

Post Graduates-ILWS scholarships

Jane Roots

Jane Roots is an ideal person to tackle a challenging research project on “The future of farming in rural amenity landscapes.”

It is an issue that is becoming increasingly complex as, in certain parts of Australia, usually around metropolitan cities and major regional centres, traditional farming land is subdivided and/or taken out of production as more people move to the countryside and, as a consequence, the rural landscape that attracts people to country in the first place changes.

“I am looking at how we can create, manage and maintain a sustainable landscape which meets social, economic and environmental needs,” says Jane, who is supervised by Dr Joanne Millar and Dr Rik Thwaites.

Jane, who began her PhD in July 2008, is Canadian. She did her Masters in 1988 on biosphere reserves in Canada at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. For 20 years she worked in landscape management and community engagement in Canada, the U.S. and in Australia. She moved to Australia in 1996 and worked for the Murray Darling Basin Commission on various community engagement issues for seven years.

Prior to doing her PhD Jane was the regional implementation manager for northern Victoria’s Bush Tender program and before that the project manager for the River Tender program with the North East Catchment Management Authority. . She observed that almost everyone she dealt with through the Tender programs was concerned about the management of the broader landscape.

Jane lives on a conservation and farming property near Chiltern with partner Neil Ward (ILWS Masters student who is director of the Murray Darling Basin Authority’s Indigenous Partnership Program), their two boys, two dogs and eight horses.

Jane, who is doing her research on the Indigo Shire in North East Victoria, hopes her findings will help the shire understand what the landscape values are and the processes of governance around decision making. She is talking with farmers, councillors, planners, government representatives, community members and landholders and doing case studies within the shire in areas where there is current or potential conflict over land use.

“I am interested in what it takes to create and maintain a more holistic, or perhaps sustainable, landscape where farming plays an important social as well as economic and environmental role,” says Jane.



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