



Australian Government

maintaining australia's biodiversity hotspots



ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

Introduction

Biodiversity hotspots are areas rich in native plant and animal species, especially species that are endemic (i.e. found nowhere else) and are under threat from factors such as land clearing, development pressure, salinity, weeds and feral animals.

The Australian Government Department of the Environment and Water Resources is implementing the *Maintaining Australia's Biodiversity Hotspots Programme*. The programme involves identifying areas of high conservation value that are relatively intact, and working to maintain their biodiversity values. The aim is to better conserve biodiversity hotspots on private and leasehold land by actively managing ecosystems as habitat for native plants and animals.

How will the programme be delivered?

The programme draws on the considerable expertise of Australia's conservation non-government organisations (NGOs). The Department has established a panel of non-government organisation delivery agents with relevant expertise; these agents will help to deliver some of the programme's \$21 million funding commitment for projects across Australia.

The programme will invest in areas that have:

- > largely intact natural ecosystems with a good representation of native species and communities;
- > a high diversity of endemic species;
- > natural values that will be put at risk by current, planned or potential management activities, particularly where this risk is likely to increase without active conservation management; and
- > the potential to provide conservation value for money.

What activities will be supported?

The programme will support two activities in hotspot areas:

- > **Stewardship payments** — These are rewards for management that conserves biodiversity, paid to land-holders who are willing and able to take care of valuable ecosystems beyond current duty of care or regulations. Land-holders who are willing to contribute to the costs of conservation actions are likely to be more competitive in the stewardship tender process.
- > **Voluntary acquisitions** — These concern large properties with outstanding biodiversity values that are available to be purchased and managed by environmental NGOs. Proposals that leverage significant funding from outside sources are likely to be more competitive in the voluntary acquisition tendering process.



How do land-holders become involved?

Funding to land-holders will be directed through the national delivery agents. Having identified hotspots where action is needed, agents will then develop proposals for stewardship projects or voluntary acquisitions to meet the programme guidelines. Once proposals have been approved, the agents will call for expressions of interest.

For stewardship funding, land-holders who express an interest can expect a site visit from delivery agent field staff. The purpose of the visit will be to discuss the individual project objectives and look at how the land may meet the programme guidelines.

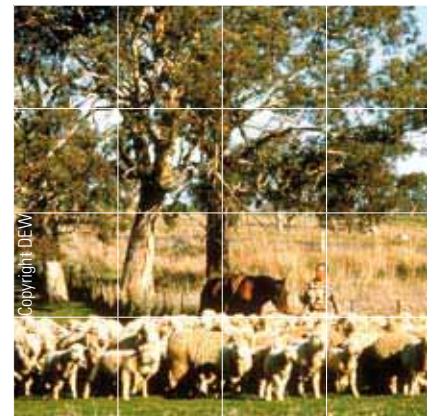
For voluntary acquisitions, the agents will aim to source large properties with high biodiversity value for acquisition. Agents may source properties from the open market or from their own dealings with interested land-holders.



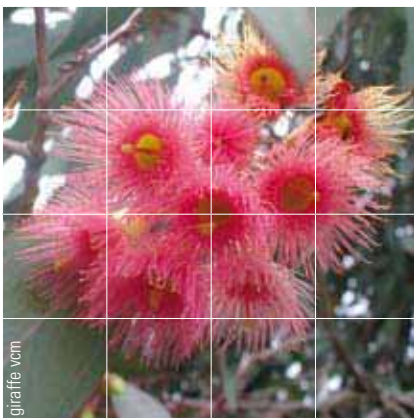
John Baker

What are the programme guidelines?

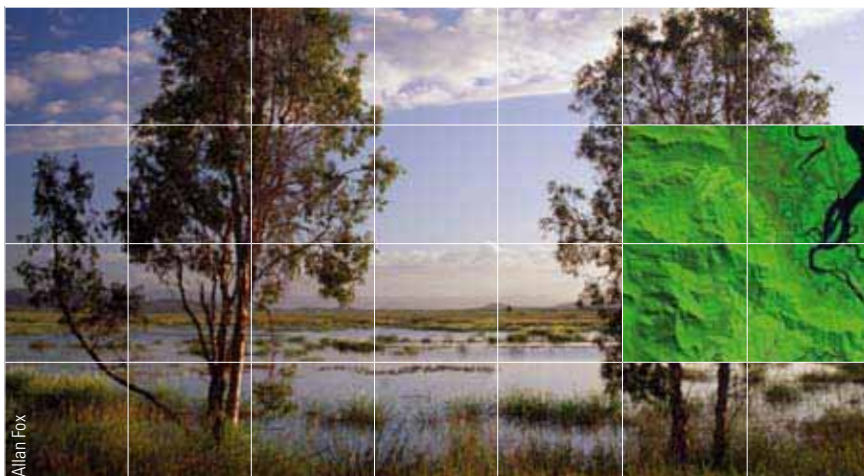
Guidelines for the programme provide help in understanding the process and criteria for seeking support under the stewardship funding or voluntary acquisition parts of the programme.



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Allan Fox

The full guidelines are available at:
www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/hotspots/guidelines

Further information about the *Maintaining Australia's Biodiversity Hotspots Programme*, including delivery agents in your region, can be found at: www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/hotspots/programme