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THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT CALLS FOR APPLICATIONS FOR 2012-13 GRANTS

Biodiversity fund now open

Australia's farmers and other land managers can now apply for funding under the Biodiversity Fund, which is part of the Australian Government's Clean Energy Future Plan. The ongoing Biodiversity Fund has been allocated \$946 million over the first six years of the program and will support projects that establish, restore, protect or manage biodiverse carbon stores.

Under the first round of the Biodiversity Fund, in 2011-12 over \$30 million will be allocated to activities to help farmers and land managers store carbon, enhance biodiversity and increase resilience across the Australian landscape.

The Biodiversity Fund will facilitate investment in three key areas:

- Biodiversity planting – where funding will be made available to support farmers and other land managers expand native habitat on their property through planting mixed vegetation species appropriate to their region. This will help build landscape resilience and connectivity;
- Protecting and enhancing existing native vegetation – funding to support farmers and other land managers to protect, manage and enhance high conservation value native vegetation on their land for its carbon storage and biodiversity benefits; and
- Managing threat to biodiversity – funding to support farmers and other land managers to control the threat of invasive pests and weeds.



Applications for Biodiversity fund close at 5:00pm EADT Tuesday 31st Jan 2012.

To find out more about the Biodiversity Fund and how to apply for funding, visit the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities' website: www.environment.gov.au/cleanenergyfuture or call 1800 008 678.

First round of the action on the ground now open

On 29th Nov 2011, the Australian Government announced the first round of the \$99 million Action on the Ground program to help farmers cash in on Australia's clean energy future. This funding is to help farmers over the next six years to trial and demonstrate on-farm practices and technologies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions such as methane and nitrous oxide or increase soil carbon.

"The first funding round of competitive grants will commit up to \$25 million between now and 2015."

Applications for this funding close at 5:00pm AEDT Tuesday 31 Jan 2012.

To access the guideline and application form please go to: www.daff.gov.au/climatechange/carbonfarmingfutures/action-on-



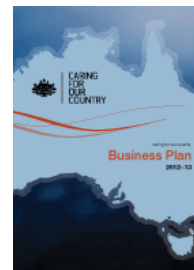
the-ground/aotg-grant-guidelines

If you do not have access to the internet you can request a hard copy application pack by calling the Action on the Ground hotline on **1800 025 005**. The hard copy application form will be available from 11 January 2012.

Business Plan 2012-13 Applications now open

On the 6th Dec 2011, the Australian Government announced the opening of applications for grants for natural resource management and sustainable agriculture projects under its Caring for our Country program. Funding of up to \$64 million are now available under this Business Plan for projects in the 2012-13 financial year.

For more information for this last round of C4oC funding please go to www.nrm.gov.au or alternatively call 1800 552 008.



Applications close at 5:00pm EADT Thursday 9th Feb 2012.

\$2 million for Research into Biochar

Applications are now open for \$2 million in competitive grants for biochar research, under the Australian Government's Carbon Farming Initiative. Biochar is a stable type of char made by burning organic materials, such as wood or crop straw in a low oxygen environment. It can be added to soil to sequester carbon and improve soil health. It has the potential to help mitigate Australia's greenhouse gas emissions while benefiting agricultural production.

Grants under the Biochar Capacity Building Program will fund the research that is needed to investigate how biochars can reduce carbon emissions, and to support the development of biochar offset methodologies. The development of robust methodologies is key to helping land managers participate in the carbon market through the Carbon Farming Initiative.

Examples of activities that would be eligible for this funding include:

- research projects examining issues such as the impact of biochar on emissions
- demonstration of the use of biochar, such as in Australian agricultural and forestry systems
- projects to develop CFI methodologies for the use of biochar in Australian systems



Applications close at 5:00pm AEDT Friday 3rd Feb 2012.

For more information about eligibility and applying for funding, visit the Biochar Capacity Building Program website: <http://daff.gov.au/climatechange/cfi/biochar>.

Coles Junior Landcare Grants

About 101 schools around Australia will receive grants of up to \$1000 from round 3 to assist with the development of various garden projects. This funding is designed to not only educate children about fresh fruit and vegetables, but also to involve them in hands-on environmental education.

