

Reply to Senator Clifford Hayes question.

Rural people that produce must deal in facts or almost immediately fail. What they produce must be done evaluating local climate, soil types, threats, variety of plant ect. Intelligent evaluation and a commitment to hard work. The principles of sustainable conservation, (I prefer it called a respectful relationship), are the same.

We live in a permanently changed, and constantly changing environment. Currently we have dictated on us one intellectually lazy lockup system for thousands of different ecosystems. In the case of MW'S Healthy Waterways Program, they fence off, plant like hairs on a dogs back. This system is designed for total reliance on chemicals used right up to the waters edge. Bushfire risk appear to be a nuisance to be dismissed with bushfire management plans that all local input - knowledge was excluded and it appears that our local bushfire history was excluded also. History is fact. All inputs controlled. Are these actions of criminal culpability in a bushfire senario?

My stewardship that is now worthless to a very successful environmental power and business model, I will explain my stewardship example.

As stated we used goats for the first two years. The blackberries had been head high. Our river reserve is only 17 metres wide. We placed the fence about 50 at metres, well into our freehold land. The area consists of a old river bed and therefore a island at times. A magnificent remnant stand of Manna Gums, but difficult to maintain due to the old river bed and excavation by wombats.

Being fertile and high rainfall hand maddocking of thistles, hemlock ect was carried out numerous times a year. One seasons weeds is seven years problems. Spot spraying of hardy weeds such as blackberries, ivy. Cattle were grazed for one day only, to expose weeds and to reduce fire fuel. Usually about twice a year. Under our original MW Riparian Management Licence they supplied us with funding for revegetation. When this was done, cattle were excluded as a management tool for a couple of years. Revegetation done in thickets to allow maintaining with machinery. I suggest that what might cost me \$20- in fuel would cost the taxpayer possibly \$1,000- if actually done.

Chemicals have a essential place in environmental management as nature has no evolutionary defences from the many pressures we have placed on nature. But only one part of locally evaluated relationship with nature.

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