



2004 National Landcare Awards

Andrew Nichols, "Redbanks", TAS

Andrew and Carolyn Nichols have been farming in North West Tasmania for over 20 years, with their "Redbanks" farm a fine example of a sustainable, environmentally friendly and profitable enterprise. "Redbanks" is a farm of 380 hectares with almost a third devoted to natural bush, wetlands and revegetation areas.

The farm combines its natural assets with diversified and rotational land usage, from poultry to cropping, beef cattle production, farm forestry products and a fine foods line, "Naturally Nichols". North West Tasmania has been heavily cleared and erosion and water quality are priority issues in the region.

Since Andrew adopted a Nature Conservation Management Plan for the farm in 1998, he has put in place a number of initiatives that have improved crop yield. Some of these include manure application from intensive livestock, use of cover crops on bare ground during Tasmania's wet winters, best practice cropping rotation, mulch rip lines and a farm policy of only tilling flat ground.

The steeper areas on "Redbanks" have been put into plantations or revegetated with native species to create wildlife corridors between remnant vegetation. Nearly all creeks and waterways have been fenced and revegetated with local species. This bushland contains some of the most pristine, high priority remnant forest in the region including white gum forests, blackwood forest and valuable old habitat trees. The farm also hosts a family of wedge tailed eagles, the threatened fresh water lobster and burrowing crayfish.

Most importantly, Andrew has educated those around him that "landcare values are not against production values" by showing very clearly that the two can operate in harmony with great success.