Schools, kindergartens, day care centres and youth groups looking to start their own garden program can apply for a Coles Junior Landcare garden grant by registering with Junior Landcare through www.juniorlandcare.com.au or www.coles.com.au.

2012 grants are now open and the closing dates are:

- **Round 1:** closes Friday 17th Feb 2012 at 5:00pm EST
- **Round 2:** closes Friday 4th May 2012, 5:00pm EST
- **Round 3:** closes Friday 27th July 2012, 5:00pm EST.



CARBON FARMING INITIATIVE (CFI) UPDATE

As most of you would know, the CFI Bill has passed through the House of Representatives in October and the CFI commenced operation on 8 December 2012.

Methodologies have been approved for:

- capture and combustion of landfill gas,
- capture and destruction of methane generated from manure in piggeries and
- environmental plantings (reforestation).

The savanna burning methodology is close to finalisation and the methodology for feral animals (camels) is still being developed. More information about methodology development can be found at:
www.climatechange.gov.au/government/initiatives/carbon-farming-initiative/methodology-development.aspx.

On 8 November 2011, the Parliament passed the Clean Energy Bills, which include the carbon price mechanism. For more info on the CEF please visit: www.cleanenergyfuture.gov.au

THE CFI WORKSHOPS ACROSS THE NAR

NACC has teamed up with the Australian Carbon Traders to run a series of information workshops on the Carbon Farming Initiative [and the land sector component of the CEF] for farmers, land managers and local authorities across the region on the 3rd week of Feb 2012 (i.e. 13th – 17th). The aim of these workshops is to provide you with information about the CFI and how it means for you in terms of farm practice, the mechanics of the market and how to go about accessing some of the opportunities.

The key speakers include **Ben Keogh** of the Australian Carbon Traders and **Mark Canny** of NACC. There will be time for a great deal of questions so start jotting them down now.

The table below outlines the proposed schedule of workshops.

Days (Feb 2012)	Tentative location/venue		
	Meetings for farmers, land managers and others	Meetings specific to reps of local government	Meetings for farmers, land managers and others
Monday 13 th		Moora 1:00 -2:30pm	Gingin 6:00 – 8:00pm
Tues 14 ^t	Badgingarra 9am -11am	Jurien Bay 1:30 -3:00pm	Coorow 7:00 – 9:00pm
Wed 15 th	Morawa 9am – 11am	Morawa 12:30 – 2.00pm	Mullewa 4:30 – 6:30pm
Thursday 16 rd	Geraldton 9am – 11am	Geraldton (CGG) 12:30 – 14:00pm	Binnu / Northampton 5:00-7:00pm

More details about the events including promotional flyer will be available in early Jan 2012.

For more information and to RSVP your interest please contact Stanley Yokwe at NACC office on Ph: 08 9938 0105, Mob: 0428 649 775 or email: Stanley.Yokwe@nacc.com.au

SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS IN COMMUNITY ACTION GRANT FOR 2011-12

CAG successful projects in the NAR

In mid Nov 2011, the Australian Government committed about \$7 million in the community action grant to 365 projects across the nation. Forty one of those are in WA and seven in our region including (not in any order):



Project 1:**Project title:** Youth project**Funding recipient:**-NACC

Project description: Currently in Geraldton, WA there is little opportunity for the Indigenous and non Indigenous community to understand Aboriginal connection to country and traditional Aboriginal uses of local natural resources. The Alice Nannup Walk Trail has provided a wonderful opportunity to showcase Aboriginal Australian's connection to country. In a present social environment where NRM, Reconciliation and Bridging the Gap have become positive forces in community building, the Alice Nannup Walk Trail has the ability to strengthen a spiritual connection to country for both Indigenous and non Indigenous Australians while raising awareness of NRM practices and issues such as Weeds of National Significance which existed on site. The first stage of this project is now complete.

Project 2:**Project title:** Demonstrating elite fodder shrubs for future productive use in the NAR.**Funding recipient:** Moore Catchment Council

Project description: This project aims to partner with the Moora Miling Pasture Improvement Group and CSIRO Livestock Industries to demonstrate new elite strains of old man saltbush that have been bred for improved productivity and palatability. Saltbush is an effective fodder shrub and revegetation plant for the thousands of hectares of saline affected unproductive land of the Moore River catchment. It has proven health benefits for stock including Vitamin E and essential minerals, allows deferred grazing from other pasture and encourages improved hydrological balance and benefits to native biodiversity. These new saltbush will provide farmers with an improved grazing tool for future sustainable farming.

