



# UNDERSTOREY NETWORK

**THE UNDERSTOREY NETWORK INC STRATEGIC PLAN**

**2011-2015**

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## **Background**

The Understorey Network is a community not-for-profit environmental organisation, supported by members from all parts of Tasmania. The network was established in 1995, by a group of committed individuals to promote the use of understorey plants in revegetation, and to raise awareness of the values of the understorey as critical habitat.

The Understorey network was modelled on the South Australian Trees-for-Life organisation, where volunteers grow native plants for landholders requiring plants for revegetation sites.

The Understorey Network fills a niche in vegetation management, by providing an educational and technical support service to individuals and groups.

It enables busy people from a wide range of backgrounds, to contribute to improving Tasmania's environment in an easy and enjoyable manner, through propagating plants and collecting seed.

The **primary objectives** of the Understorey Network are:

- To raise awareness of the importance of the natural environment with particular emphasis on the understorey and its role in the maintenance of biodiversity, by way of workshops, field-days and publications
- To assist and encourage members to record successful propagation methods for Tasmanian understorey plants leading to the conservation and preservation of these plants and plant communities
- To assist with the conservation of the genetic pool of native understorey through the establishment and maintenance of an understorey vegetation seed-bank
- To participate in a statewide network of regional co-operation for the planning and management of understorey plant communities in Tasmania
- To grow local provenance plants for the establishment, maintenance or regeneration of habitats for the protection of threatened species of animals and plants
- To develop funding options to further the objectives of the Understorey Network
- To grow plants for the rehabilitation and revegetation of degraded and cleared land

The **key activities** of the Understorey Network are:

- Holding workshops and field days on plant identification, seed collecting, seed sorting, plant propagation, vegetation management and weed management
- Organising the Growers' Scheme, where members grow up to 250 native plants for their own or other revegetation sites. Seed, tubes, potting soil and instructions are provided to the growers
- Collecting seeds and managing a seed-bank for native vegetation from around the state
- Providing plants to other members, community groups and other organisations
- Providing project management for government and corporate initiatives in natural resource management
- Raising awareness of the understorey through displays at events, and presentations or talks at forums and meetings
- Providing resources such as the Growers' Guide and the online Plant Propagation database

## **Why do we need a Strategy?**

When the Understorey was ten years old we reviewed our organisation and formed a strategy to guide us for the following five years. This strategy was initiated in 2006 but will need to be revisited on a regular basis. Some changes have been made in 2010 and this regular review should continue into the future.

Developing this strategy enabled us to outline a vision, define our aspirations, identify barriers and follow up with actions. It will give us a means of measuring progress, and a focus to review our failures and successes.

This strategy was drawn up by the coordinators in conjunction with the management committee and members of the Understorey Network.

### **Vision**

**Our Vision is to be a key service provider for vegetation technical support and resources while continuing to be a grass roots community organisation.**

## The Understorey Network **Organisational Structure**

and

### **Governance Procedures**

**Members**

**Committee Members**

**Coordinators**

The current committee members are:

President: Joan Rodrigues

Vice President: Warner Wait

Secretary: Mary Jolly

Treasurer: Rupert Manners

Committee Members: Anne Griffiths, De Deegan, Amanda Cole, Susan Friend, Martin O'Bryen, Camilla Hughes

The members elect the committee at an annual general meeting. The committee meets once a month. The committee in conjunction with the coordinators make all day to day decisions and also set policy and maintain financial and membership records as required by the constitution.

## SWOT analysis

SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis enables an assessment of the business environment for planning purposes.

### Strengths

- Volunteer involvement
- Good Publications
- The Online Plant Propagation Database
- Key service provider of technical support
- The Growers' Scheme
- Reputation and existing partnerships
- Community Nursery

### Weaknesses

- Dependence on the coordinators for the success/failure of the network
- Reliance on government funding
- Difficulties involved in website updates
- Inadequate resources to function as a statewide organisation.

### Threats

- Unreliability of government funding
- Increased competition for government funding
- Increasing competition from other enterprises providing similar services
- Inability to control site preparation, planting and ongoing care.

### Opportunities

- Corporate funding/sponsorship
- Growing for projects not just for members
- More members growing than are receiving
- Fee for service
- Providing support for sustainable land management
- Partnerships with other organisation
- Working with local groups (e.g. councils, landcare, schools)
- Other members' ideas
- Increasing use of Nursery for training/education
- Increasing interest in the use of native understorey plants by a variety of people

## OUR PRODUCT

Our product falls into three categories

1. Plants

A cheap and viable way for individuals and community groups to have access to plants for re-vegetation of the understorey.

2. Expertise and Training

Providing information and resources on vegetation management in Tasmania, including the database and Growers' Guide. Training in seed collecting, storage and plant propagation.

