



## The National Landcare Facilitator

**Newsletter - June 2011**

### **2011/12 Community Action Grants Round Announced**

Community groups around Australia can now apply for small grants to help fund local environmental and sustainable agriculture projects. Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Dr Mike Kelly, today announced that \$5 million will be available through the 2011-12 Community Action Grants round.

Grants of between \$5,000 and \$20,000 are available to help local community groups undertake activities such as planting trees, revegetating landscapes, rehabilitating dunes, removing weeds, controlling pests, holding field days, recording traditional ecological knowledge and improving sustainable land management practices. Community Action Grants are part of the Australian Government's Caring for our Country initiative.

**Applications for the 2011-12 Community Action Grants will close Monday 1 August 2011. More information on Caring for our Country and Community Action Grants, including how to apply, is available at [www.nrm.gov.au](http://www.nrm.gov.au) or by calling 1800 552 008.**

Individuals are not eligible for Community Action Grants and projects must be completed within 18 months. Importantly the Community Action Grants can be used for on ground works or capacity building within the community. This gives groups greater flexibility in developing a project that best meets the needs of their local group/community. These grants were instituted in direct response to feedback from the community about the need for a small grants process for groups to undertake work in their local areas.

2010/11, Community Action Grants for Landcare related works totalling \$4.2m were approved and covered a range of local activities such as monitoring soil properties, erosion control, invasive pests and weeds management, riparian restoration, benchmarking sustainable resource management, trialling various farming and grazing practices, soil health and dung beetle projects, rainforest and bush regeneration, wildlife corridors, wild dog and rabbit control, managing salinity and recording and use of traditional ecological knowledge.

Also small groups which are not incorporated can participate by being sponsored by an incorporated organisation that is willing to apply on their behalf. For example a local branch of a farming organisation could approach their State Farming Organisation as their sponsor or a local environmental or productivity group could approach their regional NRM body or CMA. For more information on current Community Action Grants or on how to apply for the current round of funding go to [nrm.gov.au](http://www.nrm.gov.au). Also, if you need a hand, try your Regional Landcare Facilitator and their contacts can be found at <http://www.nrm.gov.au/contacts/landcare.html>.

**Community Action Grants – In Action:** Farmers in the dryland broadacre agricultural region of WA’s Upper Blackwood Basin have been busily improving the environmental condition of their properties, thanks to two Community Action Grants. Managed by the Katanning LCDC, the local district Landcare group, 6.2km of fencing has been erected and 17,000 native seedlings planted through the “Greening the Eastern Blackwood” project, with a further 7.8km of fencing and 9180 native seedlings through “Kent Farmers Protecting Biodiversity”. (Salmon Gum country fenced off for stock exclusion)



The project works have seen more than 170 ha of remnant bushland fenced off from stock to encourage regeneration, and 37 ha of bare areas of paddock revegetated – not only protecting against erosion but also increasing the area of native bushland available for local animals, including the endangered Carnabys Black Cockatoo. Funding received provides part costs for the farmers who contribute their labour, machinery and some material costs to their projects.

## Landmark Proposal to Protect Cropping Land



Conflict around the permanent loss of agricultural land is not new, particularly from urban development, but in recent years the boom in the resources sector has seen a rapid escalation in the development in areas traditionally used for cropping in many parts of the country. There have been a number of high profile cases in cropping areas in states such as Queensland, NSW and Western Australia.

In Queensland for example less than 2% of the state is permanently cropped, and Australia in general has limited areas that have both the soil and climate to sustain permanent cropping. In most states the resources sector is exempt from state planning mechanisms and the scale of proposed developments has seen open conflict develop between the resources sector, farming communities and environmental groups. While planning mechanisms are in place in many States to deal with urban encroachment, there is nothing in most cases to deal with mining or the potential unplanned spread of large carbon plantations in the future onto scarce cropping lands.

The resulting uncertainty is a problem for all concerned and issues around future food security has seen the Queensland Government propose land use planning legislation aimed to prevent the permanent alienation from food production of land which is deemed to be “Strategic Cropping Land or (SCL)”. The approach proposed by the Queensland Government could provide a template for other States to consider.

The Queensland State Government has committed to protecting “Strategic Cropping Lands” which is designed to protect the best of the currently cropped areas in the state from permanent alienation from food production by activities such as mining. While the proposed process is not perfect – it is an historic step as this is the first time that a State Government has moved to protect cropping lands for food production from activities such as mining.

Hopefully, this will begin to give some certainty to the mining sector, farmers and environment groups about where development can or cannot occur. Importantly the process is also intended to help protect strategic cropping land from permanent alienation due to large scale carbon plantations. Many Landcare and related groups in Queensland have been heavily involved in the process so far.

Further information;

The Queensland Government has announced the implementation of its SCL policy through [Strategic Cropping Protection Areas and a Strategic Cropping Management Area](#). The government has also announced its intention to include [transitional arrangements](#) (to have effect from 31 May 2011) in new SCL legislation to be introduced into Parliament later this year. As of 31 May 2011, resource development projects, such as mining, that are not well advanced in the approvals process will be subject to the full effect of the legislation to be introduced later this year.