Project 3:**Project title:** Oil Mallee Sustainable Agriculture Study Tour for Young Farmers**Funding recipient:** Oil Mallee Association of Australia Inc.

Project description: The project is a 'contiki' type tour for 40 young farmers and students, focusing on sustainable agriculture and the oil mallee industry. It would run over four days and include demonstration and viewing of crops, biochar experiments, the oil mallee harvester, a eucalyptus distillery, the Cunderdin Agricultural College trials, the Western Australian No-Tillage Farmers Association trials, and an introduction to the Carbon Farming Initiative. It aims to educate young farmers on the benefits and opportunities of oil mallee farming in order to increase the uptake of sustainable farming practices. Funding is required to meet most of the costs but a contribution will be made by Oil Mallee Association.

Project 4:**Project title:** Building the knowledge of carbon in our farming systems**Project recipient:** Liebe Group Inc

Project description: This project aims to increase the knowledge of local growers about the opportunities the carbon farming initiative offers in overcoming unproductive soils. Extensive land clearings for broad acre agriculture in the WA wheat belt have led to rising water tables, salinity, soil acidity and exposed soils that are prone to wind erosion. These areas are often uneconomic to crop. Increased knowledge for landholders about carbon farming practices, the carbon trading scheme, the laws and regulations governing the carbon market in Australia and available funding sources will help to open up opportunities for landholders to make effective choices about these unproductive soils, preventing exacerbation of the problem.

Project 5:**Project title:** Fencing feral species out of areas of indigenous heritage**Project recipient:** Warri Association Incorporated

Project description: This project will enable the protection of an area of cultural significance which is currently exposed to heavy grazing pressures from transient feral species. The fence will exclude feral species and livestock from the identified area to prevent damage to its cultural significance and allow the native vegetation to regenerate and protect the area from the impacts of erosion. The fence will be constructed in accordance with Mt View Farm's management plan and in collaboration with other local Indigenous land managers.



Project 6:

Project title: Raising awareness of revegetation and rehabilitation in the natural environment

Project recipient: West Midlands Natural Resource Group Incorporated

Project description: The aim of this project is to build on the success of previous rehabilitation and revegetation projects in the West Midlands region, to control invasive weeds, to plant 6 000 local native species and erect informative signage, to enhance eroded dune and roadside areas which act as important wildlife corridors. The opening of the Indian Ocean Drive has increased the amount of traffic and visitors, and together with a lower rainfall, will escalate the erosion problems. In addition, the significance of local provenance in relation to biodiversity and controlling wind erosion will be endorsed through newspaper articles and school programs. Through the coordination of these projects the relationship between all groups will be consolidated.

Project 7:

Project title: Reducing erosion & improving biodiversity with forage shrubs in the Yarra Yarra

Project recipient: Yarra Yarra Catchment Management Group Incorporated

Project description: - The project will demonstrate how planting windbreaks to reduce wind erosion and improve on-farm soil management can also have benefits for biodiversity, as well as providing shelter and feed for stock. Incorporating forage shrubs into a farming system can increase productivity by providing green feed during the autumn feed gap, reducing the need for hand-feeding stock and protecting paddocks from over grazing. This project will address issues of protecting soils from overgrazing, reducing wind erosion, making productive use of less productive land, reducing recharge to the water table and consequently reducing the spread of salinity, all leading to increased sustainability of farming, it will also address the issue of increasing biodiversity.

NATIONAL AND LOCAL EVENTS***West Midlands 2012 Rabbit and Fox Baiting Program***

West Midlands Group is offering landholders in the WMG region an opportunity to participate in a free rabbit and fox baiting program. The program will run in March/April 2012 and will include a workshop to obtain a S7 Training certificate if landholders do not already have one.

Note:

- Baiting needs to be within a 2km area of remnant vegetation.
- Only landholders located in the West Midlands region may apply.
- Depending on the level of interest the number of baits allocated per landholder may be restricted.

