

Guiding principles for carbon projects in the Western Region

Local Land Services Western Region encourages the development of sustainable land management activities that enable land managers to diversify their income sources.

Carbon farming is one activity that has developed rapidly in recent years and is expected to continue evolving into the future.

Local Land Services Western Region recognises that carbon farming can provide opportunities for the region and part of our role is to work with all relevant stakeholders to maximise the long term regional benefits and help to avoid any adverse outcomes.

To assist landholders to develop carbon farming projects that are both sustainable and appropriate for the region, all potential project proponents are encouraged to contact Local Land Services Western Region early in the process to:

- check if the proposed project conflicts with any existing programs or strategies
- access possible support programs for project activities
- access support and advice to incorporate best management practice activities in project design
- ensure consistency with the Western Local Strategic Plan.

Undertaking a carbon project in the Western Region

The Local Land Services Western Region Strategic Plan provides a framework for achieving resilient communities and productive, healthy landscapes within the region.

The goals of the plan are:

1. self-reliant, adaptive and prepared communities
2. productive, bio-secure and sustainable primary industries operating in resilient landscapes
3. effective, efficient and integrated service delivery underpinned by collaboration, adaptive management and local decision making.

To contribute to the goals of the Western Local Strategic Plan, projects should seek to adhere to the guiding principles and project criteria outlined below.

Guiding principles

1. Projects should achieve social, environmental and economic benefits throughout the full project life.
2. Projects should have multiple outcomes wherever possible.
3. Projects should not have adverse social or environmental impacts.
4. Where appropriate projects should include strong community support and involvement.
5. Projects should achieve long-term sustainable land-use.
6. Projects should not negatively impact primary production.
7. Projects should not adversely affect neighbouring landholders.

Carbon farming involves land managers changing practice to reduce greenhouse gas emissions or capture and hold carbon in vegetation and soils.

The Australian Government is offering land managers incentives to do this through the Emissions Reduction Fund.

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What is a good project?

To contribute to the goals of the Western Local Strategic Plan, a carbon project should seek to meet the following criteria:

- a. The project should seek to improve, not reduce, landscape diversity through a change of vegetation composition and structure.
- b. The project should seek to maintain groundcover above a minimum threshold of 50 per cent through influences such as the control of total grazing pressure.
- c. The project should seek to maintain or improve groundwater or surface water distribution, quality and availability.
- d. The project should seek to adhere to relevant invasive species or biosecurity plans and should not result in an introduction or increase in pest animals, diseases or weeds.
- e. The project should seek to maintain or improve high conservation value asset areas.
- f. The project should seek to avoid damage to sites of Aboriginal cultural significance in accordance with the Due Diligence Code of Practice for the Protection of Aboriginal Objects in NSW.
- g. Project managers should be familiar with all relevant State and Federal legislation.
 - i. The project should avoid impacts on threatened species or endangered or threatened ecological communities as listed under State and Federal legislation.

- ii. Relevant recovery plans provide a sound basis for managing recognised endangered or threatened ecological communities as listed under State and Federal legislation.
- h. The project should be consistent with any existing Local Land Services contractual requirements.

Commonly used climate change terms

Carbon emissions: the total amount of greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide, that are released into the atmosphere.

Carbon abatement: the means to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It includes both carbon sequestration and emissions reduction activities.

Carbon sequestration: the process by which carbon is captured and stored in vegetation and soil. Vegetation absorbs carbon dioxide through photosynthesis, releases the oxygen, and stores the carbon in its leaves, wood and roots. As plant roots die, the carbon molecules in the roots remain in the soil unless they are exposed to the air through tillage and other disturbances.

Emissions reduction: the process of reducing the amount of greenhouse gases that are actually produced.

Carbon mitigation: a human intervention to reduce our impact on the climate system. It includes strategies to reduce greenhouse gas sources and emissions as well as enhancing greenhouse gas sinks.

Carbon farming: a farming method that reduces greenhouse gas emissions or captures and holds carbon in vegetation and soils.

More information

Local Land Services Western Region has produced other fact sheets which can provide you with further information.

- Considering a carbon project
- Managing a carbon project for long term production and environmental outcomes

For any other information, contact your nearest Local Land Services office.