3. Project Management

Implementation of funded projects.



## OUR MARKET

Our market is divided into 4 sections:

### 1. Our Membership

- Members growing for themselves  
These members pay an annual membership fee as decided by the committee and receive seeds and growing materials for 250 plants. Membership is statewide.
- Members growing for other members  
These members pay an annual membership fee and receive seeds and growing materials for 250 plants
- Members receiving plants  
These members pay the annual membership fee and receive plants grown by other members at a nominated materials levy
- Members who neither grow nor receive but receive all member entitlements such as newsletters and the opportunity to attend workshops and field days also pay the annual membership fee.

### 2. Community Projects

- Community projects are where Not for Profit groups receive plants grown by our members

### 3. Government Projects

- Government projects are those in which we support government-funded projects by providing project management, plants and/or training and advice.

### 4. Corporate Projects

- Corporate projects are those in which we support corporate funded projects by providing project management, plants and/or training and advice.

## Marketing issues

- Are the membership fees fair?
- How to find community projects and what charges should apply
- How to market our services to governments and corporations
- How to obtain corporate and/or philanthropic sponsorship

## ASPIRATIONS

<p><b>ASPIRATION 1</b></p> <p><b>To be a key provider of accessible accurate information and resources on vegetation management</b></p>	<p><b>What do we have now?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An online Plant Propagation database with approximately 1200 Tasmanian understorey species entered.</li> <li>• A Growers' Guide explaining the Understorey Network growing method</li> <li>• Two part-time coordinators who can provide advice and run workshops and field days</li> </ul>
<p><b>What do we want by 2015?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An expanded comprehensive Plant Propagation database that is easily updated with taxonomic changes etc.</li> <li>• Website links and resources</li> <li>• Technical support publications available online and hard copy</li> <li>• An up-to-date Growers' Guide</li> <li>• The capacity to provide support for site preparation and maintenance</li> <li>• The capacity to provide advice and support statewide</li> </ul>	<p><b>ACTION 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update Plant Propagation database</li> <li>• Redesign the website for easy online administration, add in more links and resources</li> <li>• Provide training guides for workshop participants on plant identification, seed collection and plant propagation.</li> <li>• Compile information for technical resources</li> <li>• Seek funding for paid staff in the north and north-west.</li> <li>• Volunteer members to work with school children and other community groups</li> </ul>

<p><b>ASPIRATION 2</b></p> <p><b>To have influential links and communication with the wider Natural Resource Management network</b></p>	<p><b>What do we have now?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Established relationships with NRM, local government, schools and community groups</li> </ul>
<p><b>What do we want by 2015?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen the relationships with local government, schools and community groups</li> <li>• Establish long-term partnerships with NRM bodies and other relevant organisations</li> <li>• Wider communication and links with likeminded interstate organisations</li> <li>• Strengthen links with State Government</li> </ul>	<p><b>ACTION 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee and coordinators to develop links</li> <li>• Form partnerships through common projects</li> <li>• Advertise in and write articles for local papers and newsletters</li> <li>• Increase profile of the Understorey Network with displays and events</li> <li>• Send our newsletter to organisations (TFGA, GA etc)</li> </ul>

<p><b>ASPIRATION 3</b></p> <p><b>Participate in identifiable positive landscape and vegetation change</b></p>	<p><b>What do we have now?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have projects that achieve small scale identifiable landscape change</li> <li>• Linked to regional targets through supporting NRM projects</li> <li>• A seedbank of local provenance seed from identified locations around the state</li> </ul>
<p><b>What do we want by 2015?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moving towards more strategic planning</li> <li>• A framework for recording and monitoring results of landscape change</li> <li>• Demonstration sites where change has been achieved</li> <li>• The majority of decision makers including local provenance understorey plants in revegetation planning</li> <li>• Increased protection of remnant bush for habitat</li> <li>• Local provenance seeds for key species available for most areas of Tasmania</li> <li>• Plantings in strategic locations</li> <li>• Be involved in longer term projects</li> </ul>	<p><b>ACTION 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback from growers and recipients on success of germination and survival of seedlings after planting</li> <li>• Establish monitoring sites for tubestock</li> <li>• Increase educational opportunities for council workers and decision makers via workshops and publications</li> <li>• Use the above information on propagation database</li> <li>• Maintain and expand our seedbank of local provenance seeds</li> <li>• Members involved with planting at sites</li> <li>• Identify and respond to opportunities for funding of projects</li> </ul>

