



## JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

**The Hon Peter Garrett MP**  
Australian Minister for the  
Environment, Heritage and the Arts

**The Hon Tony Burke MP**  
Australian Minister for Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Forestry

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28 July 2008

### **NEW FUNDS SUPPORT QUEENSLAND EFFORTS FOR SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT & MORE RESILIENT ECOSYSTEMS**

The Great Barrier Reef and Queensland's Burdekin Dry Tropics rangelands are among the beneficiaries of a \$25.7 million Caring for our Country 2008-09 regional investment funding package announced today.

Australian Government Ministers for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, Peter Garrett, and Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Tony Burke, said the package would fund a range of activities across Queensland to further build on sustainable land management practices and maintain or rebuild resilient ecosystems.

The Ministers said the Caring for our Country funding focuses on six national priorities: the national reserve system; biodiversity and natural icons; coastal environments and critical aquatic habitats; sustainable farm practices; natural resource management in remote and northern Australia and community skills, knowledge and engagement.

Minister Garrett said a resilient ecosystem is one that can withstand shocks and rebuild itself when necessary. It is an environment that can accommodate change, adapt to new pressures and develop mechanisms to cope with stress.

"Our challenge is to ensure all the work we do today towards the sustainable management of our environment improves its resilience to cope with the pressures of a changing climate," Mr Garrett said.

The scope of projects is broad and ranges from protecting endangered species of plants and animals that help to sustain the ecosystems in which they live to rehabilitating selected habitats, controlling weeds and pests and reducing sediment run-off into inland and coastal waterways.

In the Burdekin, for example, \$2.6million in funds will deliver improved land management practices on a regional-scale to reduce land degradation and soil erosion that currently spills more than 4.5 megatonnes of sediment into the Great Barrier Reef lagoon each year.

Minister Burke said that farmers and graziers across Queensland would benefit from a range of investments that aim to improve land management practices on an individual property and regional scale.

Landholders across regions and landscapes will be encouraged to develop individual property plans that could feed into larger scale regional plans. Such plans would then

guide pest management, sustainable grazing land management, habitat protection and rehabilitation, soil conservation and salinity management activities now and in the future.

“Enabling landholders to work together across a region or regions means we can work together to bring about landscape-scale improvements , which deliver even greater benefits in terms of water and soil quality and therefore productivity. Queenslanders value the natural assets of their state, and the Australian Government recognises it is important they are supported in maintaining both the ecological and productive values of their state for the benefit of the whole community,” Minister Burke said.

For more information visit [www.nrm.gov.au](http://www.nrm.gov.au)

## Queensland Region Funding Summaries Caring for our Country 2008-09:

### **Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM: \$2.6 million**

The Burdekin regional body has developed an investment strategy which balances conservation with production interests. The population viability of Irwin's Turtle, the Black Throated Finch and the Northern Quoll is to be improved through the protection of critical habitat within the catchment. Regional biodiversity (particularly within Northern Brigalow remnants and lower Burdekin wetlands) as well as agricultural assets will be better protected from pest plants and animals through targeted collaborative arrangements involving local government and other providers. Improved water quality in the Bogie River sub-catchment is to be achieved through the increased adoption of sustainable grazing land management practices by land owners. Projects aimed at improving habitat condition and the functionality of the Barratta and Sheepstation Creek wetlands systems are also to be carried out. *For more information contact Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM on (07) 4724 3544 or visit [www.burdekindrytropics.org.au](http://www.burdekindrytropics.org.au)*

### **Burnett Mary Regional Group: \$2 million**

The Burnett Mary regional body has developed an investment strategy which balances conservation with production interests. Projects include significant recovery actions for species such as the Glossy Black Cockatoo and Grey Nurse Sharks and projects for enhancing in-stream habitats. The region's Better Catchments program will deliver high levels of resource condition improvement within each priority sub-catchment and a reduction of the impacts of pest plants and animals on land, water, biodiversity and productivity assets leading to an overall improvement in wider catchment condition. *For more information contact the Burnett Mary Regional Group on (07) 4181 2999 or visit [www.bmrg.org.au](http://www.bmrg.org.au).*

