



## Appendix 8: Mechanisms and incentives to implement the Plan

There is a broad range of natural resource management mechanisms and incentives used by government and non-government agencies in Australia to encourage organisations, the community and individuals to ameliorate threats to biodiversity. Incentives and mechanisms are instruments introduced to influence the way people behave (Young et al. 1996). These have been detailed in Young et al. (1996) and include the following:

- financial instruments
- covenants and management agreements
- motivational and educational instruments
- voluntary instruments
- institutional arrangements (i.e. various strategies and programs at national, state, local levels)
- regulatory instruments (i.e. NSW and Commonwealth legislation aimed at protecting native vegetation and biodiversity).

No single mechanism can provide appropriate protection for biodiversity; a mix of policies, strategies and incentives is needed (Young et al. 1996). The mechanisms and incentives currently known to be available to assist in the implementation of this Plan are discussed below.

### 1 Financial instruments

This section outlines the major financial instruments relevant to the Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority (CMA), local government agencies, community groups and private landholders. A discussion of what funding sources are available to all groups is provided, followed by a discussion on what sources of revenue are available to local government agencies.

#### Grants

There are numerous funding opportunities for biodiversity-related works available to CMAs, local government agencies, community groups and private landholders.

These funding sources often rely on 'in kind' contributions to match the grant funds sought. Funded projects can be further enhanced by volunteer and environmental training programs such as Green Corps and Work for the Dole. Such programs may provide labour to help implement a project. CMAs and local government agencies also offer advice and encourage landholders to apply directly for funding.

A summary of Australian and NSW government funding sources is provided in **Table 1** below.

Information on available grants can also be found at:

- GrantsLINK, an Australian Government website dedicated to providing information on existing government grant programs, other funding sources and writing applications. Go to: <[www.grantslink.gov.au](http://www.grantslink.gov.au)>.
- Easy Grants Information Service, Strategic Australia, is a subscription-based service that provides updates on available grants and financial assistance.

