

Sonia Trevaskis, naturopath, Wairewa

I grew up on a beef farm in Wairewa, Far East Gippsland, first settled by my great grandfather. There I came to love the land and realise my connection to it.

Growing up on a farm was full of fun and laughter although we were all required to contribute and had numerous chores to perform.

The droughts lasted for years and the only things that grew were arguments. When the rain came there was rejoicing and everything changed. The green valley we knew revived and with it our health and wellbeing.

After being home educated I went to university in Melbourne.

Being a country girl I found it difficult to relate to my friends, many of whom had never even set foot on a farm. They, just like most of the western world were disconnected from the land and the environment. A new term has been coined to express this disconnection with nature, it is Nature Deficit Disorder and it can impact both physical and psychological health. I qualified with a double degree in nursing and naturopathy and headed back home to the bush.

As a naturopath I knew that the food we eat affects our health. The food our grandparents ate was less processed and more nutritious, but why?

A light bulb moment came when I heard Dr Christine Jones explain the impact of water-soluble fertilisers on plant nutrition and I realised the connection between how we grow our food and health status.

I see many illnesses and chronic conditions which I believe could be radically improved if the food we ate had higher nutritional content.

Now I am learning about best management practice and how to regenerate the land to reverse this downward cycle of poor nutrition.

The groundswell of interest to support local farmers and to grow clean, green food brings hope for the future.

The new frontier in health, I believe, is to discover how to “Nurture the Land and Nourish the People”, our future depends on it.