

# HEATHCOTE LOCAL TO LANDSCAPE PROJECT:

## A model for scaling up landscape repair

*Supporting communities with knowledge and collaboration to restore environmental health and resilience*

### SUMMARY

Farmers and landowners are seeking knowledge and support to collaborate to improve their local natural environment. This project is trialing a planning system designed to empower communities to lead projects that create genuine, lasting change for native plants and animals by connecting those communities with knowledge, networks and resources. This project will increase local community capacity to take coordinated, science based and strategic local actions to restore the health and resilience of the Heathcote landscape and secure its threatened species.

### PROJECT METHOD

This project is using Biolinks Alliance's Local to Landscape planning system to build communities around large-landscape scale issues. It identifies shared values and develops pilot projects that provide a focus to develop partnerships, demonstrate innovative and effective approaches to landscape restoration and to get more people involved – and thereby building community capacity.

## PILOT PROJECTS STEMMING FROM HEATHCOTE LOCAL TO LANDSCAPE

### PROTECTING LARGE OLD 'HERO' TREES

*Raising the profile of and empowering communities to protect Large Old Trees - irreplaceable habitat and landscape connectors*

1



### SPRING PLAINS WATERSHED REPAIR

*Landscape scale restoration that targets a local hotspot for threatened woodland birds, to help make the watershed more absorbent and productive again*

2



### IMPROVING SOIL HEALTH

*Working with landholders to restore soils; one of the most vital and under-appreciated assets*

3



### INTERESTING POINTS

Communities are profoundly interested and willing to help restore the environment but need support to do so. Over 80 individuals participated in the development of an ecological restoration Plan and project prospectus for the area.

The project has found that a highly diverse demographic of tree changers, farmers and winegrowers alike from the Heathcote region are concerned about environmental decline and loss of biodiversity in their region. With no organised Landcare present in the region they have been unsure of where to start, or how they could individually tackle the more complicated and difficult ecological restoration challenges the region presents.

The development of a community-led plan has enabled the community to begin to develop new partnerships with philanthropic funders, environmental not-for-profit organisations and government agencies; which has attracted \$300,000 in philanthropic funding.

### CONCLUSION

Landscape thinking and planning is key to improving the types of ecological restoration undertaken and to up-scaling it. New network and capacity building organisations (like Biolinks Alliance) that can facilitate knowledge sharing, network building and bring in resources are key to taking Landcare to the next level and so becoming a significant part of the solution to Australia's large-scale landscape restoration challenges.

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