**Table 1 Australian and NSW government funding opportunities**

Name	Dates	Brief description
<b>Federal</b>		
Caring for Our Country	2008–2013	<p>Caring for Our Country is an Australian Government initiative providing \$2.25 billion in funding to achieve strategic results for six national priorities: the National Reserve System; biodiversity and natural icons; coastal environments and critical aquatic habitats; sustainable farm practices; natural resource management in northern and remote Australia; and community skills, knowledge and engagement.</p> <p>The program removes the restriction imposed on 'national', 'regional' and 'local' level funding and provides the opportunity for all levels of government, non-government organisations, regional and local bodies to access a greater proportion of program funds to help achieve national priorities.</p> <p>For further information: &lt;<a href="http://www.nrm.gov.au/funding/index.html">http://www.nrm.gov.au/funding/index.html</a>&gt;</p>
Education for Sustainability Grants Program	N/A	<p>The Education for Sustainability Grants Program aims to facilitate changes in community attitudes and behaviours in support of sustainable development in Australia.</p> <p>For further information: &lt;<a href="http://www.environment.gov.au/education/programs/index.html">http://www.environment.gov.au/education/programs/index.html</a>&gt;</p>
Energy Efficient Homes Package	2009–	<p>The Energy Efficient Homes Package provides assistance for home owner-occupiers to save energy.</p> <p>For further information: &lt;<a href="http://www.environment.gov.au/energyefficiency/index.html">http://www.environment.gov.au/energyefficiency/index.html</a>&gt;</p>
Grants to Voluntary Environment and Heritage Organisations	N/A	<p>The Grants to Voluntary Environment and Heritage Organisations program helps community-based environment and heritage organisations protect Australia's natural environment and historic heritage by assisting with their administrative funding.</p> <p>For further information: &lt;<a href="http://www.environment.gov.au/about/programs/gveho/index.html">http://www.environment.gov.au/about/programs/gveho/index.html</a>&gt;</p>
Green Loans	2009–	<p>The Australian Government's Green Loans Program assists Australian families to install solar, water saving, and energy efficient products. The program will provide household sustainability assessments and access to low interest loans of up to \$10 000.</p> <p>For further information: &lt;<a href="http://www.environment.gov.au/greenloans/index.html#about">http://www.environment.gov.au/greenloans/index.html#about</a>&gt;</p>
National Solar Schools Program	2008–2015	<p>The National Solar Schools Program assists Australians to save energy and water by offering grants to install solar power systems, rainwater tanks and other energy efficiency measures.</p> <p>For further information: &lt;<a href="http://www.environment.gov.au/settlements/renewable/nationalsolarschools/guidelines/index.html">http://www.environment.gov.au/settlements/renewable/nationalsolarschools/guidelines/index.html</a>&gt;</p>
National Rainwater and Greywater Initiative	2009–2014	<p>The National Rainwater and Greywater Initiative assists households and surf life saving clubs reduce water usage by providing rebates for installing rainwater tanks or greywater systems.</p> <p>For further information: &lt;<a href="http://www.environment.gov.au/water/programs/nrgi/index.html">http://www.environment.gov.au/water/programs/nrgi/index.html</a>&gt;</p>
<b>State</b>		
NSW Environmental Trust	N/A	<p>Environmental Trust is a NSW-run funding program that is offered annually for projects that rehabilitate or regenerate the environment, or promote environmental education and sustainability.</p> <p>For further information: &lt;<a href="http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/grants/envtrust.htm">http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/grants/envtrust.htm</a>&gt;</p>
NSW Climate Change Fund	2007–	<p>The Climate Change Fund was established in July 2007 and incorporates the Water and Energy Savings Funds, Climate Action Grants Program and funding from the Environmental Trust. The program provides funds for projects that save water, energy and lead to greenhouse gas emission savings.</p> <p>For further information: &lt;<a href="http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/grants/ccfund.htm">http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/grants/ccfund.htm</a>&gt;</p>
NSW City & Country Environment Restoration Program	2005–2010	<p>City and Country Environment Restoration program is a five year program to restore icon wetlands, protect marine environments, purchase perpetual Crown leases on land of high conservation value, and address priority urban environmental issues. The program also provides assistance to farmers adjusting to new land clearing laws.</p> <p>For further information: &lt;<a href="http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/candc/index.htm">http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/candc/index.htm</a>&gt;</p>



Name	Dates	Brief description
NSW Aboriginal Lands Clean-Up Program	N/A	This program supports projects that develop partnerships between Local Aboriginal Land Councils and local government agencies to address social and environmental issues of illegal dumping occurring on Aboriginal-owned lands. For further information: < <a href="http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/grants/alcup.htm">http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/grants/alcup.htm</a> >
Aquatic Habitat Rehabilitation Grants Program	N/A	NSW Department of Industry and Investment has funds available for local councils, community groups and individuals to rehabilitate fish habitats throughout NSW. For further information: < <a href="http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/habitat/rehabilitating/ahr-grants-program">http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/habitat/rehabilitating/ahr-grants-program</a> >
NSW Rural Assistance Authority – Special Conservation Scheme	N/A	The Rural Assistance Authority provides a financial incentive scheme to improve land management practices on farms in NSW. For further information: < <a href="http://www.raa.nsw.gov.au/reader/2">http://www.raa.nsw.gov.au/reader/2</a> >

## Local government mechanisms

Local governments are a key player in natural resource management and can make significant contributions to the conservation of biodiversity because:

- they are close to the community and are able to translate Commonwealth and NSW government policies into on-ground, community-based conservation projects
- as managers of public land they have the opportunity to make a substantial and positive contribution to biodiversity conservation
- as landuse planners, local governments are responsible for regulating a wide range of activities that may impact on native vegetation and biodiversity (Binning et al. 1999).

