

Proposal: 7star Metrics for Effective Land Care

Summary:

The 7star system is intended to integrate the fundamental objectives of sustainable land management by rewarding best practice.

Values/principles:

1. That effective land management is an holistic activity underpinned by best practice and inclusive of human occupation and activity
2. That financial rewards are more effective than penalties
3. That measured objectives are more likely to be achieved than those unmeasured

7stars: Can be applied to any sized land holding (urban, bush, or rural) as well as to a region, State or Nation. Each of the stars underpinned by robust criteria and clear metrics for assessment. The 7stars are as follows:

1. Habitat: 20% cover of indigenous (to local area) species
2. Waterways/run-off: riparian zones planted or managed to best practice
3. Pest and noxious weeds: controlled or managed to best practice
4. Soil: erosion/salinity controls and/or carbon management to best practice
5. Greenhouse gas emissions: neutral or negative to best practice
6. Effluent/waste: Treated and managed to best practice
7. Cross boundary projects involving two or more of the above

Market operation: 7stars is intended to be a proliferating market based instrument underpinned by fee for service payments. 7star ratings could be bought and sold on a secondary market as a more holistic approach to emissions trading. Landholders will apply for and pay a fee for an assessment (perhaps bi-annual). A parcel of land would then receive a rating from 0-7 stars. A 0-3 rating might qualify the landholder to apply for financial assistance. A 7star rating would not only be a marketable commodity but also add value to the property.

Management: In non-urban areas, Landcare is currently best placed to conduct the assessments. The stars are aligned with Landcare objectives and Landcare co-ordinators would be qualified to make assessments.

Benefits:

- Best-practice is able to be measured, encouraged and compared
- Landholders have clearly defined management targets with built-in rewards
- Landcare invigorated by having an important role in best-practice management
- Management infrastructure already exists as an implementation framework
- Regional targets are more easily defined and facilitated
- Core environmental management objectives are vertically aligned
- Govt. Agencies have a clear facility for purchasing environmental services

Supporting legislation:

It may be desirable to pass legislation that all properties must be assessed before they change hands. It would be expected that a high rating property would have an increased market value. A low rating would present an opportunity for improvement.