In addition, the Queensland Government, through the Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM), has released [Protecting Queensland's strategic cropping land: Regulatory Assessment Statement](#) (RAS) for public comment. Submissions are invited from the community, stakeholders and other interested parties on the proposals contained in this RAS by Wednesday 29 June 2011.

The [proposed criteria](#) were released on 14 April 2011, along with a technical report and independent expert review. The proposed criteria will be used in the drafting of the SCL legislation. The SCL policy includes plans to introduce new legislation in late 2011. Developments such as open cut mining, coal seam gas, underground coal gasification, long-wall/underground mining, urban uses and permanent forest plantations would all be assessed under the new legislation. The release of a draft State Planning Policy (SPP) is the next step to progress the implementation of the SCL policy. The SPP will become a new instrument under the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009*. The draft SPP will be released for public consultation as soon as possible.

If you would like to receive updates on the progress of the government's SCL policy, email [scenquiries@derm.qld.gov.au](mailto:scenquiries@derm.qld.gov.au) or call 13 QGOV (13 74 68).

For more information go to; [http://www.derm.qld.gov.au/land/planning/strategic-cropping/index.html#progress\\_update\\_\\_may](http://www.derm.qld.gov.au/land/planning/strategic-cropping/index.html#progress_update__may).

## 2011/2012 Federal Budget

In a difficult budget environment many people were relieved to no major funding cuts to Landcare/NRM programs in the 2011/12 Federal budget handed down in May. Funding increases were announced for the Environmental Stewardship Program as well as the Wildlife Corridors election commitment.

In the budget, the Federal Government announced \$84.2 million over four years in a new round of the Environmental Stewardship Program, through Caring for our Country. The Environmental Stewardship Program gives landholders access to 15-year grants so they can take long-term action on their land to reduce grazing intensity, control weeds and feral animals and protect key species and ecological communities.

The Budget also sets aside \$10 million over three years to deliver on a 2010 Election commitment to develop a National Wildlife Corridors Plan to link national parks and reserves with private land, providing a framework for the protection of the natural environment and biodiversity. A further \$4 million over four years will be invested to control the crazy ants which threaten the iconic red crab and rainforest habitat unique ecosystems of Christmas Island.

## Carbon Farming Initiative

The Domestic Offsets Integrity Committee is currently considering proposed Carbon Farming Initiative offset methodologies for Savanna Burning, Capture & Combustion of Landfill Gas, and Management of Camels in the Australian Rangelands. All three of these focus on avoided emissions and are open for public consultation until the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2011.

### Proposed methodologies

Proponent	Title	Eligible activity	Status
Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency	<a href="#">Savanna burning</a>	Avoided emissions from savanna burning	Open for consultation  Deadline for public comments <b>30 June 2011</b>
Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency	<a href="#">Capture and combustion of landfill gas</a>	Avoided emissions from legacy waste deposited in landfill	Open for consultation  Deadline for public comments <b>30 June 2011</b>
Northwest Carbon Pty Ltd	<a href="#">Management of large feral herbivores (camels) in the Australian rangelands*</a>	Avoided emissions from feral animals	Open for consultation  Deadline for public comments <b>30 June 2011</b>

For more information on the CFI, including the proposed legislation and further information on offset methodologies go to: [www.climatechange.gov.au/government/initiatives/carbon-farming-initiative/methodology-development/methodologies-under-consideration.aspx](http://www.climatechange.gov.au/government/initiatives/carbon-farming-initiative/methodology-development/methodologies-under-consideration.aspx).

## Market Based Instruments Forum



The National Market Based Instruments Forum is a free event hosted by Designer Carrots, and will investigate the implications and future application of market-based instruments (MBIs) in natural resource management in Australia. Key MBI practitioners, researchers and policy makers will tackle issues such as farmer experiences with MBIs, Traditional Owner involvement, carbon markets and their implications, and the future of MBIs in Australia. A full program will be available shortly on the [Designer Carrots website](http://www.designercarrots.com.au). To register, please visit [www.marketbasedinstruments.gov.au](http://www.marketbasedinstruments.gov.au).

## The Agricultural Resource Management Survey

Caring for our Country commissioned the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to establish the Agricultural Resource Management Survey to report every two years on land management practices being used by Australian farmers. The 2007-08 Agricultural Resource Management Survey provides the baseline for future assessments. For the first survey the ABS sampled approximately 33 000 agricultural businesses from an in-scope population of approximately 150 000 agricultural businesses to estimate the uptake of specific land management practices. For more information go to: <http://www.nrm.gov.au/about/caring/sustainable.html#reporting>.

