



Wednesday, 14 July 2021

## LANDHOLDERS BUY PROPERTIES FOR BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

So far, more than 250 landholders have signed conservation agreements with the BCT over 97,800 hectares.

One special mechanism the Biodiversity Conservation Trust (BCT) uses is a revolving fund.

BCT Board Chair, Prof Hon Niall Blair, said the revolving fund is a vital tool in the BCT's kit.

"The BCT can find properties for sale with high conservation values, buy them and sell them on to landholders who will be paid to manage parts of the property for conservation," Mr Blair said.

"Many of the properties revolved by the BCT comprise mixed enterprises with production areas and funded conservation areas.

This is a win-win for conservation, sustainable production and better land stewardship."

So far, the BCT has bought and sold (or 'revolved') six properties where the new owners have entered conservation agreements covering 3,036 hectares.

The BCT has also bought and plans to revolve another seven properties with combined proposed conservation areas of 2,261 hectares.

*Fernleigh* is one of the properties revolved by the BCT.

Mal Coleman, *Fernleigh*'s new owner, agreed to purchase the property and enter a conservation agreement with the BCT. The agreement includes annual funding for managing *Fernleigh* for biodiversity conservation outcomes. Mr Coleman says he couldn't be happier with his purchase.

"I'm a regenerative farmer so was interested in a property with good soil carbon and a healthy ecosystem," said Mr Coleman.

"I couldn't imagine anything better than a conservation agreement with annual funding that will improve my agricultural output while providing important habitat for native wildlife," Mr Coleman said.

The revolving fund involves the BCT identifying properties up for sale that contain very high conservation values. The BCT buys these properties then 'revolves' them by selling to landholders interested and willing to sign an in-perpetuity conservation agreement on a portion of the land, to manage that area for biodiversity conservation outcomes.