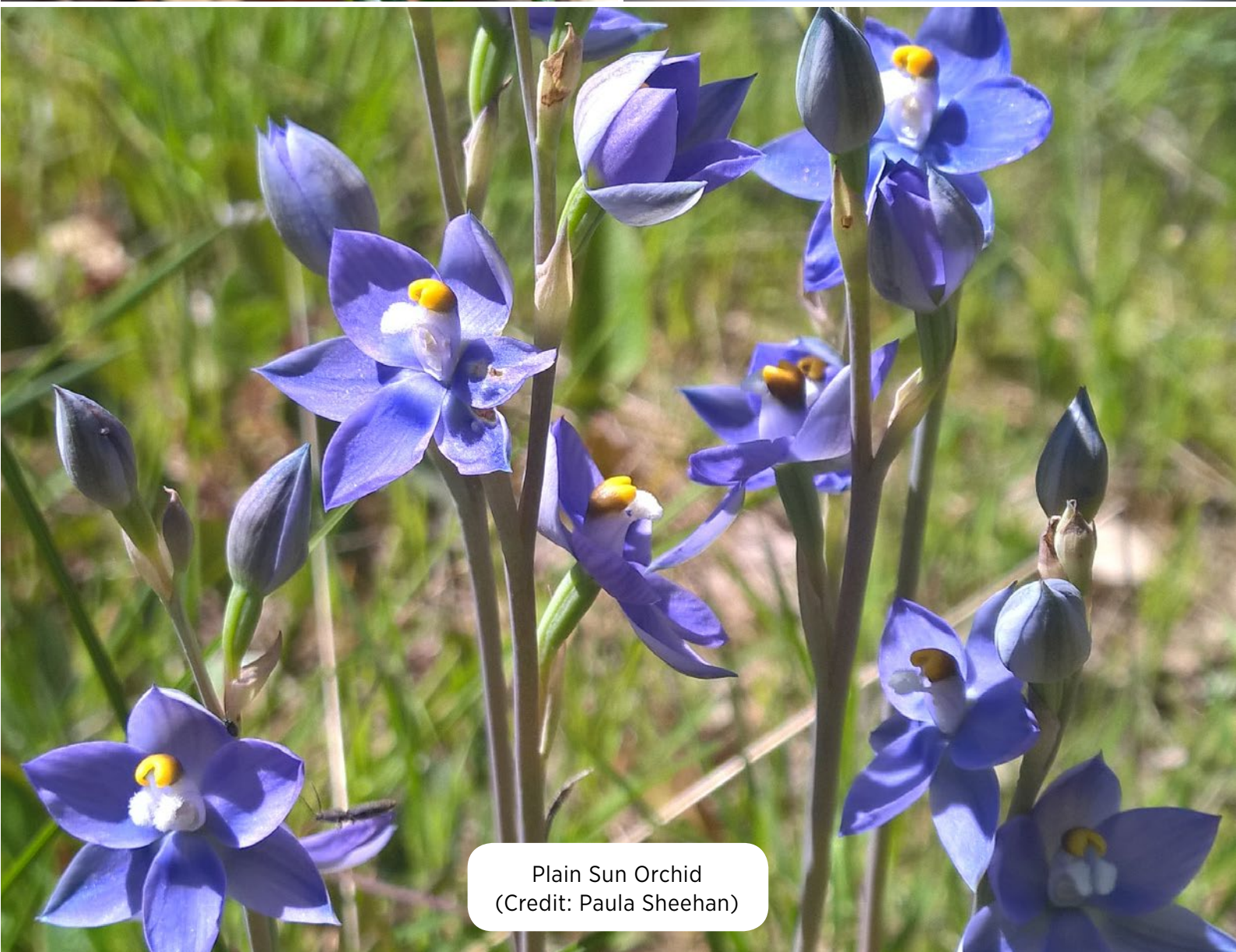
It is also home to other native plant species, such as Everlasting Daisies, Chocolate Lilies, and thirteen different species of native orchid.

The livestock is mostly kept out of the woodlands to protect these rare native species and allow them the chance to regenerate and survive.





