



**Community
Grants Hub**
Improving your grant experience



National Landcare Programme – Small Farms Small Grants 2017-18

Case Study Template

Organisation: Holbrook Landcare Group

Activity ID: 4-9GM1X5H

Activity Title: Embedding a Recycling Culture for Silage
Wrap and On Farm Plastics

As part of your funding, the Australian Government requires that you to produce a case study of your project so that the community can learn from this investment. This is a short story – no more than two pages that tell the story of the project.

1. In your own words please describe “what was the problem/issue for this project and how did you identify the issue?” *If you have a photograph of the area prior to work beginning please include.*

Holbrook Landcare identified from its members that there was a lack of options to disposal of on farm plastic waste, specifically silage wrap and twine. Current practices include burying or burning the toxic waste. Burning plastic waste releases harmful greenhouse gasses and pollutants into the air and toxins leach into the soil when plastics are buried. Used silage wrap can litter farms, landscapes and waterways and is hazardous for livestock and wildlife. Landfill sites are becoming reluctant to take used silage wrap and twine as its difficult for machinery to deal with because its stretchy and gets caught around the drive shafts of loaders.

Holbrook Landcare undertook to find a solution to this problem for its landholder members. Through an initial pilot project in 2017, Holbrook Landcare was inundated with support for the development of a process that provided an ethical means of disposing of on farm plastics. Funding from the Australian Governments National Landcare Program enabled Holbrook Landcare to set up skips at 4 landfill sites within the Greater Hume Shire where landholders could drop off their plastic waste. From here the skips were taken to Plastic Forests in Albury for recycling.



Packing silage wrap into bags to then send to Plastic Forests for recycling.

2. In your own words please describe what you did – e.g. work/workshops/begin trials. *If you have a photograph of the beginning of the work please include here.*

Holbrook Landcare provided a process for landholders to easily dispose of their on-farm plastic waste. The process was clearly documented for everyone involved with the project, from documents

explaining how to take part in the project, to documents for council employees regarding what plastics could and couldn't be disposed of in the skips provided.

Holbrook Landcare partnered with Greater Hume Shire Council and Plastic Forests in Albury and these relationships had to be secured through accurate information and trust in the process. Holbrook Landcare went above and beyond to ensure both parties requirements were met throughout the duration of the project. Holbrook Landcare also had some difficulties with the skip companies at the beginning of the project and changed supplier, there were some issues throughout the project with skips being dropped off in the wrong place and the incorrect size skip delivered to landfill sites, however HLN was able to work around these issues.

Holbrook Landcare staff were required to load the skip at the Holbrook landfill site at the beginning, but we worked with Greater Hume Council to make a loading bay available for participants to easily drop their silage wrap into the skips.

Holbrook Landcare made 2 videos of the recycling process, posters that were used as various field days, and information flyers that were available through the life of the project.

Video

#1

[https://holbrooklandcare.sharepoint.com/sites/shareddrive/Shared%20Documents/1PROJECTS%20&%20ACTIVITIES/1.%20CURRENT/Embedding%20a%20Recycling%20Culture/media/HLN%20Plastics%20%20Koora%20\(1\).mp4](https://holbrooklandcare.sharepoint.com/sites/shareddrive/Shared%20Documents/1PROJECTS%20&%20ACTIVITIES/1.%20CURRENT/Embedding%20a%20Recycling%20Culture/media/HLN%20Plastics%20%20Koora%20(1).mp4)

