

International Year of freshwater

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factsheet

The Australian Government Envirofund – helping Australians through the drought

Australia's land and water resources are suffering from the severe effects of drought.

To help communities get through these tough times the Federal Government has allocated \$10 million from the \$2.7 billion Natural Heritage Trust's Australian Government Envirofund. Funding will be available for targeted works to protect our land and water and vegetation from drought-induced environmental damage, projects designed to improve drought resistance, and activities that are best undertaken when water levels are low.

Under the Natural Heritage Trust, almost 400,000 Australian volunteers have so far participated in over 12,000 projects. This has seen 546,900 hectares of native vegetation protected by fencing and/or legal covenant; 127,800 hectares of degraded remnants rehabilitated by fencing, weed control, and replanting; and 98,510 hectares of predominantly cleared land replanted with native vegetation species.

The one-off Envirofund Drought Recovery Funding Round allocated grants of up to \$30,000 for community groups to carry out on-ground environmental work in drought-affected areas. Funding has been channelled directly to local community groups that have the local knowledge, expertise and enthusiasm to deliver on-ground results.

Successful projects under the Round were aimed at protecting and rehabilitating local environments affected by the drought. Grants ranged from \$605 to replant trees that have died in the drought to \$27,273 to grow stock fodder from native species which are growing well in these conditions.

With funding from the Drought Recovery Round, land managers are protecting waterways and fragile river frontage by fencing waterways and relocating watering points to protect them from damage caused by stock grazing. They are also taking action to control feral animals and protect native plant and animal life.

Many of the projects focus on water quality and preventing salinity.

Some examples of projects funded by the Envirofund's Drought Recovery Round are:

- \$22,208 for a project near Willawarrin in New South Wales to plant native trees and shrubs around a waterway to restore declining freshwater ecosystems, suffering from the drought.
- \$20,288 for a project near Burra in South Australia to stop further erosion around a waterway. A six kilometre section of the waterway will be fenced off to stop stock from entering the area so that native plants can regenerate and the land stabilise. Weeds growing around the area will also be removed.
- \$27,273 for a project to restore and conserve the important habitats of the Wooleen Lake Wetland in Western Australia and will also address Aboriginal heritage values.
- \$17,700 to remove weeds and replant a corridor of native plants in two sections of riverbank in New South Wales' Namoi catchment covering 300 metres.
- \$17,446 for a project in Queensland's Quinalow to implement cell grazing. This is done by fencing off areas into cells to keep stock together in one cell so that native pasture can rejuvenate in other cells. Fences will also be used to keep stock away from fragile waterways to improve water quality, restore habitat and prevent erosion.

In addition to the Drought Recovery Round, individuals and community groups are invited to apply for funding from the Australian Government Envirofund twice a year. For information and an application form telephone 1800 065 823 or visit www.nht.gov.au

A full list of successful projects in each state that are receiving funding through the special Drought Recovery Round of the Australian Government Envirofund is available on the Natural Heritage Trust web site at www.nht.gov.au/projects



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