

# Nimmie-Caira Project

## Fact sheet

### Natural values

Nimmie-Caira is part of the Lowbidgee floodplain, the largest remaining area of wetlands in the Murrumbidgee Valley within the southern Murray Darling Basin. This floodplain and its associated wetlands systems are areas of national and international significance. They provide feeding and breeding habitat for many waterbird species, including colonially breeding water birds and migratory species, listed under international agreements, rare and endangered frogs and birds, as well as threatened plants.

The key vegetation communities identified on Nimmie-Caira include:

- Lignum shrublands
- River Red Gum forests and woodlands
- Black Box woodlands
- Mid-floodplain shrublands (inundation tolerant)
- High floodplain shrublands
- Aeolian rise shrublands and woodlands
- Marshes and sedgeland

Hydrological features include natural river and creek channels, natural quaternary lakes (deflation basins) and irrigation channels. Although some of these features are man-made and have disrupted natural flow regimes, they provide unique opportunities to restore the previously magnificent wetland ecosystems and their dependent biota and in some places, ensure connectivity between dryland areas and the floodplain.

While around half of the property was previously used for cropping and grazing, the majority of it remains covered with significant native vegetation in good or recovering condition.

The natural features of the property are the key to understanding and protecting the cultural values of Nimmie-Caira. Aboriginal people will be back on their own country and designing programs to ensure significant employment and health and wellbeing outcomes.

The natural features will also be a key driver of research and education programs with significant capacity to study and learn from our management activities, particularly in relation to environmental flow management.

### Cultural values

The entire Nimmie-Caira area is a rich cultural landscape supporting many Aboriginal people as evidenced by its cultural features, particularly the burial mounds and camp sites along with other significant cultural values. There is evidence that Aboriginal people used targeted interventions to promote the productivity of regions like Nimmie-Caira, promoting fish, bird and vegetation growth.

Aboriginal land ownership and management is a key outcome of the consortium bid as evidence has shown that this delivers the best environmental, social and economic outcomes.

All core partners have significant experience building capacity for Aboriginal organisations.



Australian Pelicans © Toni Moran



Plumed Whistling Ducks © Janette Rodgers

We are able to draw on a strong networks of advisors we have built to deliver integrated sustainability outcomes and to provide access for peer learning from Aboriginal organisations around the following:

- effective governance
- financing
- land and water management
- monitoring and data management/Knowledge systems
- adaptive planning and evaluation

### **Economic values**

Nimmie-Caira's economic values stem from a range of anticipated commercial activities including:

- **Sustainable low-impact grazing** - We will demonstrate exemplary food production in balance with nature, through responsible low-impact grazing and, when appropriate, opportunistic cropping. It is anticipated that responsible low-impact grazing will be the primary driver of income while the property transitions over time to a more balanced nature- and culture-based economy. We propose that at the end of the first 10 years up to 50-70% of the property will be grazed with the balance reserved for conservation.
- **Carbon farming** - We will develop a new carbon sequestration methodology to generate verified Australian Carbon Credit Units, able to be traded through the Emissions Reduction Fund.
- **Education** - We will establish the Nimmie-Caira Centre for Two-Way Learning in partnership with a leading university to share traditional ecological knowledge and western science, bridge Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures and generate income from course participation and visitation.
- **Ecotourism** - We will build a world-class environmental and cultural visitor experience catering for private guests as well as volunteer and educational groups.
- **Biodiversity credits** - Biodiversity payments will be investigated.

A number of other non-commercial activities are also anticipated including:

- Undertake large-scale restoration of Lignum, River Red Gum, Black Box and other wetland ecological communities.
- On-ground land and water management – e.g. managing fire, weeds, feral animals, salinity and threatened species to protect and maintain assets.
- Monitoring and evaluation.
- Undertake world-leading research on the restoration of aquatic ecosystems, using a strategic adaptive management approach.
- Increased legal protection of environmental and cultural assets through options that may include declaration of an Indigenous Protected Area, negotiation of in perpetuity protection agreements and/or nomination for listing as a Ramsar site under The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance.
- Cultural heritage site assessment and management to protect and maintain assets.
- Leveraging 20 years' experience in wetland and water management by partnering with the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder and the NSW Government to re-establish best practice environmental watering.
- Infrastructure upgrades and maintenance to enable grazing activities and protect and maintain cultural and environmental assets.



Black-winged Stilts © Ann Killeen