



 The National Landcare Facilitator

## Newsletter - August 2011

### Landcare Week 2011 – Collective Action Making a Difference for Australia

Next week marks 2011 Landcare week and is the time when we celebrate the contribution that tens of thousands of people across the country have made. Landcare is an Australian innovation which for over two decades has delivered multiple benefits for our environment, climate and food security.

We often overlook the individual contribution of work done on individual farms or by local rural, urban or indigenous Landcare groups because these do not attract the headlines of larger projects. You sometimes hear it said that these individual contributions are “too small” to make any difference. On the contrary, each action is important and it is the collective action by Landcare in its various forms that has made it one of the most significant social movements in this nation’s history delivering productive, environmental and social benefits.

Junior Landcare in our schools is helping children from urban communities to connect with our environment through understanding where their food comes from. Children growing watermelons or sunflowers might not seem like a Landcare activity, but it is helping children make the first steps towards understanding the linkages between our environment, food, where it comes from and that they are interrelated.

Urban communities across the country have been doing remarkable work such as managing and enhancing public lands like creek banks and coastal dunes which has had significant water quality benefits, enhanced biodiversity and have made these better places to live. Indigenous communities have made significant contributions through not only managing traditional lands, but in extending their traditional land management knowledge to the broader community across the country.

Our farmers have not only undertaken widespread revegetation and biodiversity works on their properties, but have also made significant environment and climate change contributions through practices such as minimum tillage and managing ground cover etc. These actions not only make individual farms more sustainable, but enhance our environment and the future of our food supplies.

All these individual actions continue to make a difference and should be recognised for the collective benefit that they provide. The Landcare movement through this collective action continues to make a major contribution to this country. While we use Landcare week to

celebrate this contribution, it is important to recognise that this work goes on every day of the year and is undertaken by tens of thousands of Australians acting as environmental stewards or volunteers in the nation's interest.

So next week we should all take the opportunity to celebrate Landcare, its diversity and collective action and the people that make it a success.

## ABARES Research

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of August the Australian Bureau of Agricultural & Resource Economics & Sciences (ABARES) released the preliminary national survey results of "Drivers of Practice Change in Land Management in Australian Agriculture". This survey was conducted for the Department of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries to help inform the review of the Caring for Our Country Program (CFOC).

While caution should be exercised in interpreting survey results, this is some of the most interesting research of its type that I have seen and it provides some timely data to help inform the review of CFOC.



While these are preliminary results, they did highlight a number of important factors such as;

- 1) Financial and environmental factors rated highly in influencing land management practice decisions.
- 2) Improving soil quality was the major environmental motivation.
- 3) Landcare along with farm productivity groups was the most valued source of support.
- 4) The National Landcare Program had the highest level of recognition by farmers of current and previous Australian Government NRM programs.
- 5) Farmers indicated that financial limitations were the most limiting factor in the uptake of NRM practices.

For more information go to: [www.abares.gov.au/publications\\_remote\\_content/recent-publications?sq\\_content\\_src=%2BdXJsPWh0dHAIM0EIMkYxNDMuMTg4LjE3LjIwJTJGZW5yZGwIMkZEUZGU2VydmljZSUyRmRpc3BsYXkucGhwJTNGZmlkJTNEcGVfYWJhcmVzOTkwMTA4MDJfMTJhLnhtbCZhbGw9MQ%3D%3D](http://www.abares.gov.au/publications_remote_content/recent-publications?sq_content_src=%2BdXJsPWh0dHAIM0EIMkYxNDMuMTg4LjE3LjIwJTJGZW5yZGwIMkZEUZGU2VydmljZSUyRmRpc3BsYXkucGhwJTNGZmlkJTNEcGVfYWJhcmVzOTkwMTA4MDJfMTJhLnhtbCZhbGw9MQ%3D%3D).

## Carbon Farming Initiative

**CFI LEGISLATION** - The [legislation](#) to underpin the CFI was passed by Parliament on 23 August 2011. The legislation aims to provide long-term certainty to participants of the CFI and underpin the environmental integrity and market value of carbon credits. The legislation was amended to clarify that determined native title interests (including non-exclusive native title) will hold a consent right in relation to CFI sequestration projects.

The CFI Administrator will be operational in three months' time, from the start of December 2011. Project proponents can then register to participate and open an account in the national registry of emissions units. Where CFI methodologies are available, project proponents can begin applying for approval of their projects.

Methodologies for landfill gas, reforestation, manure management and savannah burning have been developed and are currently being assessed by the interim Domestic Offsets Integrity Committee. The Government is working with stakeholders to develop other methodologies including for reduced fertiliser use, increase in soil carbon, restoring rangelands, revegetation and avoided deforestation.

**CONSULTATION PAPER ON ENABLING INDIGENOUS PARTICIPATION** - The Government has extended the consultation on enabling Indigenous participation in the CFI until **9 September 2011** to allow more time for stakeholders to provide input. The [consultation paper](#) covers how Indigenous landholders can participate in the CFI and outlines outstanding issues in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land. Further information is available on the Department's [website](#). All submissions which are not confidential will be placed on the website shortly. We will keep you updated on the progress and outcome of this process.

