



August
2021

Agriculture Stewardship Package: Enhancing Remnant Vegetation Pilot



Australia's agriculture industry depends on a biodiverse and well-managed natural resource base, and land managers play a key role in biodiversity stewardship which benefits the Australian community.

The Enhancing Remnant Vegetation (ERV) Pilot is the second pilot being run under the Agriculture Stewardship Package. Together with the Carbon + Biodiversity Pilot, the ERV Pilot aims to pay farmers for improved on farm biodiversity outcomes.

The 2021–22 Budget delivers an additional \$32.1 million in new funding to continue to promote biodiversity stewardship. This investment builds on our ongoing Agriculture Stewardship Package, which is now worth \$66.1 million.

This investment expands our support for agriculture stewardship to create market opportunities for farmers who look after biodiversity. It's a win-win for farmers and the environment and contributes to industry's Ag2030 agenda.

Benefits of the Pilot

We recognise that farmers and land managers play a key role in biodiversity stewardship, so we are trialling tools to help farmers adapt to a changing climate and create new income streams.

Farmers could receive payments to manage and enhance remnant native vegetation on-farm. Examples may include:

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

Eligible management activities will improve the condition of remnant vegetation, leading to biodiversity benefits as well as other potential benefits on farm. The trial will prioritise funding for projects with the most biodiversity benefit per dollar.

Participating in the Pilot will provide farmers with opportunities to diversify into less drought-exposed income streams, making farm income more secure and improving biodiversity outcomes through better land management.

Key points

- Agricultural land managers are responsible for managing 58% of Australia's land mass.
- The ERV Pilot is trialling new cost-effective ways of engaging and rewarding farmers for providing biodiversity services through market-based processes.
- The processes and protocols that measure and reward farmers for undertaking the projects have been designed in collaboration with The Australian National University (ANU) and participating Natural Resource Management (NRM) organisations, ensuring the system will be respected by domestic and international markets.

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

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

Pilot design

The ERV Pilot is being designed in collaboration with the ANU and NRM organisations in each region. It will be a scientifically robust on-ground trial that aims to improve existing native remnant vegetation on farms.

The ERV Pilot is designed around 5 core elements:

- **Participation:** Payments will be provided to successful farmers in the six eligible NRM regions.
- **Active management:** Farmers will be required to actively manage their vegetation over and above what is already required by law.
- **Long-term outcomes:** Farmers will enter into 10-year agreements with the Australian Government to generate genuine biodiversity outcomes.
- **Monitoring and reporting:** Farmers will be required to assist in the monitoring and reporting on the condition of vegetation in their project area.
- **Upfront plus ongoing payments:** Farmers will receive a combination of upfront and ongoing payments over the life of their projects, with the payments comprised of an annual rent component plus a component to cover the costs of relevant management activities.

Applications for the ERV Pilot are expected to open late in September 2021.

Be Informed

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

