



## Hi Fert Sustainable Farming Award - Glenelg Hopkins

### Richard Stevenson

Richard Stevenson and his family have spent the past twenty-five years improving their property 'Coroona,' near Branxholme. The mixed farming enterprise includes merinos for wool, prime lambs, some cropping and an agroforestry plantation.

Richard has made many changes on the farm. He has moved from ploughing to direct drilling crops and pastures, stubble retention, fencing to soil types and ridge lines, introducing laneway systems, fencing out creeks, installing more watering points, fencing off wetlands and dams and planting and encouraging the regeneration of native vegetation.

A whole farm plan adopted in the 1980s has shown Richard how to link his Landcare practices with the farming operation. An example of this is the use of native vegetation for biodiversity but also for stock refuge in times of bad weather and feed when the understorey species need managing.

Richard estimates that over 10% of the property is now covered by trees and believes this has been a major factor in an increase in carrying capacity from 12 to 18/dse per hectare.

All non-arable land on the property is managed for conservation purposes. Three Trust for Nature conservation covenants have been placed on the property ensuring the permanent protection of the remnants Richard and his family have worked hard to rehabilitate.

The Stevenson family provides a great example for the local community. They are active members of the Lyne, Camp and Arrandoovong Creek Landcare Group, organising field days to raise people's awareness of significant native grasslands, spreading knowledge on direct seeding and participating in local rabbit buster programs.



*Pictured L-R: Andrew Jenkin, Plant Manager Hi Fert, Richard Stevenson, winner of the Hi Fert Sustainable Farming Award – Glenelg Hopkins, John Thwaites, Minister for Environment and John Landy, Governor of Victoria.*