

# DELTRAIT AND THE VALLEY OF HILLAS CREEK

A Social and Environmental History

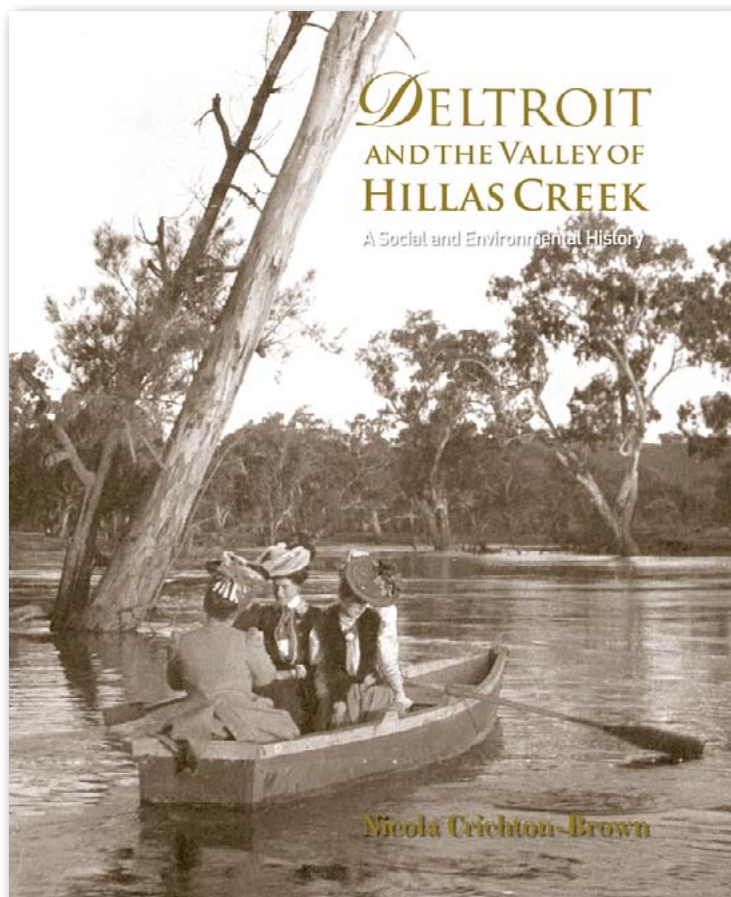
Nicola Crichton-Brown

It takes vision and fortitude to transform 'wilderness' in the Murrumbidgee basin into something of the eminence of Deltroit, one of the finest grazing properties south of Sydney. Who was it that achieved this, how was it done, and why did this iconic Riverina property, about which nothing has ever been published before, end up in the hands of King Ranch, Texas, a giant in global beef production? What is it about Deltroit that continues to seduce and set the benchmark in modern pastoralism?

When Nicola Crichton-Brown and her husband, Anthony, left London to make rural New South Wales their home, she felt displaced and isolated. Her way of combatting this was to find out more about those who had come before her, and *Deltroit and the Valley of Hillas Creek* is the result of these efforts.

This beautifully produced and significant historical work:

- recounts the fascinating evolution of Deltroit and the surrounding area, which typified what was happening all over Australia in the same period
- chronicles the gradual shift from destructive farming techniques to more sustainable pasture management practices
- incorporates the stories of several strong female characters who were key figures in Deltroit's history at a time when pastoralism was male-driven, along with many amusing details and anecdotes about the lives of Deltroit's inhabitants
- includes excerpts from diaries of local settlers and the oral testimonies of local residents and families with connections to Deltroit, none of which has been published before
- features a full chapter on the architecture, design and building of the imposing Federation homestead, which is still entirely intact.



*'A landmark study which should add Nicola Crichton-Brown to the illustrious body of women writers of Australian pastoral history. An enthralling account not just of Deltroit but of the evolution of rural Australia from pre-settlement to the modern day. I found it hard to put the book down.'*

Peter Austin, contributor and former editor of *The Land*

*'A magnificent account of an iconic Australian house — and the extraordinary people who lived in it. Beautifully written and moving.'*

Nikki Gemmell, bestselling author

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