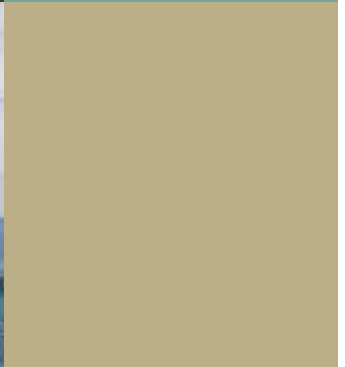
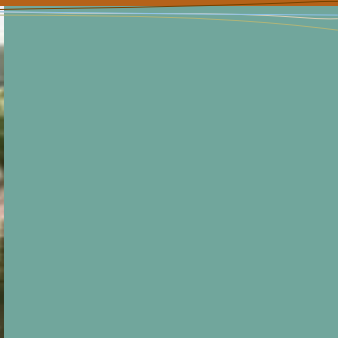
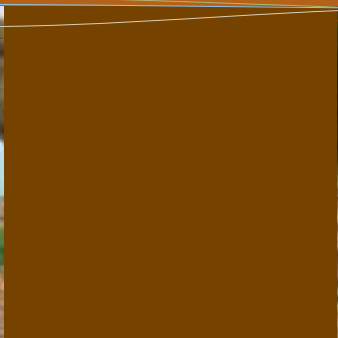


CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY



The government recognises the pressing need to protect Australia’s unique natural environment and to improve the sustainable management of our natural resources.

Caring for Our Country provides \$2.2 billion over five years to refocus natural resource management to better target national priorities.

CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY

Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts jointly administered with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

- Reforms the way in which the Australian Government invests in the protection of Australia’s unique environment, and pursues sustainable management of our natural resources by taking a business approach to investment.
- Provides funding to regions and local communities through an integrated approach to environmental management in Australia.
- Integrates delivery and funding of the previous Natural Heritage Trust, National Landcare, Environmental Stewardship and Working on Country programs while addressing weaknesses of these programs.
- Aims to deliver an environment that is healthy, better protected, well managed, resilient, and provides essential ecosystem services in a changing climate.
- Invests in six national priority areas to deliver its aims:
 - a 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.

| | 2008-09 (\$m) | 2009-10 (\$m) | 2010-11 (\$m) | 2011-12 (\$m) | 2012-13 (\$m) |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Caring for Our Country ⁵ | 428.2 | 440.1 | 465.7 | 453.5 | 459.3 |

⁵ Figures are total resourcing for this measure.

THE NATIONAL PRIORITY AREAS

National Reserve System – The government has committed to accelerating the National Reserve System (NRS) with a \$180.0 million boost in funding over five years as part of Caring for Our Country. The NRS protects examples of Australia’s distinctive landscapes, plants and animals for future generations. The NRS, often referred to as nature’s safety net in the face of climate change, will help to conserve Australia’s distinctive landscapes, plants and animals through a comprehensive, adequate and representative system of reserves across Australia.

Biodiversity and Natural Icons – The government has acknowledged the need to take action to protect our biodiversity and natural icons beyond the National Reserve System . For example, this priority will protect world heritage areas, tackle the impact of weeds and feral animals, deliver the Great Barrier Reef Rescue Program and improve outcomes for nationally threatened species and communities.

Coastal Environments and Critical Aquatic Habitats – Our coastal environments and critical aquatic habitats face a range of threats. We will deliver outcomes for these important areas, for example the protection and rehabilitation of dunes, improvement of the water quality discharged into coastal environments, and the protection of Ramsar wetlands.

Sustainable Farm Practices – The government has committed to building on the success of the National Landcare Program to change on-farm land management practices to improve the delivery of ecosystem services and production, and assist farmers and primary industries to reduce their contributions to greenhouse gas emissions.

Natural Resource Management in Remote and Northern Australia – There is a pressing need to improve the management of our natural resources in remote and northern Australia. We will secure better environmental and natural resource outcomes in these places, particularly for Indigenous groups.

Community Skills, Knowledge and Engagement – Communities have an important role to play in managing our natural resources. This priority area will invest in the skills and knowledge of Indigenous Australians, volunteers and communities to enable them to partner more effectively with regional and other organisations to deliver landscape-scale change.



DELIVERING THE GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENTS

As a matter of priority and keeping with the national priority areas for investment, Caring for our Country will deliver on the following commitments made by the government that seek to stop the decline of Australia's environmental assets.

\$200.0 million Great Barrier Reef rescue plan

- Helps protect and preserve the Great Barrier Reef for future generations, through work to improve water quality and mitigate the impacts of climate change on the Reef.
- Provides incentives and assistance to landholders and farmers to adopt cost-effective practices that improve reef water quality, by reducing pesticides, nutrients and sediment in farm and catchment runoff.

More than \$100.0 million for Community Coastcare

- Provides funds for coastal communities (including individuals, environmental groups, non-government organisations, regional natural resource management bodies and local governments) to participate in coastal protection and restoration activities.
- Protects and restores coastal habitats, including native coastal vegetation, dunes and coastal waterways, prevents and controls coastal erosion, weeds and pests, improves resilience of ecosystems and biodiversity to climate change, and improves skills, knowledge and engagement of volunteers and communities, including Indigenous Australians.
- Restores and manages the Tuggerah Lakes coastal estuarine system to achieve water quality and availability that meets both community and aquatic ecosystem needs.

\$50.0 million expansion of Indigenous Protected Areas

- Brings together Indigenous knowledge and contemporary land management practices to protect and manage environmental and cultural values for all Australians.
- Expands the existing Indigenous Protected Areas network by establishing protected areas on Indigenous owned or managed lands with high biodiversity and cultural value.

\$90.0 million for the employment of up to an additional 300 Indigenous Rangers

- Creates new jobs and training opportunities for Indigenous people across Australia, providing environmental services for land, sea and cultural management.
 - Supports Indigenous communities to sustainably manage the environmental values on their lands, conserving the natural and cultural features of Indigenous lands throughout Australia.
-

\$10.0 million to save the Tasmanian Devil

- Funds research into the Tasmanian Devil facial tumour disease and undertakes the necessary management actions to save this vulnerable Australian species from extinction in the wild.
 - Minimises the spread of the disease among Tasmanian Devils, establishes an insurance population, and engages the community in a suite of recovery actions.
-

\$2.0 million to fight the cane toad menace

- Provides information to Australians on how they can participate in reducing the numbers and impacts of cane toads, and improves local toad control measures.
 - Protects important biodiversity sites, translocates populations of affected species to cane toad free refuges, and develops management and eradication solutions.
-

\$5.3 million to improve water quality in the Gippsland Lakes

- Improves water quality and reduces nutrient inputs into the Gippsland Lakes from public and private land, through an incentive program for landholders.
- Improves community engagement and the capacity of local community and industry groups to undertake ongoing nutrient and sediment reduction activities.