### **Cape York: \$1.6 million**

Proponents in the Cape York region have developed a range of proposals which balance conservation with production interests. Improvements to the breeding success of Flatback, Hawksbill and Olive Ridley turtles will be achieved by reducing feral pig and feral dog predation on marine turtle nests in western coastal areas of the Peninsula. Other species, such as high priority weeds, will also be targeted through an ongoing pest management program; for example, a potentially disastrous spread of *Salvinia* into Lakelands National Park will be averted by upstream use of weevils as biological control agents. Improved conservation outcomes for the Southern Cassowary will be secured in the Julatten area through the creation of habitat islands on private land adjacent to the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. *For more information contact Geoff Dyne on (02) 62724561.*

### **Condamine Alliance: \$1.9 million**

The Condamine regional body has developed an investment strategy which balances conservation with production interests. The region's Endangered, Rare and Vulnerable Fauna Species project will target existing endangered communities of bluegrass, vine scrub and Brigalow and work with landholders to increase the extent and improve the condition of ecosystems. Through partnerships with key stakeholders, the Condamine River Rescue Program will improve the aquatic habitat of six high priority reaches leading to increased native fish populations. *For more information contact the Condamine Alliance on 1800 181 101 or visit [www.condaminealliance.com.au](http://www.condaminealliance.com.au).*

### **Desert Channels Queensland: \$1.6 million**

The Desert Channels regional body has developed an investment strategy which balances conservation with production interests. Projects such as fencing, re-vegetation and pest control will help improve the region's distinctive biodiversity. Assets to be targeted include mound springs containing species endemic to single springs such as the Edgbaston Goby and Elizabeth Springs Goby. *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* (river red gum) riparian corridors will be established to improve the habitat of species such as the red goshawk and grey falcon. Grassland ecosystems of the iconic Channel Country – critical to the survival of the Plain's Rat, Kowari, Dusky Hopping-mouse, Bilby and Letterwing Kite – will also be targeted. There will be ongoing training for the region's landholders in grazing land management. *For more information contact Desert Channels Queensland on (07) 4658 0600 or visit [www.dcq.org.au](http://www.dcq.org.au).*

#### **Fitzroy Basin Association: \$2.8 million**

The Fitzroy Basin regional body has developed an investment strategy which balances conservation with production interests. Projects in the region will contribute to a reduction in sediments and nutrients entering the Great Barrier Reef lagoon through the uptake of farm practices based on sustainable grazing and farming systems. By assisting landholders develop comprehensive property plans, more than 30,000 hectares of riparian zones and wetlands having biodiversity significance will also be protected. Other projects will assist in improving the conservation status of regional ecosystems and endangered and threatened species such as the Yellow Chat through rehabilitation and protection of remnant vegetation. *For more information contact the Fitzroy Basin Association on (07) 4999 2800 or visit [www.fba.org.au](http://www.fba.org.au).*

#### **Mackay Whitsunday NRM Group: \$1.1 million**

The Mackay Whitsunday regional body has developed an investment strategy which balances conservation with production interests. Projects in the region include the Ecosystem Engine project which will assist landholders to rehabilitate biodiversity within agricultural landscapes; and implementation of a Water Quality Improvement Plan in high priority sub catchments to reduce nutrient, sediment and chemical export to the Great Barrier Reef lagoon. Improved conservation of coastal threatened species (such as migratory shorebirds and marine turtles) will be effected by restoration and fencing of coastal vegetation, re-connecting coastal wetlands and by facilitating the adoption of approved coastal management plans by regional councils, *For more information contact the Mackay Whitsunday NRM Group on (07) 4957 7158 or visit [www.mwnrm.org.au](http://www.mwnrm.org.au).*

#### **Northern Gulf Resource Management Group: \$1.3 million**

The Northern Gulf regional body has developed an investment strategy which balances conservation with production interests. The significant biodiversity and cultural values of the Mutton Hole wetlands will be secured. A savannah land condition trend analysis will be conducted to help improve ecosystem health over 250,000 hectares of Gulf country. Best practice management will be implemented on sites with threatened or significant native species or communities (covering some 10 sites or individual properties). Two Nature refuges totalling 20,000 hectares will be established within the Northern Gulf. The recording of traditional knowledge from elders within the Tagalaka, Kurtijar, Euwamian, Wakamin, Mbarbarrum, and Djungan language groups will ensure that this valuable information is preserved for future generations of Traditional Owners. *For more information contact the Northern Gulf Resource Management Group on (07) 4062 1330 or visit [www.northerngulf.com.au](http://www.northerngulf.com.au).*

