



*Climate Proofing Australia: A whole-of-landscape approach to tackling climate change*

**Tuesday 26 March 2019**

## **Climate Proofing Australia welcomes \$30m fund for carbon and biodiversity benefits on farms**

Climate Proofing Australia (CPA) welcomes the Federal Government's announcement of a \$30 million pilot Agriculture Biodiversity Stewardship Program, and urges for more to be done to incentivise carbon projects that deliver the co-benefits of biodiversity, productivity, water quality and landholders and employment.

Climate Proofing Australia (CPA) is a conservation and industry alliance comprised of Farmers for Climate Action, the Red Meat Advisory Council (RMAC), Greening Australia and the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA), committed to advancing the role of agribusiness, conservation and natural resource management in Australia's climate change and emissions reduction policy.

Farmers for Climate Action CEO Ms Verity Morgan-Schmidt said the pilot program's objectives of seeing "farmers receive incentives for projects that boost biodiversity and also, if appropriate, absorb carbon" is important recognition that the agriculture sector has an important role to play in Australia's climate change mitigation strategy.

"With climate change leading to increasing management and productivity challenges for farmers, this pilot scheme is a positive step forward to ensure that farmers receive appropriate recognition for the eco-system services they provide," Ms Morgan-Schmidt said.

"Importantly this will also assist in improving diversity in income streams to effectively manage risk through times of drought or other extreme weather events."

RMAC CEO Ms Anna Campbell said the investment was a good start towards supporting the red meat and livestock industry's goal of being completely carbon neutral by 2030.

"\$30 million for Australia's farmers is a great start to rewarding the role red meat producers play in improving biodiversity on behalf of Australia. We look forward to being engaged in this process by the Australian National University (ANU) and seeing the outcomes of the trial," Ms Campbell said.

Greening Australia CEO Mr Brendan Foran said the conservation sector has an important role to play in working with the agriculture and forestry industries to better integrate biodiversity and carbon sequestration in their operations, and urged the Government use the \$2.2 billion Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF) to prioritise carbon projects that deliver multiple benefits.

“CPA calls on the Government to remove existing barriers in the ERF architecture that have limited the land sector’s participation, and direct at least \$500 million from the ERF for land-based projects that also deliver environmental and productivity benefits,” Mr Foran said.

“The current ERF conditions limit the land sector’s capacity to generate co-benefits associated with carbon sequestration, such as reinstating wildlife habitat, supporting sustainable agriculture, increasing the plantation forestry estate, and cleaner waters in our rivers. By working with the conservation sector, Australia can be more ambitious about what we can achieve with this investment.”

### **About Climate Proofing Australia**

Climate Proofing Australia (CPA) is a conservation and industry led alliance of organisations committed to advancing the role of agribusiness, conservation and natural resource management in Australia’s climate change and emissions reduction policy.

CPA advocates for a climate change policy framework that strikes the right balance between environmental, social and economic policy outcomes. Such an approach recognises that optimal sustainability and environmental restoration practices can increase productivity and/or profitability and build regional resilience through restoration of natural and social capital.

CPA recognises the critical importance of carbon emissions measures, but also suggests a new approach to land management that encourages farmers to earn carbon credits on their land, sequester carbon from the atmosphere and create more habitat for Australia’s native plants and animals, while increasing resilience and productivity.

The CPA’s underlying principles are:

- The continuation and enhancement of the Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI) – around which the Emissions Reduction Fund was built – to maximise biodiversity, and food and fibre production benefits alongside the scheme’s carbon sequestration objectives.
- The development of new mechanisms and incentives for carbon abatement on land projects that brings together institutional, private and public capital.
- The need for new and improved national environmental datasets and mapping to guide best practice and whole-of-landscape policy making that integrates forestry, farming and conservation outcomes.
- Improving the Australian landscape by balancing native biodiverse plantings with agricultural production and forestry.
- Primary industries working towards carbon neutrality by 2030.

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