



## JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

<b>The Hon Peter Garrett MP</b> Australian Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts	<b>The Hon Tony Burke MP</b> Australian Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
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### Rudd Govt funding research into Tasmanian platypus disease

A project to investigate a disease that strikes Tasmanian platypus is one of nine Tasmanian projects to share in more than \$28.5 million from the Rudd Government to protect Australia's environment and promote sustainable farming.

Details of the nine Tasmanian projects to receive funding under the *Caring for our Country* Open Grants were announced today by Environment Minister Peter Garrett and Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Tony Burke.

The Open Grants funding is part of the \$2.25 billion earmarked for the first five years of *Caring for our Country*, launched in July this year.

Mr Garrett said the projects, ranging from \$80,000 to \$400,000, would lead to significant environmental benefits and advances in land management practices in all states and territories.

“Through *Caring for our Country*, the Government is taking a comprehensive, targeted and integrated approach to natural resource management funding, encouraging organisations to work together to deliver on national priorities,” Mr Garrett said.

“Many of the organisations funded through this Open Grants scheme look beyond their local environmental issues to link up with others to deliver better environment and land management practices on a larger scale.

“The *Platypus diseases assessment and conservation* project, for example, will see the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries and Water bring together a team that will investigate the impact of platypus mucormycosis disease. This disease is caused by a fungus, perhaps carried to Tasmania via infected frogs from mainland Australia and it seems to affect only Tasmanian platypuses.”

“We have seen the terrible impact Facial Tumour Disease is having on the Tasmanian devil population and the Government has already committed \$10 million for research into it through *Caring for our Country* .

“It is hoped that the platypus research funds announced today will fill some of the fundamental gaps in our understanding of this disease, and its ecological impacts so that we can develop long-term conservation strategies for these unique creatures,” Mr Garrett said.

Both Ministers said climate change and other pressures such as invasive weeds and pests emphasised the need for the Government to work in partnership with communities to help ensure the future of Australia's environment and farming industries.

Of the 137 Open Grants projects funded across Australia, 72 projects worth approximately \$14.4 million specifically address sustainable farm practices and Landcare.

“Our farmers have produced food in Australia's harsh climate for so long – they understand the need to look after our precious landscape,” Mr Burke said.

“This funding will help many farmers continue their important work helping to manage the land in a sustainable way, including in partnership with local groups.

“For example, a project to control invasive weeds in the Cradle Coast region and a project to control boneseed and asparagus weeds in southern Tasmania are both being funded.

“These projects involve landholders and more than 90 community groups working together to fight weeds.”

Further information and a full listing of successful grants is available at [www.nrm.gov.au](http://www.nrm.gov.au)

## EXAMPLES OF PROJECTS FUNDED

### TASMANIA

#### Landcare

Project Title	Group	Funding
Soil Biology - the Missing Link for Regenerative Production in Our Farming Systems	L.R Young & R.J Young	\$94,821
Adoption of Sustainable Water Management on Tasmanian Vegetable Farms	Rds Partners Pty Ltd	\$123,788
Protecting Tasmania's Sustainable Farming and Biodiversity Assets from Serrated Tussock Invasion	Tasmanian Land & Water Professionals Pty Ltd	\$195,662
Using Landscape Ecology to Prioritise Property Management Actions in Tasmania	Natural Resource Planning Pty Ltd	\$296,264

#### Other

Project Title	Group	Funding
Control of Wons Outliers in Cradle Coast NRM Region, Tasmania	Cradle Coast Authority	\$152,909
Soil Ecosystem Health Measures: An Interpretive Guide for Land Managers	Department of Primary Industries and Water	\$111,123
Threatened Species Protection through Implementation of Coordinated Riverine Management Activities	Northern Tasmanian Natural Resource Management Association Inc.	\$242,727
Progressing Nationally Strategic Control of Boneseed And Asparagus Weeds (WONS) in Southern Tasmania	Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority	\$119,724
Platypus Disease Assessment and Conservation in Tasmania	Department of Primary Industries and Water	\$229,600