

Land Services Program

Tony Thompson - mentor

Location and property information

Tony's properties total approx. 16,000 hectares and are located on the Barwon Darling River floodplain within a 70 km radius of Bourke NSW. The predominant soil type across the properties is grey vertosol soils typical of the riverine plain.

Tony's irrigation operation is spread across two properties and under normal seasonal conditions he grows approximately 800 ha of irrigated cotton. Other crops such as winter cereals, both winter and summer forage crops, grain sorghum and peanuts have also been grown.

One of the key objectives of the farming and grazing operation is soil health. Tony's grazing operation incorporates the implementation of regenerative grazing principles and the properties have been setup for time-controlled grazing. Most paddocks are around 120 ha in size ensuring that paddocks have short graze periods with extended periods of rest.

The grazing operation is focused on matching stocking rate to carrying capacity and no animals have been fed during this current drought. As numbers have needed to be adjusted during this extended dry period, all stock sold have been in excellent condition and record prices have been achieved.

Background and experience

Tony completed an Advanced Certificate in Agriculture at Murrumbidgee College of Agriculture in Yanco NSW in 1981. He then worked as a general farmhand on pastoral grazing and dryland farming enterprises in the Northern Territory, Northern Queensland and Northern NSW for five years, before working as an agronomist in Moree until 1993. In his role as an agronomist, Tony worked in an advisory and sales capacity in dryland farming and grazing systems in the Moree district. In 1993 Tony began farming irrigated cotton and running a pastoral grazing enterprise in Bourke NSW.

Tony has completed training in a variety of areas including:

- Leadership at Marcus Oldham College in 1998.



- The Executive Development Program for Primary Producers 2000-03, where he focused on developing business skills in the meat industry from production to plate.
- Corporate Governance training in 2008 and 2012.
- Strategic Planning and Implementation through the Institute of Food and Grocery Management in 2011.
- A Certificate in Regenerative Agriculture Systems in 2019.
- Grazing for Profit (RCS) in 2019.

Area of expertise

Tony has held numerous director roles, including the Director of the North Bourke Cotton Gin from 1996 to 2009, Director of the Catchment Management Authority from 2008 to 2011 and has been the director of Open Resolve since 2014.

In 2001 Tony was a finalist in the Australian Cotton Growers Awards and in 2003 came third in the Primary Producer section of the NSW Landcare Awards.

Management motto

With 26 years of management experience in the Bourke region and learning from his mistakes, Tony's business motto has a strong focus on "managing what we have as opposed to managing what we think we will get". This philosophy extends across both the irrigation components of the business. Management decisions are based on the collection of data, encompassing an object management approach. Tony strongly believes in the concept that if you can't measure it you can't manage it.