



Bringing life back to the floodplains:

biodiversity and production working together on Waihora and Overshot, Eulo Queensland



Ross Campbell overseeing bank construction.
Photo: Southern Queensland Landscapes

Observation, commitment and a belief that 'change is possible' has been fundamental to the landscape transformation seen on Waihora and Overshot stations in Southwest Queensland.

Starting with a barren landscape

When landholders Ross Campbell and Charlie Curtis purchased the 80,000 hectare properties 10 years ago, they knew the average annual rainfall was only 300mm and flood events weren't to be relied on. However they were confronted with large areas of hard, bare ground, devoid of vegetation and impervious to water infiltration. They recognised years of overgrazing coupled with an aged stock watering system was restricting the natural rehydration of the landscape. Bore drains, once a critical lifeline for the pastoral industry, were draining incident rainfall before it had a chance to infiltrate. Plant species had limited time to germinate. For the success of the business and preservation of the natural environment, change was needed.



Bare paddocks restricted water infiltration.
Photo: Southern Queensland Landscapes



Banks were constructed to slow water runoff.
Photo: Southern Queensland Landscapes

A program of restorative action

In 2020, with the help of Landscape Restoration Practitioner Glenn Landsberg of Southern Queensland Landscapes, a project was designed to slow water runoff and increase landscape hydration. Glenn utilised topographic maps and a laser level to plan and mark out the location of earthworks. Over the next four years using a combination of earth, rock and timber, banks were strategically constructed to spread water across the landscape.

The results were immediate

The response in the landscape was immediate and spectacular; areas that had been bare for decades began to revegetate and grow pasture. As plant life returned to the floodplains, soils swelled, restoring the natural sponge and allowing more vegetation to establish.

For Ross and Charlie, an increase in the supply of feed presented an opportunity to shift grazing management away from the traditional set stocking regime. They implemented a program of strategic fencing, allowing animals to be confined to an area or more importantly removed from an area to enhance the regeneration of vegetation. Stocking rates could be adjusted in response to feed availability and distribution, and productivity benefits immediately followed.



Vegetation cover increased with landscape hydration and supported a shift to rotational grazing. Photo: Southern Queensland Landscapes



Vast areas of bare land are visible by satellite in 2020. Photo: Southern Queensland Landscapes

Landscape scale benefits

The benefits of restoration on such a large-scale has had landscape impacts far greater than anticipated. Once barren and hot, the landscape is now cooler and has increased humidity due to transpiration from plants.

Wetlands are once again fulfilling their role as part of the natural water resource network across the Lower Paroo Catchment that includes the Currawinya Ramsar Wetlands located to the west. Migratory birds travelling from the Northern Hemisphere have increased habitat in which to feed and rest, before returning North along the East Asian–Australasian Flyway to Alaska and Russia for the breeding season.

The change is visible from space

The improvements on the ground are obvious, but comparing the 'then and now' satellite images of the properties reinforces to Ross and Charlie how impactful their change in management has been.

The image from 2020 shows vast areas of scalded ground. In contrast, the 2025 image reveals a landscape in recovery, with vegetation cover that is 'rain-ready'.

But the restoration journey on Waihora and Overshot stations does not stop here. They will continue to install water and fencing infrastructure to allow for greater control of grazing and experiment with alternative restoration techniques.



2025 satellite image reveals widespread revegetation of the landscape. Photo: Southern Queensland Landscapes

Ross Campbell's vision for landscape transformation is being realised but the work is ongoing. Photo: Southern Queensland Landscapes



Are the strategies relevant elsewhere?

Ross and Charlie are confident the strategies they've employed are relevant to other grazing businesses in Southwest Queensland, but stress that landscape restoration is a process. The results build over years, not months, so vision and perseverance are key and a support team is vital.

With a clear vision and relatively simple changes in management, Ross Campbell and Charlie Curtis have been able to build resilience, productivity and ecological health into their Southwest Queensland properties.

“ We had the vision of converting every drop of rainfall into actively growing plants, but technical expertise from **Southern Queensland Landscapes** ensured it was planned and implemented in a cost effective manner. ”

– Ross Campbell

For further information, please contact SQ Landscapes at projects@sqlandscapes.org.au

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