The capacity of local government to implement biodiversity conservation measures can vary due to a number of factors, including availability of financial resources. The successful implementation of conservation measures requires an adequate revenue base. Local governments are able to raise revenue through a variety of mechanisms including: rates, annual charges, user charges, approved fees, financial assistance grants, special purpose grants, Section 94 developer contributions, borrowings and investment income. Local governments may also seek a special rate (over and above their ordinary rate) to raise additional revenue for particular works, services or activities. This section outlines four mechanisms from the *Biodiversity Planning Guide for NSW Local Government* (Falding et al. 2001) that can be used by local governments to raise money to address biodiversity conservation in their shires.

### *Special rates*

Rate income is usually the largest single category of revenue for local governments. Local governments have discretion to set the level of rates (within the limits of the rate cap), and to choose the structure of the rating system to be applied in their area. There are two types of rates: ordinary and special. Ordinary rates raise revenue for general works, services and activities. Special rates may be levied to raise additional revenue for particular works, services or activities, including biodiversity conservation programs.

Special rates may be levied on any rateable land that has access to, or benefits from, or contributes to the need for particular works, services, facilities or activities. Any monies raised through a special rate must be spent on the activity for which the special rate was sought.

Like ordinary rates, special rates are levied in relation to land value, and if they come within the rate capping limit the Minister's approval for the special rate is not required.



### *Special variation*

A local government wishing to increase rates above the rate set by the Minister must apply for a 'special variation'. In these cases the local government must either demonstrate that the project has regional significance or the project is a major enhancement to community services or facilities.

The provision of new or expanded environmental services is a sound reason for seeking a special variation, provided it can be justified. In June 2004, Byron Shire Council was successful in obtaining a 2% special variation to the general rate for use on biodiversity works over four years (Byron Shire Council 2004).

### *Section 94 developer contributions*

Section 94 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, allows local governments to recover costs of providing infrastructure and facilities to meet the demands of future development, such as community facilities, open space, roads, drainage and conservation. Section 94 contributions can include the dedication of land free of cost, a payment of a monetary contribution, or a combination of both.

Developer contributions should be considered as a tool to off-set losses to biodiversity as a consequence of development. Money collected for this purpose should be spent on restoring or reconstructing habitat in close proximity to the development site. Local government should also consider using developer contribution as 'in-kind contribution' to apply for external environmental grant funds, thereby doubling available monetary resources for biodiversity projects (Byron Shire Council 2004).

### *Approved fees*

Approved fees are charges imposed by local governments on any service that it provides, including regulatory services. Fees may be imposed on any service other than those provided on an annual basis, such as water or sewerage.

Local governments could investigate the possibility of imposing a 'replacement fee' for tree removals that result in a loss of biodiversity, as a component of their relevant tree preservation order. The replacement fee should reflect the true cost of the environmental benefit being lost (Byron Shire Council 2004).

## **Rate-based incentives for landholders**

Landholders can play a major role in protecting biodiversity across the Region, given the large area of privately-owned land. Financial incentives such as rate rebates are a key mechanism used to encourage private landholders to protect and conserve biodiversity on their properties.

### *Local government rate rebates*

Exemptions from local government rates are available to land that is subject to a voluntary conservation agreement (see below). Where the agreement covers part of the property, the rates are levied proportionally. In some cases Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW) will pay the rates on behalf of a landowner for parts of the property covered by the voluntary conservation agreement.

### *Local government: differential rates*

Rates can be determined in relation to four categories: farm land, residential, mining and business. These categories can be further divided into subclassifications by a local government. For example,



a subcategory for conservation could be created to provide discounted rates for these areas (Binning & Young 1999).

Land that is managed for conservation often falls between the definition of rural land, urban rural land and/or primary production, and therefore may be rated at a higher rate than is desirable. Where differential rating categories are based on rural land or primary production, local governments could consider extending these definitions to include land that is managed for biodiversity conservation. Ideally, in order to qualify for a differential rate, land would have to be shifted to a landuse planning zone that requires consent prior to development (Binning & Young 1999).