**REGULATIONS ON POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE LIST** - The Government has released [exposure draft regulations](#) for public consultation. These draft regulations deal with activities that would be considered additional and eligible to participate in the CFI and activities that would be ineligible. The commentary explains the criteria for assessing activities for inclusion on these lists and provides more detail on each listed activity.

The list of eligible activities includes the early dry season burning of savannah areas greater than 1 km sq and the management of feral camels (these methodologies are still being considered by the interim Domestic Offsets Integrity Committee as noted above).

The Government is now seeking comments from all interested stakeholders on the draft regulations on positive and negative lists. The consultation runs until **16 September 2011** and we would welcome your feedback. Where possible, the submissions should use the template available on the website and be lodged via email to [cfi@climatechange.gov.au](mailto:cfi@climatechange.gov.au).

For further information on the CFI, see [www.climatechange.gov.au/cfi](http://www.climatechange.gov.au/cfi).

## National Wildlife Corridors Plan (NWCP)

The NWCP is;

- a key element of the Australian Government's new approach to landscape-scale management.
- part of the response to issues impacting our biodiversity and natural resources, such as climate change.
- intended to guide creation of wildlife corridors to build connectivity and resilience to climate change and promote natural storage of carbon

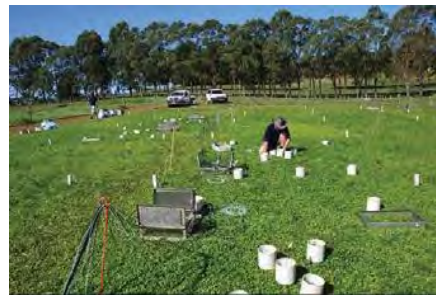
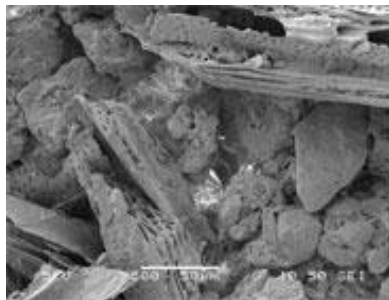


It is intended that discussions with stakeholders, including through the Advisory Group, will occur as the Plan and the pilot projects progress over the next three years. Advisory Group members have been selected on the basis of experience and expertise from science, industry, environmental non-government organisations, natural resource management bodies and Indigenous groups.

The NWCP will relate to the following land sector package measures: Carbon Farming Initiative, Biodiversity Fund, Natural resource management for climate change

Further information about the Advisory Group is available on the National Wildlife Corridor Plan website at [www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/wildlife-corridors/index.html](http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/wildlife-corridors/index.html).

## Biochar Research



The DAFF-funded biochar project is a national initiative which, under CSIRO leadership, brings together partner organisations from across Australia. Key research is carried out on the different qualities of biochar and how they interact with the soil mineral matrix and how the properties change over time. The effect of biochar on greenhouse gas mitigation is being assessed in field and laboratory trials and a comprehensive life cycle analysis will provide information on the whole-of-life mitigation potential of biochar application to agriculture.

The two projects share the characterisation and analysis of more than 70 biochars produced from different feedstocks and under different production conditions. These differences enable specific usages for different biochar types and highlight the need to better understand biochar interactions with the soil mineral matrix. Current funding from DAFF and GRDC provides a firm foundation for biochar research to close some of the current knowledge gaps around use of biochar for agronomic purposes and greenhouse gas mitigation. The following is a link to more background information on biochar and an update on this research; [www.csiro.au/resources/Biochar-agronomic-improvement.html](http://www.csiro.au/resources/Biochar-agronomic-improvement.html).

## Queensland Strategic Cropping Land Legislation

The Queensland Natural Resources Minister Rachel Nolan has announced a new committee will provide independent scrutiny of the soil science central to Strategic Cropping Land legislation. Ms Nolan said the ground breaking legislation was reliant on the accuracy of the soil science.

The Strategic Cropping - Science and Technical Implementation Committee will provide oversight to the application of the soil science test as it is rolled out and ensure a degree of independent scientific oversight. It will provide both the community and government confidence that the test is being applied as intended and will be integral to ensuring that the science has gone through a process of independent scrutiny.

The committee will be made up of four professional soil scientists, two put forward by the Association of Soil Scientists and one each put forward by the Queensland Resources Council and the Queensland Farmers' Federation.

In May this year the Government announced a comprehensive soil test using eight criteria to define the best soil. The test was developed by professional soil scientists employed within the Department of Environment and Resource Management and independently peer reviewed by the eminent soil scientist Dr Roger Shaw. The Strategic Cropping Land legislation is due to be introduced later this year.

## Carbon Cockey Awards

The Carbon Cockey Awards are now open to all landholders in Australia who are achieving excellence in Carbon Farming techniques which deliver improved soil carbon sequestration, water management, solar harvesting, energy efficiency and renewable energy OR who have developed innovative techniques or inventions to improve farm based carbon storage or emissions reduction. There are several new categories;

- National Carbon Cockey - Leadership Award. For those practicing excellence in Carbon Farming and showing Leadership in the community.
- National Carbon Cockey - Encouragement Award . For those who are just starting out, and who need to be 'encouraged'.
- National Carbon Cockey - Outstanding Best Practice
- National Carbon Cockey - Outstanding Innovation or Invention. For those who are 'out there' in their thinking. They will have already seen the potentials and be working on ways to make it easier/more cost effective/ or be inventing a new machine perhaps.

