

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY – AUSTRALIA

NATURAL HERITAGE TRUST PROGRAMS

NATIONAL LANDCARE PROGRAM (NLP)

The NLP supports collective action by communities to manage natural resources sustainably, in partnership with government. Achieving sustainable agriculture is a major environmental goal for Australia.

The NLP encourages on-ground action which will result in integrated and sustainable natural resource management at the farm, catchment and regional level. Support is provided for the development of locally initiated and managed projects addressing critical issues on public and private land for the public benefit. The NLP also supports an expansion of [property management planning](#) to give farmers improved natural resource and business management skills.

The objectives of the NLP are through working with all levels of government, industry and the community to:

- assist in enhancing the long-term productivity of natural resources in Australia;
- promote community, industry and governmental partnership in the management of natural resources in Australia;
- assist in establishing institutional arrangements to develop and implement policies, programs and practices that will encourage the sustainable use of natural resources in Australia;
- assist in developing approaches to help resolve conflicts over access to natural resources in Australia; and
- assist in raising the natural resource and business management skills of landholders.

Program Allocation 1996-97 - 2001-02

NHT	\$246.7 m
NRM Appropriation	\$283.0 m (estimate)
Landcare Tax Rebate	\$80.0 m (funded from NHT)

NATIONAL RIVERCARE PROGRAM

The National Rivercare Program (NRP) is aimed at ensuring progress towards the sustainable management, rehabilitation and conservation of rivers outside the Murray-Darling Basin and to improve the health of these rivers. The NRP seeks to encourage the development of strategic and integrated responses to address identified river issues. Its focus is on inland rivers. Projects in coastal or tidal areas are not funded under NRP.

The expected outcome of projects is improvement in the water quality and ecological values of river systems. NRP projects should focus on activities that:

- maintain or improve water quality by preventing pollution (such as trapping sediments or nutrients), improve the management of discharges or control stock access to rivers;

- manage accelerated erosion or build-up of riverbanks or beds (where it is ecologically and hydrologically sound to do so); and;
- contribute to healthy streams and ecosystems.

Program Allocation 1996-97 - 2001-02

NHT \$82.9 m

MURRAY-DARLING 2001 (MD2001) PROGRAM

The Murray-Darling 2001 (MD2001) Program was designed to contribute to the rehabilitation of the Murray-Darling Basin, with a view to achieving a sustainable future for the Basin, its natural systems and communities. It aims to accelerate activities through the Natural Resource Management Strategy to promote and coordinate effective planning and management for the equitable, efficient and sustainable use of the water, land and other environmental resources of the Murray-Darling Basin.

The Program aims to improve water quality by reducing salt and nutrient levels in the river system; to develop integrated catchment plans for all Murray-Darling catchments and commence major on-ground works to address land and water degradation; to restore riparian land systems, wetlands and floodplains; to improve the health of key river systems; and to encourage ecological and sustainable land use by reducing salinity and waterlogging in irrigated areas.

All MD2001 activities are delivered within the framework of the Murray-Darling Basin Commission's Basin Sustainability Program.

The key element of this approach is the delivery of all natural resource management activities through an integrated catchment management framework consistent with the agreed priorities of the Basin Sustainability Program. Activity under Murray-Darling 2001 complements water industry reform under the Council of Australian Government (COAG) framework.

Each State in the Murray-Darling Basin has prepared a Three Year Rolling Proposal as agreed by the Murray-Darling Basin Commission for the implementation of the Basin Sustainability Program and incorporating Murray-Darling 2001 activities. Each proposal contains a defined list of priority activities and detailed outcomes linked to performance indicators against which government investments can be assessed. Project applications should address the priority areas and activities identified in their States' Three Year Rolling Proposal as prepared through the Murray-Darling Basin Commission processes.

Funds are available for projects which implement on-ground activities where the project is part of an agreed integrated catchment management framework. All projects funded under Murray-Darling 2001 require State funding to match Commonwealth NHT funding.

Program Allocation 1996-97 - 2001-02

NHT \$195.6 m

NATIONAL FERAL ANIMAL CONTROL PROGRAM

The program aims to develop and implement in cooperation with State, Territory and local Governments a program to reduce the damage to agriculture and the environment from feral animals.

The agricultural component of the program, administered by the Bureau of Rural Sciences of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, supports a wide range of activities which will assist the development and adoption of best practice pest management.

Under the environmental component of the program, Environment Australia has responsibility for implementing nature conservation initiatives particularly those that relate to obligations under the *Endangered Species Protection Act 1992* (*Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* after 16 July 2000). Where feasible, joint initiatives will be implemented, recognising that feral animals need to be managed across landscapes rather than separately in areas inside and outside of protected areas.

The objectives of the Program are:

- To develop integrated, strategic approaches to managing the impacts of nationally significant pest animals;
- to develop and implement Threat Abatement Plans for managing pests that pose the greatest threat to the survival of endangered and threatened native species;
- to improve the effectiveness of control techniques and strategies for reducing pest animal impact; and
- to produce guidelines for the management of nationally significant pests.

Program Allocation 1996-97 - 2001-02

NHT \$18.9 m

FISHERIES ACTION PROGRAM

The Fisheries Action Program aims to rebuild Australia's fisheries to more productive and sustainable levels through:

- fish habitat restoration and protection,
- encouraging community participation in activities to improve fisheries ecosystems,
- aquatic pest control,
- ensuring that fishing by commercial and recreational fishers is sustainable and responsible,
- raising community awareness,
- promoting related research encouraging integrated approaches to fisheries resources management and habitat conservation.