## 2 Covenants and management agreements

### Biodiversity Banking and Offsets Scheme

The NSW *Threatened Species Conservation Amendment (Biodiversity Banking) Bill 2006* inserts a new Part 7A in the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* to enable the establishment of the Biodiversity Banking and Offsets Scheme. Biobanking is primarily designed to address the biodiversity impacts of urban expansion.

Biobanking is a market-based scheme that provides a streamlined biodiversity assessment process for development, an offsetting scheme as well as an opportunity for rural landowners to generate income by managing land for conservation.

Biobanking enables 'biodiversity credits' to be generated by landowners who commit to enhance and protect biodiversity values on their land through a biobanking agreement. These credits can then be sold, generating funds for the management of the site. Credits can be used to counter-balance or off-set the impacts of biodiversity values that are likely to occur as a result of development. The credits can also be sold to those seeking to invest in conservation outcomes, including philanthropic organisations and government.

### Bush Heritage Australia

Bush Heritage Australia is a national, independent non-profit organisation focused on the long-term protection of biodiversity. It acquires and manages land, water and wildlife areas of outstanding conservation value. Bush Heritage currently owns and manages 30 reserves across Australia covering over 900 000 ha. They achieve their conservation goals by purchasing ecologically significant properties on the open market and then managing them in perpetuity. Bush Heritage provides a unique opportunity for the community and local government to donate or bequest land so that it may be managed in the long-term for biodiversity and native vegetation conservation purposes (Bush Heritage Australia 2008).

For more information visit <[www.bushheritage.org.au](http://www.bushheritage.org.au)>.

### Commonwealth conservation agreements

A commonwealth conservation agreement is an agreement between the Australian Government and another person for the protection and conservation of biodiversity in an area of land or sea. The agreements are made under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Commonwealth of Australia 2007).

A conservation agreement may provide for activities that promote the protection and conservation of a number of features including the following:

- biodiversity
- the world heritage values of declared world heritage properties
- the national heritage values of national heritage places

- the Commonwealth heritage values of Commonwealth heritage places
- the ecological character of a declared Ramsar wetland (Commonwealth of Australia 2007).

Conservation agreements are legally binding.

## Crown Covenants

The Minister under Part 4 of the *Crown Lands Act 1989* may place a public covenant on land owned and managed by the State. Crown covenants are used to protect areas of environmental, cultural or historical value and also can assist in managing NSW's natural resources.

## Nature Conservation Trust of NSW

The Nature Conservation Trust of NSW is a non-government body set up under the *Nature Conservation Trust Act 2001* to promote the conservation of natural and associated cultural heritage on private land in NSW (Nature Conservation Trust of NSW 2005).

The Trust provides covenants for landholders wishing to protect their property in perpetuity. Trust agreements are placed on the property title and are legally binding on the landowner, the Trust and any other parties that gain an interest in the property. The Trust provides land management assistance and support for landowners with a Trust agreement (Nature Conservation Trust of NSW 2005).

The Trust also protects private land of high conservation value or under-represented within the public reserve system in NSW through a Revolving Fund. The Revolving Fund allows the Trust to purchase property of high conservation value and then on-sell it to a new owner with a conservation covenant attached. All sale proceeds are returned to the Fund for future acquisitions.

## NSW Conservation Partners Program

DECCW's Conservation Partners Program offers a range of options to landholders wanting to be involved in conservation. The Program includes conservation agreements, wildlife refuges, the Land for Wildlife program, and other options that support conservation on private and public land.

The Conservation Partners Program aims to provide practical guidance, information and involvement in a range of activities to all 'conservation partners' across the network (NSW Government 2008).

### Conservation agreements

Voluntary Conservation Agreements are a statutory covenant created under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*. The agreements last in perpetuity and are attached to the title of the land, hence binding future landholders (Binning & Young 1997).


Landholders who enter into a conservation agreement may be eligible for rate relief and tax deductions, although this is not controlled by DECCW (NSW Government 2008). In the Region in 2008 there were 53 conservation agreements operating which covered approximately 2 400 ha. Sizes of individual voluntary conservation agreements range from 0.37 ha to 382 ha.