<p><b>ASPIRATION 4</b></p> <p><b>A supported and active membership</b></p>	<p><b>What do we have now?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two part-time coordinators supporting members plus extending out to the wider network. Administration duties are dominant and will grow with the network</li> <li>• Approximately 50% of members growing plants for individuals and for defined projects</li> </ul>
<p><b>What do we want by 2015?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A large membership extending across the state from a wide range of individuals and groups</li> <li>• Active members volunteering for office and field jobs</li> <li>• Members renewing plus new recruits each year</li> <li>• A range of members' services providing a high standard of training and interesting events</li> <li>• A focus event for members to meet and work together</li> <li>• Electronic membership renewal</li> </ul>	<p><b>ACTION 4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the USN across the state through workshops, field days, newsletters and attendance at NRM activities.</li> <li>• Encourage members to assist with administration and field tasks</li> <li>• Attract members with involvement in exciting projects</li> <li>• Inform members of meeting dates</li> <li>• Encourage members to lead activities such as seed collecting and plant ID with support of the coordinators</li> <li>• Encourage member social activities plant swapping/guided walks</li> <li>• Continue to develop the community nursery and demonstration site</li> <li>• Set up electronic membership renewal on website</li> </ul>

<p><b>ASPIRATION 5</b></p> <p><b>Ongoing financial stability</b></p>	<p><b>What do we have now?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three year sponsorship with a corporate organisation</li> <li>• Government funding for one year</li> <li>• Partnership with NRM South for one year</li> <li>• Tax deductible Gift Recipient status</li> <li>• Membership subscriptions which do not cover the cost of supplying growers' kits.</li> <li>• Conducting fee- for -service activities</li> </ul>
<p><b>What do we want by 2015?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To maintain and expand our funding base</li> <li>• Exciting projects that attract sponsorship</li> <li>• Strong partnerships with three NRM regions</li> <li>• Annual subscriptions paid directly into our bank account</li> </ul>	<p><b>ACTION 5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a business promotional package</li> <li>• Define projects that would attract sponsorship</li> <li>• Continue to network with NRM regions</li> <li>• Encourage payments directly into our bank account for annual membership fees</li> </ul>

**ACTION PLAN**

<p><b>ASPIRATION/ACTION 1</b>  <b>To be a key provider of accessible accurate information and resources on vegetation management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update Plant Propagation database</li> <li>• Redesign the website for easy online administration, add in more links and resources</li> <li>• Provide training guides for workshop participants on plant identification, seed collection and plant propagation.</li> <li>• Compile information for technical resources</li> <li>• Seek funding for paid staff in the north and north-west.</li> <li>• Volunteer members to work with school children and other community groups</li> </ul>	<p><b>TIMEFRAME</b></p> <p>August 2011</p> <p>August 2011</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p><b>ASPIRATION/ACTION 2</b>  <b>To have influential links and communication with the wider Natural Resource Management network</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee and coordinators to develop links</li> <li>• Form partnerships through common projects</li> <li>• Advertise in and write articles for local papers and newsletters</li> <li>• Increase profile of the Understorey Network with displays and events</li> <li>• Send our newsletter to organisations (TFGA, GA etc)</li> </ul>	<p><b>TIMEFRAME</b></p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>March 2011 and ongoing</p>
<p><b>ASPIRATION/ACTIONS 3</b>  <b>Participate in identifiable positive landscape and vegetation change</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish monitoring sites for tubestock plantings</li> <li>• Increase educational opportunities for council workers and</li> </ul>	<p><b>TIMEFRAME</b></p> <p>May 2011</p>

<p>decision makers via workshops and publications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members involved with planting at sites</li> <li>• Feedback from growers and recipients on success of germination and survival of seedlings after planting</li> <li>• Use the above information on propagation database</li> <li>• Identify and respond to opportunities for funding of projects.</li> </ul>	<p>2012</p> <p>May 2011 and ongoing</p> <p>Every year</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p><b>ASPIRATION/ACTIONS 4</b> <b>A supported and active membership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the USN across the state through workshops, field days, newsletters and attendance at NRM activities.</li> <li>• Encourage members to assist with administration and field tasks</li> <li>• Attract members with involvement in exciting projects</li> <li>• Inform members of meeting dates</li> <li>• Encourage members to lead activities such as seed collecting and plant ID with support of the coordinators</li> <li>• Encourage member social activities plant swapping/guided walks</li> <li>• Continue to develop the community nursery and demonstration site</li> <li>• Set up electronic membership renewal on website.</li> </ul>	<p><b>TIMEFRAME</b></p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>2012</p>
<p><b>ASPIRATION/ACTIONS 5</b> <b>Ongoing financial stability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a business promotional package</li> <li>• Define projects that would attract sponsorship</li> <li>• Continue to network with NRM regions</li> <li>• Institute automatic bank transfer of funds for annual membership</li> </ul>	<p><b>TIMEFRAME</b></p> <p>September 2011</p> <p>September 2011</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>2012</p>