Video

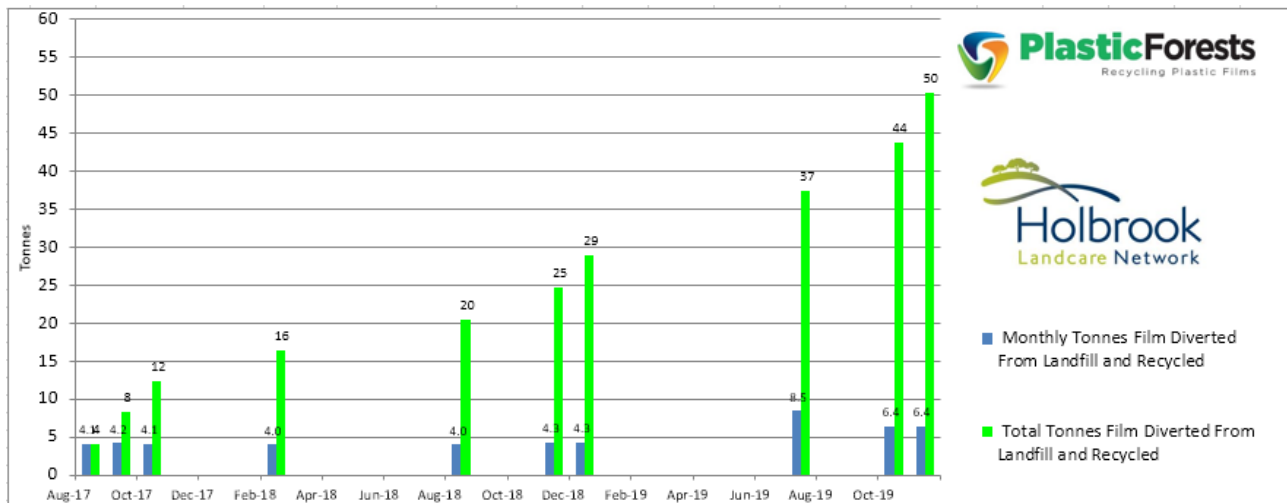
#2

<https://holbrooklandcare.sharepoint.com/sites/shareddrive/Shared%20Documents/1PROJECTS%20&%20ACTIVITIES/1.%20CURRENT/Embedding%20a%20Recycling%20Culture/media/HLN%20Plastics%20process.mp4>

3. How did you measure/record your project activities?

Holbrook Landcare recorded name, date, number of bags and contact details each time bags were collected as part of the recycling on farm plastic waste project, from each of the designated points where bags were allocated. More than 90 people participated in the program.

Holbrook Landcare measured the amount of silage wrap that was delivered to Plastic Forests with more than 50 tonnes of plastic waste being dispatched to Plastic Forests over the duration of the project. Plastic Forests provided us with a monthly report including tonnes diverted from landfill and total tonnes submitted over the course of the project, and additionally an EPA report after each delivery.



File #1 <C:\Users\User\Holbrook Landcare Network\Shared Drive - Documents\1PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES\1. CURRENT\Embedding a Recycling Culture\media\EPA Recyclator Dec 2019.pdf>

4. What do you think was the most significant outcome of your project?

Obviously, the environmental outcome of recycling this plastic waste product is significant and hugely beneficial. Having an impact on the amount of silage wrap and twine that is burnt or buried on farm is a great outcome, however having a measurable outcome of removing 80 tonnes of CO2 from the atmosphere just from that simple action of recycling is very rewarding.

However, there are some other benefits that were not expected that were significant too. Gratitude from landholders having an alternative option to burning or burying their plastic waste was unexpected. People continually thank us for providing this service, saying they felt so much better about ethically disposing of this waste product. Another outcome was the interest this project generated nationally. We get a steady stream of phone calls from people wanting to know how we started the project and how they can start up a similar project in their area - from groups and individuals all over the country.

Greater Hume Shire have given feedback on the positive outcome of not having this waste product going into landfill, freeing up space and reducing wear and tear on machinery.

A neighbouring council, Snowy Valley Council, has started a farm plastic waste recycling process, and we have supported Murrumbidgee Landcare group with a funding application to implement their own farm plastic waste recycling process.

Having the project featured on Landline in 2019 proved beneficial with the reach of the project extending nationally. This resulted in extensive interest in how we had set up the project and we've provided support to a number of groups in northern NSW, QLD and Victoria. An impromptu visit from the Minister of Environment, the Honourable Sussan Ley was another opportunity to spread the word about the benefits of recycling on farm waste. Sussan shared our videos through her networks and as a result of this we even had a request from the Prime Minister for a copy of our videos that he

could share through his social media! So the project was really on point with servicing a local need that could be replicated nationally and its simplicity enabled ease of sharing and support that can continue beyond project funding.

5. In your own words please describe any unexpected outcomes of the project

Holbrook Landcare had a visit from the Minister for the Environment The Hon Sussan Ley MP in October 2020 where we discussed in detail the process of this project. Sussan was interested to see the videos we had produced and proceeded to share them with the Prime Minister, who was apparently “very impressed” and wanted copies of the video that he could share on his facebook page. As yet they haven’t been shared, however the message that we have portrayed is clear, concise and effective which enables uptake at a regional and national level.



Landholders Kim and Ken Hulme packing their silage wrap waste up for recycling.



Holbrook Landfill site – silage wrap dropped off by landholders, ready for loading in the skip and off to Plastic Forests in Albury. That’s about 2 skip loads, or 6-8 tonnes. Holbrook Landcare staff load the frontend loader by hand to avoid over contamination of dirt and rock.



L to R – Dale Stringer, Holbrook Landcare; Phoebe Gulliver, Holbrook Landcare; David Hodge, Plastic Forests. David dropped off some wheel stoppers made from our silage wrap and twine! These are for sale via the Plastic Forests website.

Please include any photographs that either show before and after progress or show the finish of the project.