



## Alcoa Landcare Community Group Award

### Burgoigee Creek Landcare Group

The Burgoigee Creek Landcare Group was launched in 1988 on the top of a bare hill. The group's founding members looked down over the 12,800-hectare basin beneath them and saw just about every land management problem imaginable.

The early years of the group were taken up with encouraging landholders to complete whole farm plans. Many field days, speakers and community education activities were run and by the mid 1990s 80% of the group area was covered by a whole farm plan and 51 out of the district's 57 landholders were members of the group.

According to Judy Griffiths, one of the group's founding members, success came from supporting individual members to achieve their goals.

"When each member has a whole farm plan and is working away in their own time the group can then look at opportunities to assist them. It might be information or funding for revegetation, remnant protection, recharge control, erosion control, pest control, animal health, pasture improvement, or growing our own trees."

The group is in a priority area for salinity, water quality and rabbit action. Its achievements in these areas are too numerous to list but they all feature a collaborative approach. The group has worked closely with other local Landcare Groups, the Ovens Landcare Network and regional catchment strategy, salinity and water quality committees.

Recent activities include gully stabilisation works and a scarab beetle (dung beetle) program. The group is working with researchers to breed and release three varieties of beetles in a bid to improve water quality and soil condition.

Judy Griffiths says the group has always looked at the sustainability of the land as well as the sustainability of those who manage the land. The results of this approach can be seen from the hilltop where the group was launched. It is no longer bare. The view shows thriving native pastures, no visible rabbit warrens, fenced and treed creeklines and gullies and extensive shade and shelterbelts.



*Pictured: Joan McGovern, Community Affairs and Landcare Manager Alcoa World Alumina (second from left) with John Rauch, Judy Griffiths and James Neary from the Burgoigee Creek Landcare Group, winners of the Alcoa Landcare Community Group Award, John Thwaites, Minister for Environment and John Landy, Governor of Victoria.*