## Other Funding Opportunities

**Federal Government Volunteer Grants** – The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services & Indigenous Affairs is encouraging not-for-profit organisations to apply for grants of between \$1000 and \$5000 to support the work of their volunteers. Application forms and guidelines are available at [www.fahcsia.gov.au](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au) or call the toll free number 1800 183 374. **Applications close Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> June at 5pm AEST.**

**South Australian Government NRM Grants** – The SA State Government has announced funding of \$2 million in 2011/2012 for Natural Resource Management Community grants for community groups to carry out local land care, coast care and water care projects. Grants will be given for a range of NRM activities including fencing watercourses, sustainable land management, soil protection, weed control, native plant revegetation, habitat protection for native animals and other priorities supported by a regional NRM Plan. For a grant application to be successful, the project must support the achievement of long term targets within regional NRM plans established by South Australia's eight NRM Boards. Small grants up to \$10,000 and medium grants between \$10,000 and \$30,000 are available. Applications close on Friday, June 24. Application forms and further details are available at: <http://www.nrm.sa.gov.au/Funding/CommunityGrants.aspx>

**RACV Community Grants** -The RACV Community Grants are now open. Grants of up to \$10,000 are available for projects that fall under the category of environmental sustainability. Applications close **1 July 2011**. For more information or to apply, go to the RACV website ([www.racv.com.au](http://www.racv.com.au)). To be eligible groups need to be endorsed as a 'deductible gift recipient' (DGR); if your group doesn't hold DGR status then please contact Landcare Australia Ltd (LAL) as they are willing to sponsor applications by Landcare Groups: contact Heather Campbell - 03 8631 7805, [heather.campbell@landcareaustralia.com.au](mailto:heather.campbell@landcareaustralia.com.au) .

**\$1 billion for Regional Development** -The Minister for Regional Australia Simon Crean announced a \$1 billion five-year Regional Development Australia Fund in April. The Fund will commence allocation of grants from 1 July 2011 and is intended to focus on local solutions and long-term economic benefits and apparently only applications backed by local RDAs will be considered for funding. Further details on the fund, including guidelines and criteria can be found at: <http://www.regional.gov.au/regional/programs/rdaf.aspx>.

## Recycle your Mobiles & Regenerate Australia's Coastline

This year MobileMuster and Landcare Australia' have partnered to give Australia's iconic coastline a helping hand by recycling old mobiles and accessories. Through the '*Old phones, more trees*' campaign, MobileMuster aims to collect 250,000 handsets and provide up to 25 grants of \$2,000 each to Landcare and Coastcare groups around Australia. The campaign will run from World Environment

Day on 5 June to 30 September 2011. MobileMuster is calling on Australians to round up their old and unused mobiles, batteries, chargers and accessories to achieve two great environmental outcomes.

### Recycling an old mobile phone is free and easy, simply:

1. Hand them in at your mobile phone retailer / MobileMuster local collection point - to find your nearest one go to [www.mobilemuster.com.au](http://www.mobilemuster.com.au) or call 1300 730 070
2. Post them in by either picking up a free MobileMuster recycling satchel from Australia Post, National Pharmacies or printing off a reply paid mailing label from [www.mobilemuster.com.au](http://www.mobilemuster.com.au)

## Yellow pages spotlight on Landcare Volunteer

Landcare volunteer Erin Rowe is the face of this year's 2011/12 Windsor Yellow Pages® and White Pages®. Each year Sensis recognises those who contribute to the community by featuring them on their covers. Erin is recognised for her work with the Hawkesbury Young Landcare Group as well as her work with the Hawkesbury Rainforest Network and Willow Warriors.



## State Landcare Conferences & Other Dates

- WA NRM conference, Perth 23-25 August - <http://www.isde7.net>.
- NSW, Parkes 5-7<sup>th</sup> September – [www.parkslandcare.org.au](http://www.parkslandcare.org.au).
- Queensland, Ayr 22-23<sup>rd</sup> September – [www.landcare.org.au/CONFERENCE.htm](http://www.landcare.org.au/CONFERENCE.htm).
- World Congress on Conservation agriculture, Brisbane 26-29 September- <http://www.wcca2011.org>.
- Tasmania, Stanley 9-10<sup>th</sup> October – [www.taslandcare.org.au/tlca.html](http://www.taslandcare.org.au/tlca.html).



## Publications



### Global food security: facts, issues and implications

This paper highlights issues and provides information on the global and Australian food security prospects and the various challenges facing Australia in the food security context, including the availability of resources for food production, climate change, and productivity in agriculture.

Read *Global food security: facts, issues and implications* on the **ABARES website**.

## Regional Landcare Facilitators

These are now in place in most NRM regions across the country and are hosted by a variety of organisations such as Landcare Networks, CMA's/Regional Bodies and industry groups. Funding for one full time RLF (up to \$150 000) has been allocated by the Federal Government to each region and some regions have opted to split this across a number of part time positions. For the contact details for the RLF in your region go to : <http://www.nrm.gov.au/contacts/landcare.html#regional>.

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To sign up for the NLF newsletter ([Click Here](#)) Or visit [www.landcareonline](http://www.landcareonline), under the About tab > National Landcare Facilitator > NLF E-newsletter

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Regards,

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