### **Queensland Murray Darling Committee (QMDC): \$2.6 million**

The QMDC regional body has developed an investment strategy which balances conservation with production interests. The Feral Animals and Weeds projects will develop and implement coordinated multiple property weed and pest management plans which will lead to enhancement in terrestrial native vegetation, biodiversity values, priority wetlands, riparian areas and high value agricultural lands. The traditional knowledge revival pathways project will capture, store and disseminate Traditional knowledge information relating to natural resource management to the aboriginal and wider community to guide the management of natural resources by landholders, resource managers, and all members of the community. *For more information contact the Queensland Murray Darling Committee on (07) 4637 6201 or visit [www.qmdc.org.au](http://www.qmdc.org.au).*

### **SEQ Catchments: \$2.6 million**

The South East Queensland regional body has developed an investment strategy which balances conservation with production interests. Projects in the region include the improvement of native vegetation habitat in South East Queensland (Upper Maroochy, Benarkin, Ravensbourne and Tambourine Mountain coastal range areas) by fencing, rehabilitation, weed and pest animal control and fire management; and contribution to improved water quality in South East Queensland and Moreton Bay (declared Ramsar wetland site) by reduced non-urban diffuse sediments in the Lockyer, Logan/Albert and Bremer catchments and community water quality monitoring programs. Another project will focus on improved farm productivity and increased water use efficiency by training farm managers in production and water management systems using new telemetry technology. *For more information contact SEQ Catchments on (07) 3211 4404 or visit [www.seqcatchments.com.au](http://www.seqcatchments.com.au).*

### **South West NRM Ltd: \$1.5 million**

The South West regional body has developed an investment strategy which balances conservation with production interests. Projects in the region include local project planning and a devolved grant program that encourages the undertaking of coordinated planning and resource assessment, and coordinated on-ground works that derive from either catchment planning or individual properties; and recording with video and aural tapes of traditional stories and cultural practices and the protection of sites of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance by landholders on their properties. *For more information contact South West NRM Ltd on (07) 4654 7382 or visit [www.southwestnrm.org.au](http://www.southwestnrm.org.au).*

### **Southern Gulf Catchments: \$1.3 million**

The Southern Gulf regional body has developed an investment strategy which balances conservation with production interests. Projects in the region are aimed at improving stream water quality and aquatic habitat and protecting riparian vegetation, through fencing and the provision of off-stream watering points for stock. About 500 hectares of wetland areas will be protected by fencing. Obstacles to priority fish passages will be also removed. Concurrently, a range of initiatives will be undertaken to conserve the region's key biodiversity assets including the iconic Julia Creek Dunnart. All of these activities will be backed by ongoing awareness and skills raising across the region's community. *For more information contact Southern Gulf Catchments on (07) 4999 2800 or visit [www.southerngulf.com.au](http://www.southerngulf.com.au).*

### **Terrain Natural Resource Management (Wet Tropics): \$1.4 million**

The Wet Tropics regional body has developed an investment strategy which balances conservation with production interests. A Catchment Communities project will improve river health in priority catchments within the Wet Tropics through the support of eight communities undertaking riparian rehabilitation activities, including the enhancement and rehabilitation of native riparian vegetation and stream banks. Restoration and monitoring of key habitat in the Southern Atherton Tablelands and Kuranda will improve conservation outcomes for iconic species such as Tree Kangaroos and Cassowaries. The Local Government Engagement project will systematically enhance local government's capacity to incorporate natural resource management considerations into its structures, functions and planning mechanisms. *For more information contact Terrain Natural Resource Management on (07) 4043 8000 or visit [www.terrain.org.au](http://www.terrain.org.au).*

**Torres Strait Regional Authority: \$940,000**

The Torres Strait regional body has developed an investment strategy which balances conservation with production interests. Projects in the Torres Strait will include enabling Indigenous Communities to successfully address environmental priorities through the development of the first stage of a formal Land and Sea Ranger program and the commencement of the On-ground Land Management initiative which aims at delivering resources through devolved grants. *For more information contact the Torres Strait Regional Authority on 1800 079 093 or visit [www.tsra.gov.au](http://www.tsra.gov.au).*