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TREE CORRIDORS ENHANCE 'LAKEVIEW'

PROPERTY OF THE WEEK

■ Uralla
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WHOEVER buys "Lakeview", the Southern New England grazing property of Cam and Lel Banks listed for auction next month, will inherit the benefits of an intensive tree-planting project funded by a 2012 Federal Government biodiversity grant.

That's one of the unique features of "Lakeview".

Another – for those with a taste for history, or aesthetics – is its elegant Victorian homestead, built in the 1880s with bricks made on the property, later extended and recently renovated.

The highly regarded 525 hectare (1298ac) Uralla property has been listed for sale by Elders Armidale and Webster Nolan Real Estate of Sydney, and will go to auction in Armidale on December 16.

The offering is expected to attract strong local and outside interest, by virtue of the property's strategic location, its history of environmentally sound management, its productive capability and its lifestyle appeal.

Before the present owners bought the property in 2001, it was held for 74 years by the Roberts

family, and at the time of the Banks' purchase, was being managed for prime lamb production supplemented by agistment and cattle trading.

It was earlier held for many years since the 1850s by David Davidson and his wife Mary (nee McCrossin, whose parents owned the local flour mill), and it was they who built the present homestead overlooking the lake that gives the property its name.

In early days the lake was known as Racecourse Lagoon, encircled – as it

then was – by the former Uralla racecourse.

Situated on the New England Highway just south of Uralla and 26 kilometres from Armidale, "Lakeside" is a property of level to gently undulating country of fine granite formation, nearly all of it arable.

Under the previous ownership the property was sown to introduced pastures such as fescue and clovers, and regularly supered, but the present owners have adopted a more biological approach to soil health, using compost-

ed manure and hydrated lime to promote organic matter and reduce chemical dependency.

For their first 10 years the present owners ran finewool Merinos, supplemented by trading cattle in season, but since 2010 they have been contract-growing dairy heifers under a planned grazing regime.

Cattle are moved rotationally through a network of 112 paddocks, always retaining 95-100 per cent ground cover, and watered by dams and a reticulation system using permanent

and portable troughs linked to 10km of underground piping.

Currently understocked and awash with feed, "Lakeview" has estimated carrying capacity of 6000 DSE or 430 to 450 cows.

The property is equipped for both sheep or cattle enterprises.

Working infrastructure includes a four-stand raised board shearing shed, sheep yards with sheep handler, cattle yards of 600-head capacity, sheds and workshop.

A heritage feature of "Lakeside" is its 1886

brick homestead, extended by the previous owners in 1980 and renovated in 2004.

Set amid mature trees in an established garden with views over the lake, the north-facing homestead boasts five bedrooms, cedar joinery, pressed-metal ceilings, formal dining-room with open fire and slow-combustion heating.

The property is held under three titles, offering potential for future subdivision.

Bidding is expected in the vicinity of \$3 million.

- PETER AUSTIN