



Andrew Filmer's river frontage on the Cann is much improved from nine years ago (inset). (PS)

Recovery takes time and effort

Fourth generation farmers, Andrew and Jill Filmer, together with their daughter, Chelsea, have an appreciation of the recovery work that has been undertaken on the Cann River by the East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority.

The Cann River has seen many changes from clearing for agriculture in the 1870s to a range of river management works carried out following major flood events as far back as 1919.

In 1998, Cann River had a major flood event that caused extensive bank erosion and threatened infrastructure including bridges and underground cables. It was following this flood that an intensive rehabilitation program began.

Through community and landholder partnerships, the program has so far seen the river margins fully fenced from livestock, willows removed, other weeds controlled and an extensive amount of revegetation along

the riverbanks.

The Filmers, as farmers, see the benefit of fencing not only for the river's sake but being able to control their stock.

"Our river frontage has always been fenced because when running a high stocking rate and milking you've got to be able to get the cows when you need them," Andrew said.

Controlling weeds along the riverbanks requires an ongoing partnership between the CMA and landholders.

"We've signed a long term agreement for the management of the area along the river where we farm. It is in our best interest to manage the blackberries in the close vicinity of our fence line," Andrew said.

River stabilisation and erosion control has seen the installation of rock structures in sections of the river. Andrew sees erosion control along the river as one of the main concerns

for a farmer.

"Yes, I get worried if erosion is heading towards my paddocks," he said.

"The pools of water that the CMA worked really hard to achieve seem very settled. It's not a fast running stream like it used to be. The water actually stops because of the control barriers. When I was a kid, to find somewhere to go for a swim you had to be pretty lucky, whereas now there are deep pools you can swim in."

The recovery of the Cann River has been and will continue to be a process of partnerships with community and landholders.

"Ongoing maintenance will continue forever," Andrew said.

"No doubt there will be outbreaks of erosion that will have to be controlled or revegetated.

"To me the river is quite stable the way it is now. If that can be maintained then that's how I see it being ideal.

"River health is good for everyone."