



Caring for our Country: a better outcome for Australia's environment and natural resources

Australians want to see investment in the environment and better land management, but only when that leads to real change.

The Commonwealth Government's new program to protect Australia's unique natural environment and manage natural resources ensures:

- clear targets
- value for money
- reduced administrative complexity
- full accountability of public expenditure.

An integrated approach

Beginning on 1 July 2008 Caring for our Country will, for the first time, bring together delivery of a raft of Australian Government programs into an integrated package with one clear goal, a business approach to investment with clearly articulated outcomes and priorities.

Less bureaucracy

This integrated and streamlined approach to Australian Government investment in environment protection and natural resource management will be less bureaucratic, reducing the administrative burden on those undertaking activities.

Caring for our Country will do away with the complexity of 'national', 'regional' and 'local' level funding, allowing regional bodies, local, state, territory, government and non-government agencies more funding opportunities to achieve real and measurable outcomes.

Clear outcomes

An annual report card will set out what has been achieved.

The Prime Minister will be asked to approve specific outcomes for Caring for our Country within each of the six national priority areas for investment.

The Government will invite proposals from relevant organisations and partnerships to undertake activities that will contribute to its priorities and outcomes.

A business approach

The Government will:

- in September 2008, release an annual business plan for 2009-2010 that describes its priority areas for investment
- ensure integrated delivery of all relevant 2007 election commitments
- make funding decisions that ensure the Australian taxpayer gets the best value
- set short one to three year targets to stay on track
- establish a single portal for processing funds:
 - a secure internet portal and a toll-free telephone number;
 - standardised information, funding, contracting and reporting arrangements.

Better delivery

Caring for our Country will integrate delivery of national natural resource management programs: the Natural Heritage Trust; the National Landcare Program; the Environmental Stewardship Program; and the Working on Country Indigenous land and environmental program.

The Government will invest in the best combination of delivery agents, delivery mechanisms and integrated activities for a particular geographic region or asset.

It will continue to work closely with state and territory governments on the delivery arrangements for Caring for our Country and will look for opportunities for cooperative delivery throughout the program.

Competition for Caring for Our Country funds

The Government is committed to improved environmental outcomes for its national priorities.

These will be assured by selecting the best people to do each job through opening up opportunities for a greater range of people to access funds from Caring for our Country, including regional groups, government and non-government agencies.

Further information

Ring the information hotline on 1800 552 008 or visit www.nrm.gov.au