Everlasting Daisies



Plain Sun Orchid
(Credit: Paula Sheehan)

Native Plants

There are many varieties of native plants on 'Yallock' including:

- River Red Gum
- Red Stringy Bark
- Grey Box
- Yellow Box
- Red Box
- White Box
- Drooping Sheoak
- Chocolate Lily
- Everlasting Daisy
- Broad-Leaved Peppermint
- Ploughshare Wattle
- Woolly Wattle
- Kangaroo Grass
- Shiny Casinia
- Silky Guinea Flower
- Native Blackthorn
- Prickly Acacia
- Happy Wanderer



Mistletoe flower
(Credit: Holbrook Landcare Network)



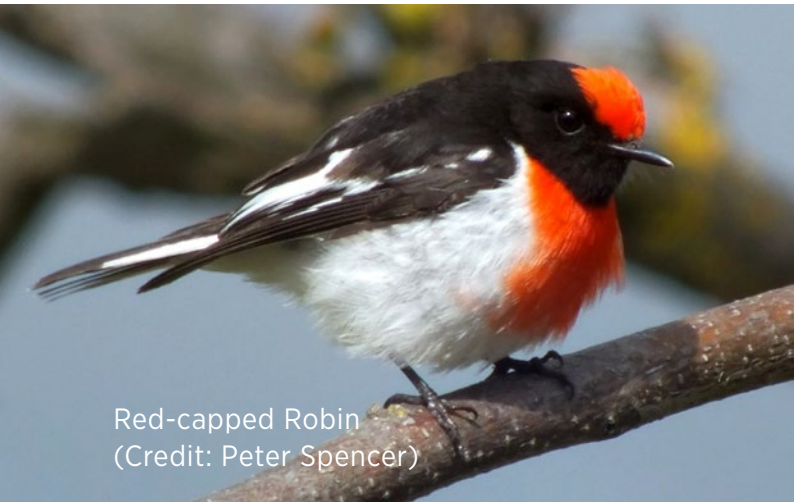
Mistletoe is a parasitic plant that lives on trees, such as *Eucalyptus*. This can also be found in some trees on 'Yallock'. It has yellowish flowers, small, yellowish green leaves and waxy white berries. Birds, mammals and insects love mistletoe. It often flowers in summer when other plants don't, so they are a good source of nectar.



Native Blackthorn
(Credit: PeeKdesigns)



Happy Wanderer
(Credit: PeeKdesigns)



Red-capped Robin
(Credit: Peter Spencer)

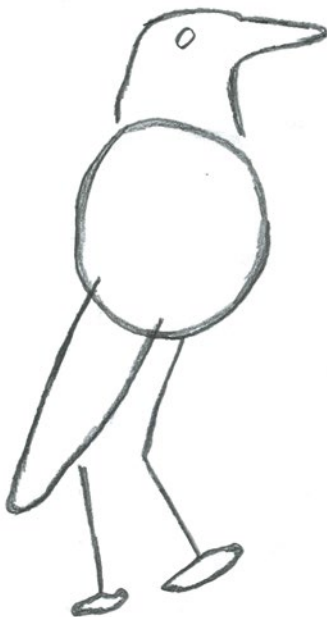


Flame Robin
(Credit: Peter Spencer)

Native Animals

There are a lot of different native animals on the Geddes' farm, especially birds. Some of the 100 different birds Marg Geddes has seen are, Scarlet Robin, Red-capped Robin, Eastern Yellow Robin, Hooded Robin, Flame Robin, Eastern Rosellas, Brown Treecreepers, Galahs, cockatoos and magpies.

On the farm there are also Beaded Dragons, Filled-neck Lizards, and both Brown and Yellow-footed Antechinus (small, carnivorous marsupials the size of a mouse).



Magpie by Ryder McKillop



Hooded Robin pair
(Credit: Peter Merritt)



Bearded Dragon
(Credit: Marg Geddes)



Yellow-footed Antechinus
(Credit: Peekdesigns)

