

14. Kenilworth: Tackling the challenges of tree planting



Northern Midlands farmer David Taylor is investing in the long-term sustainability of his property, Kenilworth, through a combination of water infrastructure and strategic tree planting. While improved water access is set to boost on-farm productivity, David is also focused on increasing shelter with well-placed trees — enhancing both productivity and landscape resilience. The added benefit of improved visual amenity is also a valued outcome of the planting.

AT A GLANCE

Owner	David Taylor
Property name	Kenilworth
Location	Campbell Town, Northern Midlands
Property size	2,234ha
Enterprise	Sheep (wool and meat) and mixed broad-acre cropping
Rainfall	475mm
Soil type	Range from light sandy loams, red clay loams to black cracking clays
Forested area	About 300ha of remnant dry open native forest woodlands, 3ha of 20-year Pinus radiata shelterbelt and some mixed biodiversity plantings

KEY POINTS

- Extensive planning for shelterbelt establishment does not always guarantee an optimal outcome.
- Significant browsing pressure from Bennetts wallabies has resulted in a sub-optimal outcome. Investment to improve wallaby-proof fencing before re-establishing planned shelterbelts with effective browsing control is ongoing.
- The trees will provide shelter for livestock and crops, and enhance visual aesthetics when re-established.
- Radiata pine is suited for the site with aims to expand the area under radiata pine cultivation.



About

Kenilworth, located at Campbell Town, is one of seven successful recipients of Round 1 Integrated Farm Forestry Demonstration Site funding — supporting the establishment of landscape-scale, best practice tree plantings on commercial farms.

Owner David Taylor runs a high-performing operation with 9,500 Merino ewes, producing primarily wool (60%) alongside meat and mixed cropping. David has a direct supply arrangement with a European mountaineering clothing label, whose annual audits ensure the farm meets stringent environmental and sustainability standards.

As part of this supply chain, David is required to meet key criteria around soil health, carbon performance, animal welfare, and land stewardship — areas where tree planting plays a critical role.

Through the program, David has established L-shaped shelterbelts planted across prevailing winds, transforming two previously unproductive paddocks. The plantings will provide shelter, improve land use efficiency, and support his broader whole-of-farm planning as he undertakes pivot irrigation development across the property.

Tree planting at Kenilworth is not only enhancing productivity and resilience but also helping to future-proof the business through environmental accountability and improved supply chain credentials.

Previous land use

- Agriculture use (pasture) and marginal land.

Site preparation

- Heavily grazed to control weeds.
- Ripping and mounding conducted following pre-plant spray.

Planting date

- Originally planted August 2021.
- Refilling Autumn 2022.

Species and area

- P.radiata - 4ha

Stocking

- 1,000 stems per hectare
- Survival rate as at July 2025 = 0% fertiliser burn at establishment and browsing.



"We put some trees in the early 2000s, and they grew well but ended up in front of a bulldozer so we could install a pivot. So, a whole of farm plan is quite critical. Then when you're deciding where to put trees or where to put pivots, it is factored in," David Taylor said.

"My next-door neighbour contacted me and mentioned that there was this program going on... and it might be a good idea to piggyback an application side by side with two properties integrated together."

"The growing of trees that have potential for commercial harvesting at the end of a particular cycle, there are obviously going to be some benefits with being collaborating with your neighbours in terms of management of those trees and efficiency around services and the reduction of costs around harvesting."

Management to date

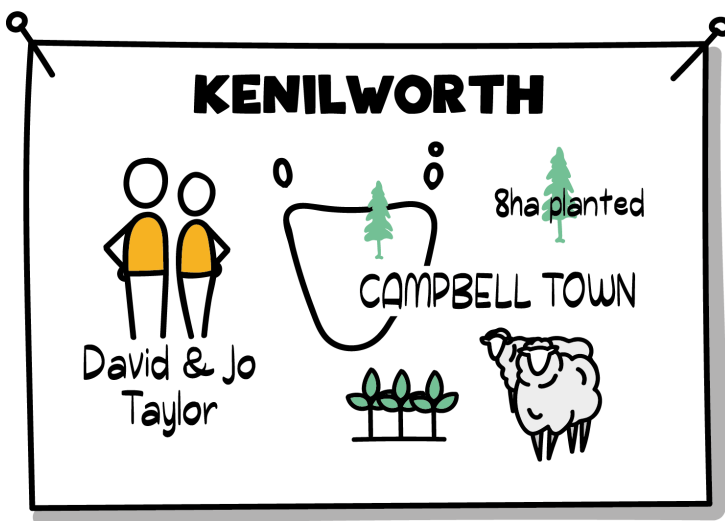
- Fencing and browsing control.

Challenges

- Incorrect use of fertiliser for the soil type which killed off majority of seedlings in the first planting.
- Dry weather conditions in autumn 2021 and 2022 on sandy soils contributed to low survival rates.
- High browsing pressure. Despite regular shooting to attempt to control numbers the browsing pressure exceeded control efforts over two seasons.
- Salinity cannot be dismissed as a contributing factor to the low survival.

Planned management

- As of 2025, the plan is to invest and improve existing wallaby proofing fencing on the property to assist in browsing control for future planting operations of both new and failed shelterbelts.



Watch Kenilworth's video [here](#)

David is a merino sheep farmer producing wool, lambs and crops on their 2,234 ha property. Listen to David explain his reasons for planting trees in an enterprise like his.