Key objectives of the Fisheries Action Program are to:

- develop an awareness amongst all resource users and the wider community of important fisheries issues, the sources of fisheries habitat problems and the actions required to remedy them,
- develop a sense of ownership and responsibility amongst all user groups for the sustainable use of the resource,

- encourage participation, particularly by the direct users of fisheries resources, in habitat rehabilitation, aquatic pest identification and other Fisheries Action Program activities,
- enhance sustainable resource use by fishers and 'upstream' groups by ensuring that impacts on fish resources and habitats are considered in their actions, processes and plans,
- integrate habitat considerations into fisheries management strategies,
- encourage development and use of sustainable fishing practices,
- integrate fisheries issues with regional planning.

Program Allocation 1996-97 - 2001-02

NHT \$12.7 m

NATIONAL WEEDS PROGRAM

The National Weeds Program is aimed at reducing the detrimental impact of nationally significant weeds on the sustainability of Australia's productive capacity and natural ecosystems. The objectives of the Program are, through working with all levels of government, industry and the community to:

1. Develop integrated strategic approaches to reduce the impact of weeds of national significance;
2. Prevent the introduction of new pest plants through revised quarantine assessment procedures; and
3. Assess the potential of existing pest plants to become weeds of national significance.

The National Weeds Program began in 1996-97. The Program is the Commonwealth's contribution for strategically implementing a limited number of high priority weed management issues of national interest outlined in the National Weeds Strategy. In accordance with the objectives of the National Weeds Program, funding will be targeted towards [weeds of national significance](#). This program is jointly managed with Environment Australia. AFFA manages the sustainable production aspects of the program.

Program Allocation 1996-97 - 2001-02

NHT \$28.5 m

FARM FORESTRY PROGRAM

The aim of the Farm Forestry Program is to encourage the incorporation of commercial tree growing and management into farming systems for the purpose of wood and non-wood production, increasing agricultural productivity and sustainable natural resource management.

The program recognises that commercial opportunities can stimulate private landholders to undertake farm forestry activities that provide both economic, environmental and natural resource management benefits. These include water catchment protection, biodiversity enhancement, salinity reduction, and the rehabilitation of degraded land. There can also be regional development and employment benefits associated with farm forestry.

The Commonwealth is fostering a regionally integrated approach to farm forestry by working in partnership with the States, local government, regional development organisations, industry, landholders, and landcare and community groups.

As part of this approach, the Commonwealth wishes to build on the momentum developed through the Farm Forestry Program under the National Forest Policy Statement, the Wood and Paper Industry Strategy and the Plantations for Australia: the Vision 2020.

The program provides support for activities in lower rainfall regions, including the development and promotion of wood and non-wood products, especially where these activities address biodiversity and land degradation issues.

The objectives of the Farm Forestry program are:

- To promote farm forestry on cleared agricultural land for a range of benefits, including wood and non-wood products, increased agricultural production and environmental benefits.
- To promote commercial wood production on cleared agricultural land as an integral part of profitable wood-based industries.
- To promote development of new tree-crop products and industries with an emphasis on native species.
- To promote sustainable management and use of private native forest and woodland.

Program Allocation 1996-97 - 2001-02

NHT \$47.2 m

THE NATIONAL LAND AND WATER RESOURCES AUDIT

The Audit is a four year program in partnership with States, industry and community groups to provide an independent, objective assessment of the extent of natural resource degradation and include an economic analysis of each problem. Primarily, the focus of the Audit will be on the needs of the Commonwealth and State agencies. Local government, rural industries, community groups, and a range of other government and non-government organisations will also benefit from the Audit.

The Audit will provide a comprehensive nationwide appraisal of Australia's natural resource base, in the following areas:

- policy assessment and development
- investment decisions
- evaluating program and policy performance
- direct resource management particularly by government

The Audit concentrates on rural and remote Australia, and natural resources as they are used and managed for a range of productive and conservation values. Within this framework, and consistent with the primary objective of the Audit, as set out in the Natural Heritage Trust Act, the Audit is to provide as comprehensive as possible coverage across all land tenures in relation to both the Australian environment and economy.

The objectives of the Audit are to facilitate improved decision making on land and water resource management by:-

- Providing a clear understanding of the status of, and changes in, the nation's land, vegetation and water resources to assist decision makers in their efforts to achieve ecological sustainability. The assessments are also to serve as a baseline or benchmark for future trend analysis.
- Reports on the economic, environmental and social assessments of land and water resource change (including land cover) and remedial actions.
- Integrated, nationally compatible data sets to support the Audit process, which are suitable for ongoing development and maintenance as a readily accessible national information system.
- A National Water Resources Assessment to show the extent of the surface and groundwater resources, quality, supply, capacity and use. The assessment is to consider all water uses including environmental requirements.
- Defined and agreed reporting links between the Audit and the State of the Environment reporting process, the Indicators for Sustainable Agriculture and other relevant activities at the State and Commonwealth level.
- A framework for the long-term monitoring and assessment of the health and management of Australia's land and water resources that meets the needs of all major stakeholders.

Program Allocation 1996-97 - 2001-02

NHT \$42.6 m

FARM BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM – FARMBIS

FarmBis is an initiative of the Agriculture – Advancing Australia package announced in 1998-99. promotes sustainability and self reliance by developing business management skills of farm managers and communicating the benefits of continuous learning. Farm Bis contributes funds to the cost of training activities such as quality assurance, risk management, rural leadership and natural resource management. NHT funds are used through FarmBis to support advanced property management planning activities in natural resource management.

Program Allocation 1996-97 - 2001-02

NHT \$15.0 m