

REEF PROGRAMME CASE STUDY

Greg McLean, Gargett



Australian Government

The financial incentives and support provided through the Australian Government Reef Programme (formerly Reef Rescue) have enabled Gargett landholder **Greg McLean** to complete a wide range of works on his property, more rapidly than he would otherwise have been able to. Greg has also taken advantage of a number of educational programs offered to landholders.

Greg McLean has a 126 hectare grazing property near Gargett in the Pioneer valley. When Greg purchased the property it was rundown, with a high stocking rate, set stocking, weedy pasture and soil erosion along the creek that runs through the centre of the property.

In partnership with Reef Catchments and the Australian Government Reef Programme (formerly Reef Rescue) Greg has undertaken a wide range of activities since 2011. He now has control over grazing of the riparian zone through 1.3km of fencing and has established four off-stream watering points. This has reduced the nutrients (from cattle defecating in the creeks) and sediment movement along waterways on his property, providing stream bank stabilisation and erosion control. The management actions have provided yearlong supply of quality water for stock, thereby improving health and management.

In addition, Greg has planted 1.6ha of native riparian vegetation to improve ground cover. The vegetation acts as a buffer to catch sediments from tracks and bare areas. The natural regeneration of trees, shrubs and planting species suited to the riparian zone has resulted in an increase in deep rooted vegetation that stabilises banks and holds soil during high flows.

Greg has also installed 550m land-type fencing to divide alluvial floodplain from steep Eucalypt hills. This has enabled him to control stock grazing to these areas to ensure good ground cover is available year round. In turn, this has helped reduce soil loss from hill slopes and slowed the movement of any sediment and nutrients into waterways.

Through good use of programs designed to control grazing in riparian areas with fencing and the establishment of off-stream watering points, water quality has been significantly improved on Greg's

property. Increased control of grazing pressure has also encouraged more vigorous pasture growth and reduced the need for chemical weed control.

Greg has taken advantage of a number of educational programs offered to landholders through the Reef Rescue program and has attended a Stocktake course which provides farmers with tools to better manage pastures, including accurate fodder budget estimates and stock number records. Greg has also participated in Reef Rescue Grazing Forums over the last two years.

"The training and forums are a great way to update knowledge and get new ideas to boost productivity on the farm, as well as improving the quality of the farm overall," Greg says.

Greg says the incentive provided through Reef Rescue has enabled him to complete works on his property faster than he would have otherwise been able to afford. It has also given him a timetable to get works done, and allowed him to involve his son in the fencing and watering point projects. To complement this, Greg has participated in a trial of the Phoenix mapping program which has enabled him to identify and map the more productive areas of the property, while also helping plan future business and management strategies for the long term.

Greg has been a great advocate for the Reef Programme by encouraging neighbours and friends to participate, highlighting the advantages the assistance provided to his farm business and the support and information gained from project officers.

****Graziers please note:** Reef Catchments is currently taking Expressions of Interest from landholders in the next round of funding for the Australian Government Reef Programme (formerly Reef Rescue), available July 2014.