



## Banyandah Wetland – A Model for Management and Research

For farmer Jane Reid, the sign as to whether or not her efforts to restore a medium sized wetland on her property are successful is simple.

*"I'll know we'll have been successful when I see the wading birds return to the mudflats in summer,"* says Jane who owns "Banyandah", a 160ha property along the banks of the Murray River near Howlong west of Albury, NSW.

Jane came to the river flats five years ago from a cattle property in the Upper Murray and is quick to admit she has been on a steep learning curve, particularly when it comes to understanding wetlands and the environmental consequences of altered flow regimes along the Murray.

A keen horsewoman, Jane was attracted to the property because of its suitability for riding and its natural beauty. There is a 10ha or so ephemeral wetland which links to the Murray by a channel off a lagoon. When the water in the Murray is high, it flows into the wetland and then makes its way back to the river via another channel and anabranch.

*"The trouble is, because of the regulated flows, when water is released from the Hume Dam, it is usually back to front to what would have once happened naturally,"* says Jane. *"Instead of the wetland having water in winter and spring, it is dry then but flooded in summer."*

Releases of water along the Murray for environmental purposes can help, but, some winters, for example, even with an environmental release Jane says there hasn't been enough water to flush out the wetland so that its waters can reach the anabranch. The wetland is further stressed due to the drought and the low level of the Murray and it is now two years since the wetland has had water through it



Jane Reid,  
'caretaker' of  
Banyandah wetland.

Jane approached the NSW Murray Wetlands Working Group about using her wetland as a model to explore how to re-establish the natural wetting and drying regime of the wetland. The group has discussed plans to block the water out in summer. The next step is to get water into the wetland during winter/spring.

Jane has already made progress in achieving her vision of rehabilitating the wetland. With financial assistance from the Murray Catchment Management Authority and the Wetlands MWWG the wetland was fenced off from stock and 3000 native understorey species planted around its edges.

*"Despite several very dry years this planting has been very successful with wattle trees now 3 meters tall. I put the success of this planting down to timing and correct preparation prior to planting"*



Banyandah Wetland, near Howlong, NSW

*"I'm really excited by what we hope to achieve, that is, getting the wetland back to its natural state,"* says Jane. *"I think the word 'natural' is the key. I see myself as the caretaker of this land, not its owner and it is a responsibility to look after it."*

\* Banyandah wetland has been selected by the Department of Sustainability and Environment and the Murray Darling Freshwater Research Centre as one of the sites in a three year study investigating the impact on native fish and their habitat of various flooding and inundation regimes in lagoons and wetlands along the Murray. Linked into this research is a two year \$90,000 research project, funded by the MWWG and conducted by Charles Sturt University, to study how frogs are affected by flooding in managed wetlands.

*"I am thrilled to be able to offer my support for these research projects,"* says Jane.

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