

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT INVESTMENT FUND (NEIF)

Special request for project funding from the Australian Government – 2022

BACKGROUND

Cradle Coast Authority Representatives from member councils identified the urgent need to fund natural environment management as their number one priority in the lead up to the Federal election.

The establishment of the Natural Environment Investment Fund (NEIF) would protect and enhance the natural assets that underpin Cradle Coast's world class tourist experiences and support the production of premium goods, that form important ecosystems supporting diverse flora and fauna and provide essential functions such as carbon stores.

While the NEIF addresses the priorities of the 2030 NRM Strategy for the Cradle Coast, its specific purpose is to address the natural management issues that are localised or specific to local councils, communities and the region and not addressed by the current Federal agenda for environmental management.

Additionally, the NEIF will allow councils, communities, and the region to address chronic skill shortages and the lack of defined career pathways in Natural Resource Management.

It capitalises on the knowledge and skills, and existing partnerships and networks of NRM Cradle Coast to produce sustainable environmental benefits for future generations, education and training opportunities and improved liveability for the Cradle Coast region.

1. VISION: NATURAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

This project will deliver on ground environmental outcomes to protect and conserve the Cradle Coast's water, soil, plants, animals and ecosystems, as well as supporting the productive and sustainable use of these valuable resources.

This will include:

- Improved land and water management in agricultural systems;
- Biodiversity protection and improvement;
- Biosecurity including weed control and invasive species management;
- Create sustainable industries by building climate change resilience systems.

2. VISION: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

This program will be facilitated through Cradle Coast Authority and our existing networks (local councils, industry, not-for-profit organisations, environmental and Aboriginal groups and local land managers) and includes hosted positions for trainees within our member councils.

This will deliver the following social outcomes:

- Increased participation in the workforce through targeted mentorship;
- A skilled future Natural Resource Management (NRM) workforce for local councils;
- A Pathway for career opportunities facilitated through job network partnerships;
- Increased awareness and exposure to potential employment opportunities within the industry, easing the current strain of a limited workforce.

KEY BENEFITS:

- Develop a skilled workforce through mentoring, training and work experience to improve the participant's skills and employability and enhance their sense of well-being.
- Deliver significant conservation outcomes in Key Biodiversity Areas, protecting natural values and strengthening the foundations of sustainable tourism and agriculture sectors.
- Improve the capacity of our partners to achieve significant strategic and economic outcomes.

REQUEST:

NATURAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT \$12 mil

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT \$3 mil

TOTAL INVESTMENT OVER 3 YEARS \$15 mil





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VISION: NATURAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

The NEIF would focus on six important systems within our region; three catchments and three key biodiversity areas.

Using a CCA project team to drive actions and priorities in conjunction with our delivery partners, we will work with land managers and communities to achieve:

- Improved land and water management in agricultural systems;
- Biodiversity protection and improvement;
- Biosecurity outcomes including weed control and invasive species management;
- Create sustainable industries by building climate change resilience systems.



Key Biodiversity Areas – Northwest KBA, King Island KBA, Cradle KBA

- Native planting for biodiversity and habitat protection.
- Invasive species management, including feral cats.
- Fire and weed management.
- Access infrastructure and education in tourism.
- Threaten species programs.
- Cultural asset protection and culture values projects.

Catchments – Mersey Catchment, Circular Head Catchment, Flowerdale Catchment

- Riparian and on farm management (stock exclusion fencing revegetation, weeds).
- Effluent storage and on farm drainage.
- Appropriate irrigation practices.
- Urban water use and management.
- Ground cover management.
- Carbon opportunities and co-benefits (soil, forestry and blue carbon systems).



REQUEST: OVER 3 YEARS

\$12 mil

Funding would enable:

- A qualified CCA project team of four;
- Land owner grants on co-funded projects;
- Engaging partners and specialists for works, environmental planning, implementation and monitoring for adaptive management.





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VISION: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The need for more access to workforce in natural resource management and agriculture sectors has been identified for the Cradle Coast region.

This project will help develop a workforce by offering career opportunities for young people in the region. Nine CCA apprentices will be hosted each year over the region's councils. CCA will work with councils in targeted environmental projects involving the apprentices, this will be co-funded from NEIF expanding the capacity of not just the individual but councils in delivering regional environmental outcomes. The project will include targeted support for three Aboriginal apprentices.

By providing these opportunities we will achieve:

- Increased participation in the workforce through targeted mentorship;
- A skilled future Natural Resource Management (NRM) workforce for local councils;
- A pathway for career opportunities facilitated through job network partnerships;
- Increased awareness and exposure to potential employment opportunities within the industry, easing the current strain of a limited workforce.

Actions would include:

- 27 NRM apprenticeships hosted by the regional councils;
- Aboriginal apprenticeship program;
- Training and development program with formal qualifications;
- Targeted local environmental project per council with CCA project support.

REQUEST: OVER 3 YEARS

\$3 mil

Funding would enable:

- A qualified CCA project coordinator;
- 27 NRM apprenticeships over the three years;
- Allocated project budget per council for targeted localised environmental outcomes.

