

Photopoint monitoring guide

Photopoint monitoring is the use of photographs taken from a particular site at different intervals to show change over a period of time. The same direction, angle, focus points and preferably camera settings are used.

Photopoint monitoring is a quick, simple and reliable way of capturing short and long-term visual changes at a site, that may result from:

- Changed land management practices (including any trials).
- Climatic conditions.
- **Natural events** (e.g., flood, drought, fire).

Photopoint images provide a permanent visual record of change without reliance on memory or taking physical measurements; they help to show and explain to others how and possibly why particular locations have changed, for example to:

- Demonstrate the effects of changed land management practice.
- Show the results of a trial of a new methodology.
- Support your case for ongoing or new activities.

Healthy Land & Water uses 'before', 'during' and 'after' photopoint images to keep track of works undertaken, promote the results of projects and to leverage further resources to support land managers and the broader community.

Equipment needed

- **Essential:** camera (digital/film or mobile phone), property map.
- **Optional:** pegs or star pickets, spray paint, labelling tag, sledge hammer, 1 m quadrat, 10 m tape measure, GPS (geographic positioning system).

Choosing your photopoint sites

1. Consider what you want or have been asked to monitor.

This may include:

- **Ground changes** (e.g. ground cover, salinity, land condition).
- **Site changes** (e.g. gully erosion, weed control, fencing).
- **Local landscape changes** (e.g. fire, flood).

If unsure, contact your project manager at Healthy Land & Water.



Image 1. 'Before' photopoint: Lantana control.



Image 2. 'After' photopoint: Lantana control.



Image 3. Groundcover monitoring.

2. **Identify an area typical of what you are monitoring that is easy to find and access as you will need to visit it again.**
3. **Choose an easily identifiable point** about 10 metres away (e.g. a tree or fence post) or a recognisable landmark in the background, such as a building. This provides a sense of scale, as well as ensuring the same field of view is recorded each time.
4. **Decide if you need pegs or pickets to mark your photopoint** (likely for ground changes).

Use spray paint, a tag or other marking method, to name and number your photopoint.



Taking your photopoint photos

Photos should be taken at least once at the start, during, and at the end of the project. Your project manager from Healthy Land & Water will discuss specific requirements with you in more detail.

- **Ground changes:** place a pen, coin or similar item on the ground, stand behind it, then from this position, take a photo of the ground just in front of your feet (make sure you include the pen or other item in the photo).
- **Site changes:** check you can see your 'identifiable point' through the camera (don't zoom in too close!)
- **Local landscape changes:** make sure you can see your 'recognisable landmark' through the camera.

Try to avoid bright, glaring sky in the photo, as it creates contrast and reduces the image detail.

When you revisit the photopoint for progress or final photos, ensure the same field of view is captured as that for your 'before' photos.

What to do with your photopoint photos

Make sure you record the photograph's details: project number/name, photopoint name/number, date, site location, direction of photo (e.g. facing north, south-east), names of any people, any comments or observations (e.g. grazing pressure, seasonal conditions).

Send these details and a digital or scanned copy to your Healthy Land & Water project manager.

- **Digital photographs:** file name should include project number, date and location. Please provide highest quality available in a "jpg" format.
- **Print photographs:** write the photograph's details on the back of the photo and scan these. Your project manager can help you with this.

Make sure you have obtained permission from anyone in your photos

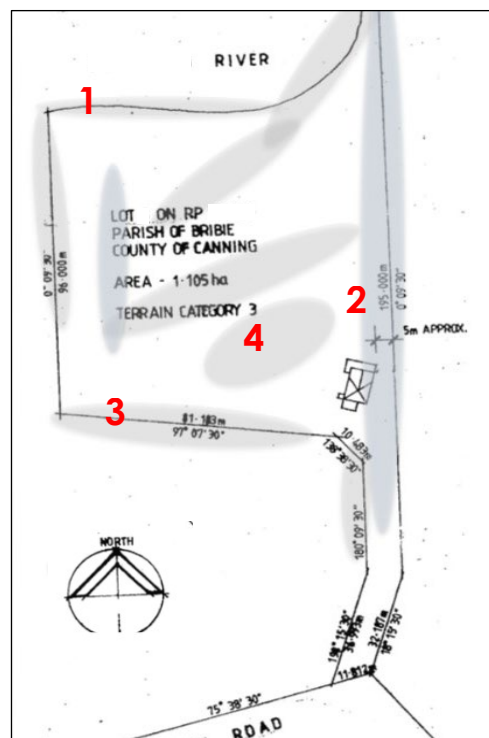


Figure 1. Example property map showing location of photopoints.

Project name and no.	HLW1053 Weed Control
Photopoint name and no.	#3 East fence
Location description	150 m west from gate
GPS (easting, northing in MGA94)	E 27.729730 N 152.528572
Photopoint direction	North-west
Photograph date	30 September 2012
Photograph number/name	IMG_0859
Comments/observations	Before first spray
People in photo (if relevant)	Jane Smith
Photographers name	John Smith

Figure 2. Example photo label. Recording the details of your photopoint is vital.