



MEDIA RELEASE

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY

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Myponga landholders help improve water quality

Landholders in the Myponga catchment of the Mount Lofty Ranges Watershed are doing their bit to improve water quality in their own backyards.

As part of the **Myponga Watercourse Restoration Project** landholders are installing fences to protect and rejuvenate watercourse environments to improve the quality of water in local creeks.

The **EPA's Watershed Protection Office (WPO) Manager Rachel Barratt** said the project was established in 2000 to protect and enhance the quality of the source water supply to the Myponga Reservoir, which provides mains water for the central and southern Fleurieu Peninsula.

"It also aimed to increase the overall health of aquatic and riparian ecosystems and improve the biodiversity value along the whole watercourse," Ms Barratt said.

Since the project's inception in 2000 the WPO has overseen works with 30 landholders in the Myponga catchment and has worked at 48 sites to construct 37km of fencing, protecting more than 19km of watercourse.

"Owners of the properties include dairy farmers, beef cattle graziers and lifestyle landholders who have constructed 23 stock crossings and planted thousands of trees, shrubs, sedges and rushes," she said.

The project provides eligible landholders with incentive funding to install fencing, water troughs, stock crossings and native plants.

"This project allows landholders to fence off their watercourses to prevent the entry of livestock that often erode stream banks and defecate directly into creeks reducing the quality of the water.

"Fencing off the watercourses will help to improve water quality and the health of the aquatic ecosystem within and around these waterways which lead to the Myponga reservoir," Ms Barratt said.

The project's success over the past six years is a result of the commitment of local landholders through the work of the Myponga Riparian Group.

One such landowner is **Craig Penrose**, who recently received the funding package to use at his 20 acre property on Pages Flat Road in Myponga.

Until recently Mr Penrose ran cattle on the property, as did the previous owners. As a result, the native vegetation surrounding the creeks and dams has deteriorated and the banks have eroded.

He recently began installing fences so that once he reintroduces stock to the property they will be prevented from accessing the creek.

“In a few years time I hope that when I look through the creek line I won’t see four foot high grasses. I hope the native vegetation will return,” he said.

Ms Barratt said the dedication shown by local landholders like Mr Penrose demonstrates how every individual can make a difference to improving water quality in their own backyard.

“This is integral to our local catchment, which forms part of the Mount Lofty Ranges Watershed – which is the largest supplier of water to Adelaide and the Fleurieu Peninsula in an average year,” she said.

A report on the project is currently being prepared, which will include a computer model analysis outlining the benefits and improvements the on-ground works have had on water quality within the Myponga catchment.

Any individuals wishing to be a part of this project should contact the newly appointed Project Officer Tanya Roe through the WPO on (08) 8139 9900.

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