

## Media release

9 June 2020

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### CCA helps farmers improve soil

Our region has some of the most productive and valuable farmland in Australia. The Cradle Coast Authority (CCA) is delivering a four-year project to protect the valuable soils which drive our region's agricultural productivity, with a focus on hillslope erosion and soil acidification.

CCA's Agriculture Project Coordinator, Ali Dugand, has been busy since mid-2019 working with farmers and running demonstration trials, field days and workshops.

"Hillslope erosion and soil acidification are two big issues for our region, and there are some simple practices farmers can adopt to improve productivity and profitability as well as protecting the environment" said Ms Dugand.

Hillslope erosion by water is a significant issue for cropping farmers, with paddocks most vulnerable when they are bare, soon after seeding. Up to 15 tonnes of soil per hectare can be lost in a single heavy rainfall event. The project aims to help farmers better manage hillslope erosion by inviting them to see the results of practical commercial sized demonstrations and offering follow-up on farm support.

"The trials explore different management options from mechanical erosion control measures and contour mapping technology, through to biological options including multi species cover crops. Each of these measures is designed to keep the soil in place and working for the farmer."

The *Protecting Our Productive Soils* project also focusses on soil acidification, which is a natural process that can accelerate under intensive agriculture. Soil acidification (low pH) impedes plant growth through locking up nutrients heavy metal toxicity and causes inactivity in beneficial soil microorganisms.

More field days and workshops will be delivered over the next three years. Farmers are encouraged to contact Ms Dugand for more information and to discuss options for getting involved.

This project is supported by Cradle Coast Authority, through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.

The Cradle Coast Authority is owned by the nine Councils of western and north-western Tasmania to help them achieve regional outcomes and maintain strong local government, by working together.

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