### Wildlife refuges

Wildlife refuges are a non-binding voluntary agreement made under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*. Although non-binding, they provide a formal recognition of conservation values on private lands with the status noted on the land title and transferring to the next owner. The refuges can be revoked at any time (Binning & Young 1997).

In the Region in 2008 there were 90 wildlife refuges covering approximately 29 709 ha. Sizes of individual wildlife refuges range from 1.2 ha to 11 322 ha.





## Property registration

Two property registration schemes exist for landholders who do not wish to enter a legal agreement:

- The Land for Wildlife scheme gives landholders information and support to manage wildlife habitat on their property. It also provides opportunities to share experiences with other landholders. The scheme operates on a regional level, and is currently available within the Northern Rivers Region.
- Conservation Wildlife landholders register their properties with DECCW by purchasing a 'Conserve Wildlife' sign. They receive issues of *Bush Matters*, the newsletter of the Conservation Partners Program (NSW Government 2008).

## Property vegetation plans

The *Native Vegetation Act 2003* introduced a new approach to managing native vegetation across NSW. CMAs have been given the role of applying the regulations of the new Act and supporting landowners in managing native vegetation on their properties through development of property vegetation plans.

A property vegetation plan is a long-term plan which identifies actions for protecting and enhancing native vegetation on a particular property, including off-set actions for any proposed clearing.

Some major benefits of property vegetation plans for landholders are that they are developed free of charge and once completed can be used to apply for incentive funding. They can also provide landholders with greater security to plan and invest.

## Wildlife Land Trust

The Wildlife Land Trust was established in the United States of America in 1993 to complement existing legal protection measures for conservation. It has since been extended to other countries, including Australia in 2006.

The Trust enables landowners to participate in a global sanctuary system which is designed to protect wildlife by preserving natural habitats as permanent sanctuaries. Joining the network involves landholders registering a non-binding voluntary commitment to the principles of land stewardship. The Australian Humane Society International established the program in Australia and works in partnership with DECCW's Conservation Partners Program (see above) to promote the Wildlife Land Trust to all partners. For more information visit [www.wlt.org/australia.asp](http://www.wlt.org/australia.asp) (DECC 2007).

## Indigenous protected area

An Indigenous protected area is an area of Indigenous-owned land or sea where traditional Indigenous owners have entered into a perpetual conservation agreement with the Australian Government to protect and maintain biological diversity as well as promote cultural resource conservation (DEWHA 2008). Indigenous protected areas form part of the National Reserve System administered by the Australian Government. There are 36 of these areas in Australia representing approximately 2% of the National Reserve System. In the Northern Rivers Region there are two declared Indigenous protected areas: Wattleridge (Guyra) and Tarriwa Kurrukun (Guyra). There are two others under consultation: Dorodong (Dorrigo) and Gumma (Nambucca) (DEWHA 2009).

## Indigenous land use agreements

An Indigenous land use agreement is a voluntary agreement between native title holders and government agencies for the co-management of public land and waters within a claim area. These agreements may be used by native title holders as a step towards obtaining a native title determination, and may:

- recognise native title rights
- enable development to take place on the land
- deal with how a development will occur
- deal with how native title rights will be exercised
- address any compensation payable to the native title group
- set up park co-management arrangements, including developing an Indigenous advisory group for a park.

Native title holders and government agencies are bound to the terms of agreement of an Indigenous land use agreement if it is registered on the Register of Indigenous Land Use Agreements. The native title rights recognised by an Indigenous land use agreement have the same force under Commonwealth law as if they were part of a native title determination. There are three agreements in the Northern Rivers Region: Bunjalung of Byron Bay (Arakwal), Githabul People and Ti Tree Lake (Taylors Lake).

