



Landcare

Policy Position

The NFF continues its support of Landcare and its ethos of working together to achieve natural resource management goals. Government investment in Landcare and other natural resource management activities must have at its centre a focus on sustainable agriculture.

Issue

The National Landcare Programme (NLP), the Australian Government's natural resource management investment, currently has a strong emphasis on investments that are aimed at improving important environmental assets such as the Great Barrier Reef and Commonwealth listed endangered species and ecological communities. In addition, a significant portion of funding is focused on the Green Army which delivers training for youth and the unemployed.

In NFF's view, the NLP needs 'rebalancing' to provide a renewed focus on sustainable agriculture – which is at the heart of the ethos of Landcare. NFF encourages the Government to invest in partnership with industry – so that sustainable agriculture efforts are integrated into our agricultural best management practice programs and industry wide extension efforts.

Farmers deliver environmental services that are of benefit to the environment and to the entire community. These include protecting biodiversity and maintaining water quality. NFF encourages the Government to recognise this role by reinstating investment in environmental stewardship, and supporting the development of market based approaches. Environmental stewardship and other market-based instruments must be a part of the NLP investment mix.

Background

Landcare began formally in 1989 with a joint agreement between the National Farmers' Federation and the Australian Conservation Foundation to improve the sustainability of farmland, public land and waterways. Since this time, the Australian Government has provided ongoing investment to natural resource management activities, including the Landcare movement. A core component of the Australian Government's investment (the "Regional Stream") is delivered through 54 regional

NRM organisations, who have a role in natural resource management planning and in program and project delivery. The “National Stream” is delivered directly by the Australian Government. Much of the national stream is focused on 20 Million Trees, the Green Army and the Reef Programme.

What the industry needs

To support our farmers in managing their natural resources, the NFF asks that the Government:

- Rebalances its investment in the National Landcare Program, so that an equal focus is provided to sustainable agriculture activities.
- Expand its focus to provide real incentives for landholders to undertake practice changes that benefit the environment. Industry validated best management practices that have productivity, profitability and environmental stewardship outcomes must be central to our investment sustainable agriculture.
- Rekindle its investment in stewardship activities, so that the role of farmers in delivering biodiversity, water quality and other environmental outcomes for the community can be recognised.