

# Patchwork Ploughing: Australian Farmer Creates Huge Geometric Artwork to Fight Soil Erosion

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*A pattern made by a farmer, Brian Fischer, at Ashmore White Suffolk Stud in South Australia in January 2016. Fischer says it's saving him 15cm of topsoil because the ridges reduce the chance of wind erosion. Photograph: Brian Fischer*

### [Jonny Weeks](#)

A South Australian farmer has transformed his land into a gigantic geometric patchwork in a bid to fight soil erosion. Brian Fischer created the patterns at Ashmore White Suffolk Stud, north of Adelaide, following recent bushfires. In the absence of any vegetation, he says the furrows prevent gusting winds from causing further damage. “The fires cooked everything,” he told 3AW radio, “but whichever way the wind blows it’s always at 90 degrees [to the furrows] so it can’t get started”. The idea dates back to 1944 – if not earlier – when more than one million hectares of land were destroyed by a raging bushfire in Victoria. Fischer says the pattern took several days to plough but is saving him 15cm of topsoil

Fischer says the method is generations old. The design he used comes from a technique his father used on his farmland as early as 1944, but he admitted to a local radio station that he has no idea who came up with the concept originally, since his father most likely learned it from older farmers. The intricate geometric patterns, which Fischer says took several days to plow into the land, create ridges just high enough that they block the wind and prevent it from carrying away valuable topsoil. The erosion-fighting artwork has saved 15cm (nearly 6 inches) of topsoil, according to the creative farmer.

In addition to being smart about erosion control, Fischer also acted as his own photographer. He captured these stunning images of his art, in his fields, from his eldest son’s airplane. Because of the success of his unique approach to topsoil conservation, the farmer has been getting quite a bit of press in his local region, and may be inspiring other farmers to give geometric art a go for the sake of preserving their topsoil.

As Fischer explained to 3AW Radio, “It’s really worked. It’s stopped [the erosion] completely. You only get one shot at doing that. If you do it and don’t get it right, if you get it wrong, you can’t go back.”

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