Winners of each of these awards receive \$1000 and a free ticket to the conference, and then there is the:

- The National Carbon Cockey of the Year Award. Another \$1000.

If your farmers are in the Central West CMA, they also have an opportunity to enter the Awards which are just in their area - and get another \$1000 for their efforts if they win. Please go to [www.carbonfarmingconference.com.au](http://www.carbonfarmingconference.com.au) for more information. Closing date is the 12th September.

## Other Funding Opportunities

**FarmReady Grants re-open** – On the 16<sup>th</sup> of June, the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Senator Joe Ludwig, said that the program will re-open on 1 July 2011 and changes will be introduced to extend the availability of funds and make the program accessible to more primary producers. The Minister also announced that the Farm Ready Reimbursement Grants will be expanded to include agritourism and food tourism training.

Primary producers and wild game harvesters will now be entitled to a reimbursement of 65% of the costs of approved courses. Each primary producer can still claim up to a maximum \$1500 each financial year, with funding up to \$500 also available to assist with travel, accommodation and child care expenses. The arrangements for indigenous land managers will not change and they will be eligible for a 100% reimbursement of the cost of approved training courses up to the maximum of \$1500 annually. For further information about FarmReady visit: [www.daff.gov.au/farmready](http://www.daff.gov.au/farmready).

**Junior Landcare Grants** - Coles and Yates are working together with Junior Landcare to educate children about sustainability and the environment. As part of this program there are \$10 000 worth of garden grants available to schools and youth groups. These grants will encourage children to get their hands dirty and learn more about nature. For more information: [www.landcareonline.com.au/news/archive/junior-landcare-yates-coles-garden-grants](http://www.landcareonline.com.au/news/archive/junior-landcare-yates-coles-garden-grants).

**Be Natural Landcare Grants** - Up to \$5,000 to 25 local groups to help with the projects which have not received funding in the last 12 months. [www.landcareonline.com.au/news/archive/be-natural-landcare-grants-now-open](http://www.landcareonline.com.au/news/archive/be-natural-landcare-grants-now-open).

**Victoria: 25th Anniversary of Landcare Grants** - \$600,000 helps Landcare in Victoria mark its 25th birthday On Friday 29 July 2011, Mr Ryan Smith, Minister for Environment and Climate Change, announced that the Victorian Government has made available \$600,000 to help fund activities to mark the 25th Anniversary of Landcare in Victoria. For more information: <http://www.landcarevic.net.au>.



## State Landcare Conferences & Other Dates

- **Landcare Week is September 5<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>** - Landcare Australia is promoting Landcare Week group activities and encouraging the community to donate themselves to their local group and lend a hand. Go to [www.landcareonline.com.au](http://www.landcareonline.com.au) to find a group or an event in their local area using the **Find A Local Events** section on the home page or **Find A Local Group** link to the National Landcare Directory (make sure you are registered). If you have a Landcare Week group activity LAL would like to promote this so people in your local area can volunteer or contact you for more information, please send information to [events@landcareaustralia.com.au](mailto:events@landcareaustralia.com.au)
- **NSW, Parkes 5-7<sup>th</sup> September** – [www.parkeslandcare.org.au](http://www.parkeslandcare.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>.
- Carbon Farming Conference, Dubbo 28-29<sup>th</sup> September – [www.carbonfarmingconference.com.au](http://www.carbonfarmingconference.com.au).
- Tasmania, Stanley 9-10<sup>th</sup> October – [www.taslandcare.org.au/tlca.html](http://www.taslandcare.org.au/tlca.html).
- Northern Territory NRM & Landcare Forum 13<sup>th</sup> October Darwin - [www.territorynrm.org.au/news-events/2011-nt-landcare-awards/landcare-forum](http://www.territorynrm.org.au/news-events/2011-nt-landcare-awards/landcare-forum).
- **Landcare in Action: National Landcare & Catchment Management Conference 2012**  
- NZ Landcare Trust will host a 2-day conference starting 29<sup>th</sup> February 2012 at the Academy of Performing Arts, University of Waikato Campus, Hamilton, New Zealand. The event will celebrate the work of numerous Landcare Groups from all around New Zealand and provide an opportunity to explore the role that communities play in sustainable land and water management. The conference will include keynote and workshop sessions, Landcare Group presentations, a celebration meal, and optional field trips. Detailed planning is currently underway and more information will be made available on the conference website. Email: [conference@landcare.org.nz](mailto:conference@landcare.org.nz)

## 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.com.au](http://www.landcareonline.com.au), under the About tab > National Landcare Facilitator> NLF E-newsletter**

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<http://www.landcareonline.com.au/about/the-national-landcare-facilitator/nlf-e-newsletter/>

Regards,

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