### 3 Educational and motivational programs

Community support of conservation is vital to the successful implementation of programs and activities promoting biodiversity conservation. As such, encouraging attitudinal change towards an ethos of conserving nature and providing education are integral to any community-based initiatives (Young et al.1996). Involvement of the community in on-ground natural resource management achieves conservation outcomes while also providing volunteers with opportunities for education and training. Effective biodiversity conservation cannot be achieved by focussing activities on national parks and reserves alone. The engagement of farmers, landowners and managers to implement natural resource management actions on private land is a critical component of regional biodiversity management.

#### Landcare programs

Landcare is a long-running national voluntary community movement of around 4000 groups that aims to improve natural resource management practices. Landcare operates largely in rural and regional Australia involving 40% of farmers who manage 60% of land and 70% of the nation's diverted water. In addition to Landcare groups, the Region also has Bushcare, Coastcare, Dunecare, Rivercare and Streamcare movements which contribute greatly to the protection and enhancement of the Region's bushland, waterways, dunes and coastal ecosystems.

The Australian Government's Caring for Our Country program will continue the National Landcare Program and will encourage on-ground action to enhance sustainable natural resource management at the farm, catchment and regional level through the Landcare movement. National Landcare Program funding will continue until the end of 2011/12 delivered through Caring for Our Country (Commonwealth of Australia 2008).

#### Community environment centres

Community environment centres are usually not-for-profit organisations that operate within a local community providing community groups and individuals with a meeting place and an environmental resource centre. Community environment centres promote and educate the community on local environmental issues and also provide technical support and assistance for local environmental projects. There are several community centres operating in the Region including Bellingen Environment Centre, Big Scrub Environment Centre (Lismore), Byron Environment Centre, Clarence Environment Centre and Comboyne Community Centre.





## Conservation Volunteers Australia

Conservation Volunteers Australia, established in 1982, is a national, not-for-profit, community-based organisation that attracts and manages volunteers to assist in conservation programs. Conservation Volunteers works in partnership with and develops relationships across the corporate, government, non-government and community sectors. Conservation Volunteers also delivers accredited training courses, capacity building workshops for community groups, on-the-job training for volunteers, as well as monitoring and evaluation programs for community groups to assess the success of an environmental project (Conservation Volunteers Australia 2009).

## Environmental Training and Employment Inc

Environmental Training and Employment Inc (EnviTE) NSW, established in 1993, is a not-for-profit community organisation. Their mission statement is 'Working with the community to provide best practice training, work experience and professional services in environmental restoration on the NSW North Coast'. EnviTE provides environmental restoration services on a commercial basis, runs accredited and informal training courses in conservation and land management, and also assists and supports community groups complete environmental projects by providing labour and bush regeneration expertise (EnviTE 2002).

## Greening Australia

Greening Australia was formed by the United Nations Association of Australia and the Nursery Industry Association of Australia in 1982. It is a national, not-for-profit environmental organisation that tackles issues such as salinity, declining water quality, soil degradation, climate change and biodiversity loss by practical experience, science and community engagement. Greening Australia provides commercial vegetation and environmental services for government organisations, industry, the private sector, and community (Greening Australia 2007).

## WetlandCare Australia

WetlandCare Australia, operational since 1991, is a not-for-profit, registered charity. Their mission is 'Supporting the community to protect and restore Australian wetlands'. WetlandCare Australia manages and delivers a broad range of natural resource management projects that have resulted in improved environments and biodiversity. They have also been involved with a number of education projects funded by the NSW Environmental Trust and provide a large amount of educational material for schools and teachers via their website (WetlandCare Australia 2008).

## ProFARM

ProFARM is the training program developed by NSW Department of Industry and Investment to meet the needs of farmers, primary industries, agribusiness and the community. Courses are delivered locally by highly skilled and respected departmental staff. Many of the courses are subsidised to reflect the public benefits provided by the adoption of more sustainable farming practices.

One of the ProFARM courses, property management planning for natural resource management, is designed for land managers and farm families interested in natural resource management for sustainable farm production. One of the course's aims is to plan strategies for conserving and improving biodiversity outcomes for productivity and environmental gains (State of NSW 1995).



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