



# *Outback Carbon Farming Conference*

## Unlocking the potential of carbon sequestration in WA's rangelands

### Key obstacles to moving commercial carbon sequestration forward in WA's rangelands

One of the goals of the Outback Carbon Farming Conference was to identify the key obstacles to the commencement of a commercial carbon sequestration industry in Western Australia's rangelands.

The Conference Convenor recorded points that arose on this topic during presentations and discussions throughout the day. At the end of the conference, these points were then presented to attendees for discussion and modification. The following points were noted in open plenary.

### Key obstacles

1. Final development and approval of the **rangelands method** by the Federal Government;
2. Absence of an **investment / approvals pathway** for carbon projects in WA's rangelands;
3. Absence of policy development to activate **carbon rights in WA's rangelands**;
4. Absence of a **clear economic case** backed by research and analysis for carbon farming on rangelands tenures;
5. A framework and appropriate resourcing for negotiating **native title agreements**;
6. Political/legislative differences between **state and federal** governments, particularly with regard to savannah burning;
7. Availability of tenure which encourages and provides a more certain legal framework for **more diversified land uses**;
8. Development of low-cost modelling and remote sensing technologies and techniques to economically cover the extensive and diverse rangelands;
9. Market uncertainty over **politics and pricing**;
10. Costs and risks associated with being a '**first mover**';
11. A number of key technical and policy **knowledge gaps** as defined below.

## Knowledge gaps

Filling the below knowledge gaps would reduce the development cost of a project, reduce the financial risk for investors and service providers, and allow the industry to move forward with confidence.

1. What is the **baseline level of carbon**, the **carbon storage potential** and **recovery period** required for the soil and vegetation carbon sinks of the key land units?
2. What is the most **cost-effective rehabilitation technique** and what is its **cost of rehabilitation** for each land unit?
3. What is the '**optimum**' **vegetation assemblage** for each land unit that is both highly functional and has a high carbon storage potential?
4. **Improvement of the FullCAM model** to accommodate rangeland ecosystems and management regimes;
5. What will be the **impacts of predicted climate change** on carbon that is stored in the soil and vegetation in each land system?
6. Further clarity is needed regarding whether the additionality requirements under the Commonwealth CFI Act are consistent with management requirements under Western Australia's Land Administration Act 1997.
7. Are there innovative models for how native title parties and lessees can agree to carbon rights and management arrangements to the benefit of both, possibly without an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) or by an easier path towards an ILUA than what currently exists?
8. What are the most efficient and cost-effective strategies for managing total grazing pressure across the diversity of locations and circumstances?

## The way forward

What appeared to emerge from conference presentations and discussions as top priorities were the following actions:

- The need for government to develop an investment pathway and clear policies for the carbon industry in WA's rangelands;
- The activation of carbon rights using an appropriate policy model for distributing the proceeds from carbon credits and managing related contracts;
- The establishment of forms of tenure which would provide a more certain legal basis for diversified land uses and associated investment;
- The development of business cases for carbon farming in the Outback.

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