



March  
2021

# Agriculture Stewardship package



Australia's agriculture industry depends on a biodiverse and well-managed natural resource base.

The Agricultural Stewardship Package aims to incentivise adoption of improved on-farm land management practices and develop a mechanism where farmers are rewarded for their efforts in delivering biodiversity and sustainability services that benefit their farms and the broader community.

## Benefits of the package

The package is aiming to have wide reaching benefits for farmers, the environment and across agricultural communities and landscapes.

It will demonstrate that environmental markets and other mechanisms, such as certification systems, that reward farmers for protecting and improving biodiversity, can provide a real way to diversify, and potentially boost, farm income.

Well-managed agricultural landscapes will sustain high quality ecosystem services, such as:

- healthy soils
- clean air and water
- soil carbon storage and biodiversity.

They will also help drive industry profitability and build resilience.

## Pilot programs

The pilot programs are being designed in collaboration with The Australian National University and will be delivered by the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment.

These pilots will demonstrate how to diversify and boost farm income by rewarding landholders for biodiversity outcomes. They will also help improve the resilience of farm businesses by providing opportunities to expand into less drought-exposed income streams.

## Key points

- The Australian Government is investing \$34 million over four years (2018–19 to June 2023) to deliver an Agriculture Stewardship Package. The 2021–22 Budget delivers \$32.1 million over four years (2021–22 to 2024–25) in additional funding.
- The Package comprises the Agriculture Biodiversity Policy, the Agriculture Stewardship Pilots and Certification Scheme with the Australian National University, and the Australian Agricultural Sustainability Framework with the National Farmers' Federation (NFF).
- Pilot programs will demonstrate ways to diversify and boost farm income by rewarding landholders for biodiversity outcomes.
- Pilot programs will inform national solutions to providing farmers with opportunities to diversify into less drought-exposed income streams, making farm income more secure and improving environmental outcomes.

## Carbon + Biodiversity Pilot

This pilot will develop arrangements to reward farmers for increasing biodiversity.

Farmers who undertake plantings for carbon can receive additional payments for maximising biodiversity benefits by planting a mix of species and looking after the vegetation.

Plantings can also benefit farmers by providing shelter for animals, protecting dams and waterways and reducing erosion.

## Enhancing Remnant Vegetation Pilot

This pilot will be a scientifically robust on-ground trial that aims to improve significant existing native vegetation on farms. Through this program, successful farmers would receive payments to protect, manage and enhance high conservation value remnant native vegetation on-farm.

Activity examples include:

- installing fencing
- carrying out weeding
- pest control
- replanting.

## The Australian Farm Biodiversity Certification Scheme

The voluntary Australian Farm Biodiversity Certification Scheme will allow Australian farmers to showcase best practice natural resource management to sustain and build biodiversity.

Biodiversity certification could help improve the profitability of farm businesses by supporting access to markets, creating price premiums for their produce, lowering capital costs and giving farmers access to information about ways of improving land management practices.

## The Biodiversity Trading Platform

The Biodiversity Trading Platform will enable farmers to connect with buyers of biodiversity outcomes and kick-start private sector biodiversity markets. The platform will integrate spatial information alongside buyer and seller information. This will allow verification, monitoring and reporting of biodiversity services, building transparency and credibility in the market.

## Australian Agriculture Sustainability Framework – led by the NFF

Consultation with industry stakeholders and investors is being undertaken to create an Australian agriculture sustainability framework, verifying and connecting existing schemes.

The framework will look at market opportunities and existing industry schemes to grow market value in Australia and across the globe.

## Agriculture Biodiversity Policy Statement – early 2022

The Agriculture Biodiversity Policy Statement will be informed by other components of the Agriculture Stewardship package. The policy will be a statement of agriculture's role in improving Australia's biodiversity outcomes.

## Be Informed

For more information, visit our website at [agriculture.gov.au/agriculturestewardship](https://agriculture.gov.au/agriculturestewardship). Enquiries about the program can be directed to [agstewardship@awe.gov.au](mailto:agstewardship@awe.gov.au) or the department's contact number at **1800 329 055**.

