



The Harden Murrumburrah Landcare Group

Harden Murrumburrah Landcare Group (HMLG), with a membership of 240, was formed in 1989 and encompasses the Jugiong Creek (Harden Shire) Catchment.

Vision - Sustainable and profitable long term farming and grazing throughout the Jugiong Catchment and a healthy environment for current and future generations.

Goals - Encourage 'best practice' management in all areas of land use through:

- Promotion of catchment management
- Sourcing and providing information for all land managers
- Encouraging links between farmers and other government and non-government bodies
- Initiating and supporting research into sustainable land use practices
- Promoting a balance approach to land use and the environment
- Developing benchmarks for the measurement of land management.

Major issues for members include soil acidity, salinity and water logging, biodiversity, and remnant vegetation.

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Centre for Plant Biodiversity Research

The Centre for Plant Biodiversity Research, through its various programs and research, is working to protect Australia's botanical future. The Centre is a cooperative venture between CSIRO Plant Industry and Environment Australia's Australian National Botanic Gardens (ANBG). It brings together a unique collaboration of leading researchers and links to Environment Australia's conservation managers working in a dynamic team environment.

The Australian National Herbarium

The Australian National Herbarium is the cornerstone of botanical research for the Centre for Plant Biodiversity Research. Its collection of more than one million plant specimens, some of which are more than 200 years old, documents the diversity of the Australian flora.

The Herbarium's comprehensive collections allow researchers to reliably identify plants originating from field studies, and to extract distributional and ecological data.



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www.anbg.gov.au/greening-grainbelt

Greening the Grainbelt

*A
joint project
between
the
Centre for Plant
Biodiversity
Research
and the
Harden
Murrumburrah
Landcare
Group*



GREENING THE GRAINBELT

A project linking the scientific community with a rural landcare project.

It is estimated that the Harden Shire, about 100 km north-west of Canberra has only 2.8% of its original vegetation remaining.

The Harden Murrumburrah Landcare Group sought Natural Heritage Trust funding from Environment Australia's Bushcare program to redress this situation. The chairman of the Group indicated that he wanted this project to be "based on a scientifically defensible vegetation species composition with environmentally compatible planting lists which will serve as a model for other Landcare areas throughout the country."

But a lot of detective work was going to be necessary to provide the Landcare group with such a list of appropriate species with so little vegetation remaining to base it on.



The Harden landscape at the turn of last century, from a land sale catalogue. Little native vegetation was left in this rich sheep grazing and wheat growing region.

A role for the Centre for Plant Biodiversity Research

The Landcare Group approached the Centre for Plant Biodiversity Research to become a partner in the project, which they had named 'Greening the Grainbelt'. The Centre's management was impressed with their enthusiasm in wanting a scientific basis for their landcare work, and was aware that many revegetation plant lists are unsuitable in terms of both their biodiversity content and their inclusion of a number of undesirable and potentially weedy exotic species.

This project provided the Centre with a challenge to use its scientific databases and vegetation expertise in a very practical way to achieve real on-the-ground outcomes. It also drew on the knowledge held in the collection of more than one million preserved plant specimens in the Australian National Herbarium.

Botanical Interns participating in the Centre's student training program used the herbarium specimens and botanical libraries to reconstruct what the flora of the Harden area may have been like prior to European settlement and clearing for agriculture.

The students were involved with research staff in developing methods to create regionally appropriate species lists based on historical scientific collections from the area and the interpretation of collection data and records from surrounding areas. The resulting lists will be made available on the Internet.



An herbarium specimen of Lomandra multiflora, a 1949 collection from the Harden cemetery.

Products

- A list of species occurring in the Harden Murrumburrah region over the last 150 years with habitat notes.
- A list of species suitable for revegetation projects with associated habit and cultivation notes.
- A web site linking this list with environmental data, accessible to local and other Landcare groups.
- A methodology/protocol for devising the indigenous flora of a heavily cleared region that can be transferred to other sites.



Centre scientists and Botanical Interns talk to a local Landcare Coordinator at a trial salinity control plantation in the Harden Murrumburrah district