For further information and to obtain EOI form, please contact Penny Keenan on Ph 9651 4008, Fax 9651 4107, Mobile 0427 998 001 or penny@wmgroup.org.au.

Opportunity to drought proof your farm

The DAFWA has been coordinating the Australian Government funded Farm Business Resilience Program. The program is a great opportunity for farming businesses to be eligible for a \$30,000 grant from the Govt to Drought Proof their farm and develop a 5 – 10 year strategic plan, including financial plans.

The program will resume in early 2012 and run until May 2012; during this period it is free to all farming businesses and will be run in local areas depending on numbers.

For further information contact **Drought Assistance hotline 13 23 16** or www.daff.gov.au/droughtpilot



If you need to register your interest, please contact Penny Keenan of the West Midlands Group on Ph 9651 4008, Fax 9651 4107, Mobile 0427 998 001 or penny@wmgroup.org.au.

RELEVANT PUBLICATIONS

Biochar may improve agricultural productivity

A report released by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES), reveals biochar could help improve agricultural productivity and assist in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The report, titled 'Biochar—Implications for agricultural productivity', examines the potential applications, benefits and risks of biochar as well as the research required to determine its productivity and sustainability potential.

To view the Biochar report titled Implications for agricultural productivity go to the DAFF website on www.daff.gov.au



Record Winter Crop in Western Australia Wheatbelt.

Generally favourable winter and spring growing conditions are expected to lead to a record 2011-12 national winter crop, according to the latest edition of the Australian Crop Report.

“ABARES acting Deputy Executive Director, Dr Terry Sheales, said that a significant recovery in production in Western Australia is the primary driver behind the forecast record winter crops. A marked turnaround in Western Australian production is expected after above average rainfall throughout winter and spring,” Dr Sheales said.

“Australian winter crop production is forecast to be around 43.4 million tonnes in 2011-12, a rise of 2 per cent from the record achieved last season”.

To access the report please go ABARES website at www.daff.gov.au/abares.



FARMSAFE WA ALLIANCE

FREE WORKSHOPS!
For Rural Community Members



Farmsafe WA Alliance is an independent not-for-profit, non-government organisation encouraging and leading the way to safer farming.

WORKSHOP DETAILS

CARNAMAH	5TH MARCH	2.30-5.30pm
MORAWA	6TH MARCH	2.30-5.30pm
MINGENEW	7TH MARCH	2-5pm
GERALDTON	10TH MARCH	2-5pm
MULLEWA	11TH MARCH	1.30-4.30pm
CUE	13TH MARCH	10-1pm
MT MAGNET	14TH MARCH	2-5pm

Venues to be advised....

Register NOW as places are limited..

Visit our website for more information or call us to secure your place!

FARMSAFE WA ALLIANCE
 PO Box 118 Forrestfield WA 6058
 P: 08 9359 4118
 F: 08 9359 3468
 E: admin@farmsafewa.org
 W: www.farmsafewa.org

Emergency Care and Injury Management

Farmsafe WA is coordinating a project funded by the Department of Health, Western Australia which will involve the delivery of a series of free community workshops throughout the Midwest region during March 2012.

Delivered in partnership with St John Ambulance, Fire and Emergency Service Authority (FESA), Royal Flying Doctors Service (RFDS) and the WA Regional Police, the workshops will include interactive skill stations run by the different emergency services.

The workshops will cover practical information on how to deal with medical and other emergencies in rural environments and will cover topics such as:

- ◆ Emergency planning and preparedness
- ◆ Practical skills and specific scenario demonstrations
- ◆ The role each emergency service plays in the community
- ◆ Who to call in a medical emergency
- ◆ A chance to meet your local emergency service officials

The workshops will run for approximately 3 hours and include complimentary refreshments. All attendees will receive a show bag with freebies, including health and safety information and resources.

The Emergency Care and Injury Management Project is an initiative of Farmsafe WA Alliance and is funded by the Department of Health, Western Australia and supported by the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS), Fire and Emergency Service Authority (FESA), St John Ambulance and the WA Regional Police.



Government of Western Australia
Department of Health
Public Health





CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY



MOORA - MILING PASTURE IMPROVEMENT GROUP

