



# Habitat 141<sup>0</sup> Handbury Fund

Supporting planning, co-ordination and community engagement with the Habitat 141<sup>0</sup> vision

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## Handbury Foundation renews its commitment to Habitat 141°

Creating awareness for an audacious and long-term vision such as Habitat 141° relies on influencing attitudes to gain widespread support. It takes considerable time and resources.

Greening Australia has led the development of Habitat 141° since the first discussions in 2005, and during the last 5 years much of the support for Greening Australia's ongoing role in the development of Habitat 141° has been through assistance provided by the Geoff and Helen Handbury Foundation.

This investment has enabled us to work with our partners to build the Habitat 141° brand, which is now well recognised by local communities, natural resource management players, policy makers and Governments alike. The significance of this achievement must never be underestimated, for it is only through long-term, coordinated action across the entire area by a range of organisations and individuals with complementary skills that the Habitat 141° vision will ever be achieved.

The first participatory planning event to develop a shared vision for Habitat 141° was a Conservation Action Planning workshop at the Little Desert Nature Lodge in 2007. This process continued to be led by Greening Australia until 2013 largely with staff time made available through Handbury program support. Involving hundreds of participants who collectively contributed thousands of hours, these workshops generated much awareness of the potential benefits of drawing together partners from across such a vast area and working towards a shared vision.



### Participants at a Habitat 141 Planning Workshop in the Wimmera

During the last five years through the support of the Handbury Foundation, Greening Australia has invested significant resources into building collaboration, capacity and processes to support the Conservation Action Planning process. The following table highlights some of the key achievements reached with the support of the Handbury Foundation.

<b>Key Cultural Achievements Supported by the Handbury Foundation</b>
Ongoing support of planning and implementation groups to drive development of Conservation Action Plans for Zones 1 – 5
Habitat 141° science planning workshop to complement Zone CAPs by identifying focal conservation assets and their key ecosystem requirements, threatening processes, actions and measurable long term conservation goals
Extensive community consultation across Habitat 141° to raise awareness and support for the Habitat 141° vision. The Habitat 141° 'brand' is now well-known and received by landholders, the broader community and Habitat 141° members
Creation of a shared vision through extensive participatory planning over a number of years, leading to signed Memorandum of Understanding between 10 alliance members in late 2012. The MOU establishes a framework for communication, cooperation and partnership between the signatories to mutually facilitate delivery of the Habitat 141° vision, and where possible align organisational objectives
Spatial prioritisation to identify key project areas across Habitat 141° landscape completed for Zones 1 to 5, and recent involvement of Federation University to lead similar task in southern NSW rangelands
Ongoing development and improvement of various communication tools, most notably Habitat 141° website and Habitat 141° communication plan
Ongoing development of strategic documents, most notably Habitat 141° Landscape Conservation Plan and Habitat 141° Strategic Plan
Extensive investigation of various governance processes and models

In 2014 each of the Conservation Action Plans were 'rolled up' to underpin the development of the Habitat 141 Landscape Conservation Plan. The Plan sets out a 50 year blueprint for landscape restoration activities across 18 million hectares, with the endorsement of all 10 alliance organisations.

The Landscape Conservation Plan provides a framework for action across the Habitat 141° landscape that is grounded in the best available information and knowledge, identifying priorities for action and suggesting priority project areas for more detailed planning. The Plan incorporates recommendations from leading scientists on important ecological themes (with an emphasis on connectivity) operating at the scale of the whole Habitat 141° landscape.

This is the only landscape restoration project in Australia, and one of the few in the world, that can make such a claim. The support of the Handbury Foundation has been critical to Greening Australia's leading of this process.

We are very grateful for the support provided to us by the Handbury Foundation over the last five years on our journey with Habitat 141°, and very excited to see this commitment renewed for the next five years.

### **Where to next?**

Now with the Handbury Foundation commitment renewed we are focused and clear about our priorities and intend to increase awareness and engagement with the Habitat 141° vision. The next phase of the Handbury Fund will increase opportunities for people to become actively involved in achieving the Habitat 141° vision, and we have already identified several exciting new opportunities to further target our efforts towards the objectives set out in the Landscape Conservation Plan, including;



1. Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation Program: Building accurate data sets is central to effective landscape restoration, and this program is designed to engage landowners and community members, many with local knowledge that will only be passed on as trust develops, to gauge the long-term effectiveness of Greening Australia's work in Habitat 141°.
2. Ongoing reaffirmation of Greening Australia's commitment to Habitat 141°: It is essential that we continue to engage with the agricultural and wider community to identify and promote opportunities to participate in Habitat 141°. This is most effectively achieved by regionally based staff who play a critical role in facilitating relationships between local communities and landowners.
3. Initiating fund raising campaigns to support rehabilitation works on a number of strategically located properties which demonstrate our key landscape restoration objectives of increasing woodland habitat to improve connectivity, and protecting and restoring critical wetland habitats to provide drought refuge for highly mobile species, particularly waterbirds.