Pest Control

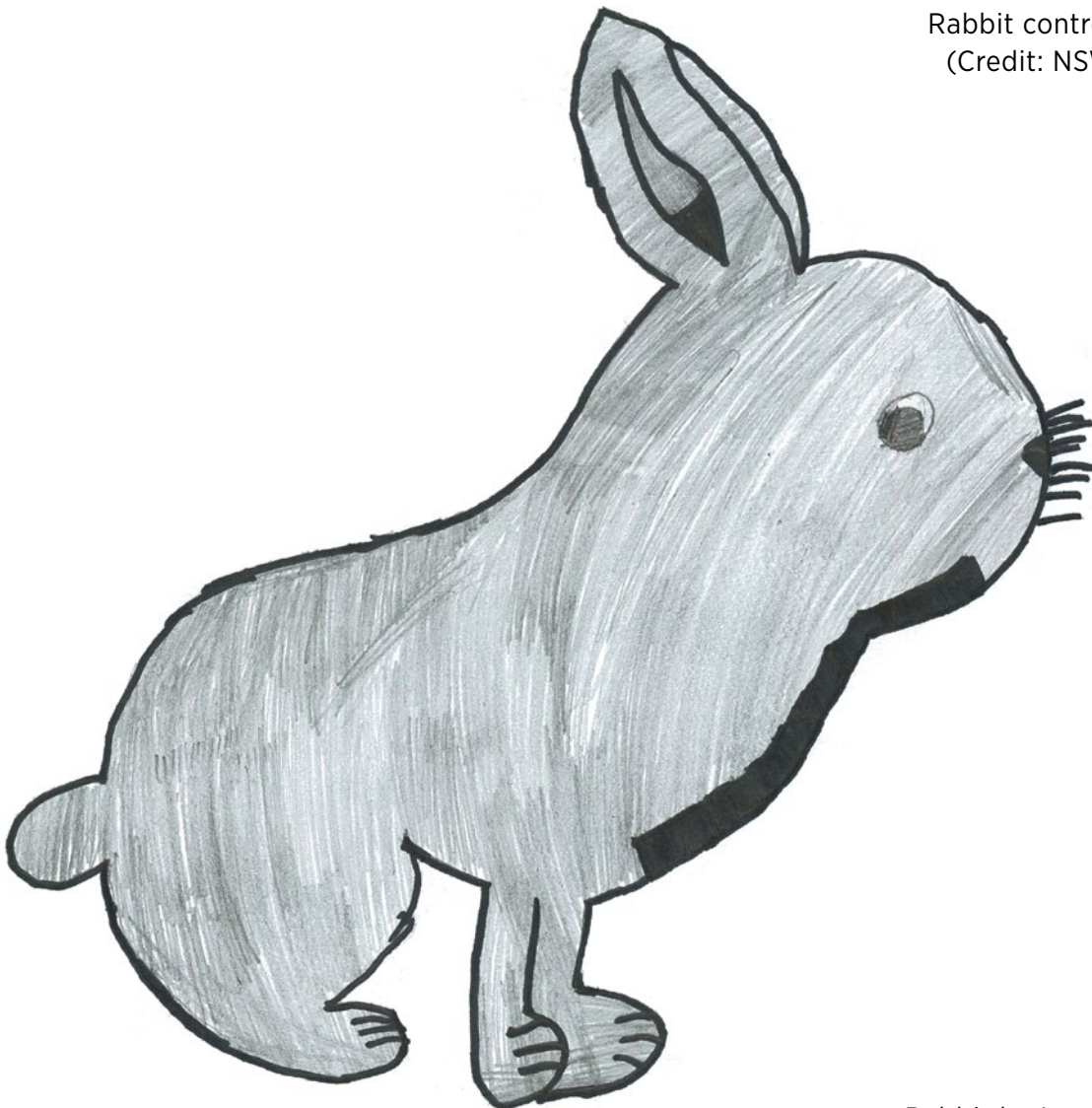
There are a number of pests, including foxes and rabbits. Rabbits were a massive problem when they bought the property. They eradicated an estimated twenty to thirty thousand rabbits using control methods such as shooting, baiting, netting, gassing (top right), burrow ripping (right) and trapping. The spread of the Myxomatosis disease throughout parts of Australia helped in their efforts on 'Yallock'. After many years of hard work, they are now under control.

Since the Geddes' main enterprise is Merino sheep, another pest is the fox. In autumn, winter and spring, foxes prey on newborn lambs and their lambing percentages are reduced. The Geddes' worked to control the foxes using methods such as shooting and baiting.

Wombats were rarely seen, however, they are becoming more common. Their burrows are can cause lots of problems to farm land.



Rabbit control works
(Credit: NSW DPI)



Rabbit by Isaac Bennetts



Marg Geddes cutting the ribbon at the new Holbrook Landcare office in April 2018, with Chair, Sarah Trescowthick, and Project Officer, Phoebe Gulliver. (Credit: Holbrook Landcare)

The Geddes' family are one of Holbrook Landcare's founding members. They were part of the 'Trees on Farms' initiative to manage paddock tree die-back well before a formal landcare group was established in 1989. Marg, Tony and Vicky are still active members of the Holbrook Landcare Network.

Learning From Farmers
Statement of Purpose
 We want to share our attitudes about native vegetation and fauna management and influence whole communities through awareness raising and education.

We want to be seen as productive rural businesses that understand the benefits of native vegetation and fauna in balance with rural production.

We want to influence the wider community to development to adopt best management practices of land management for sustainability, achieving production and maintenance of biodiversity together.

Initial project funded by
Natural Heritage Trust
 Rippling Communities Building Australia
 Project concept by Murray Catchment Management Committee and Greening Australia

LEARNING FROM FARMERS
 Tony Geddes
 02 6036 9547
 6 – 9 pm Mon – Thurs.

Swamp (or Black) Wallaby
 Brush Tail Phascogale
 Sugar Glider

LEARNING FROM FARMERS.
Yallock and Manoora
 Learning From Farmers
 Managing Native Vegetation



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2019 Holbrook Public School

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



National
Landcare
Program

