



Handy hints on managing small properties at your fingertips

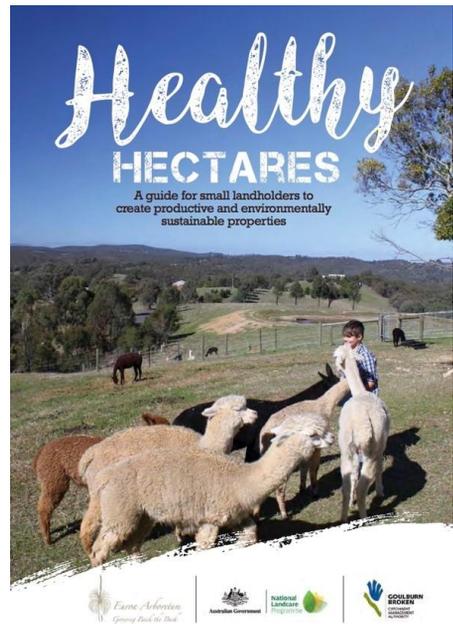
Euroa Arboretum staff noticed over the years that many small landholders, new to the region, who visited the Arboretum often had questions about how to manage their properties effectively.

Identifying a need, Euroa Arboretum spoke with the region's Landcare groups and discovered that this new landholder knowledge gap was actually a catchment-wide issue. It is also a regional priority under the Goulburn Broken CMA's Land Health Strategy.

Thanks to funding through a Goulburn Broken CMA Beyond SoilCare grant, Cathy Olive from the Euroa Arboretum, in collaboration with Green Gecko Publications' Mary Trigger, developed the *Healthy Hectares* booklet and website.

The 80-page A5 booklet provides small landholders with simple steps and advice on assessing their land and managing it in a way that protects and enhances the natural environment and provides a healthy and safe environment for animals, while recognising the landholders may have limited time and resources. Topics covered include: planning, soil, water, biodiversity, pests and pasture. Regional contacts are listed while the website provides access to more information.

Roll out of the Healthy Hectares resource was trialed in Murrindindi Shire, which has a growing number of small and absentee landholders. Initially this was via a mailout to 1700 landholders with properties of 2-40 hectares, letting them know about the resources and how to access them. The first workshop was run by the Upper Goulburn Landcare Network. However organisers found the half-day format didn't allow for enough discussion so the program was re-worked to be delivered as five, four-hour workshops.



The workshops covered property planning and animal health; soils and pastures; water and how to move water around your property; biodiversity; how to get vegetation onto your property and what to look out for; and pest plants and animals.

The series was offered over several months and landholders had the flexibility to attend all of the sessions or just the sessions that were of particular interest to them. The workshop format allows plenty of time for people to ask questions and get one-on-one advice directly related to their properties.

Feedback from local government, Landcare staff and landholders about the booklet, website and workshops and the overall package has been very positive. The Healthy Hectares resources and workshop series is currently being expanded into other local government areas.

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