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## MEDIA RELEASE



# One size doesn't fit all:

*Mixed bag for community landcare in latest Caring for our Country announcements*

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**The Australian Government announced approval of "Landcare Funding" for a further 56 projects through its *Caring for our Country* program earlier this week. The news for community-based landcare within this announcement was mixed – with NSW and Tasmania the big winners.**

Taking a country-wide view, the National Landcare Network remains concerned that the federal program needs an overhaul to ensure comprehensive support for the community-based delivery of natural resource management, sustainable land-use and nature conservation. There is an ad-hoc rather than consistent representation of community-led projects within the *Caring for our Country* program.

"National support for community landcare on the ground must happen by design, not by accident," NLN spokesperson David Walker said today.

"We welcome the news of a one million dollar investment in community landcare in Tasmania through a comprehensive grants program and two other small projects, and the major community-based woodlands project in NSW, but we're puzzled as to why there has been so little for communities elsewhere in this week's announcements," David continued.

"Many of the biggest projects, and about half the funds, included in the 'Landcare bucket' were not Landcare at all, but Grains Research & Development Corporation, private native forestry and agribusiness.

"Furthermore, while sustainable agriculture is an important part of landcare, it is by no means all that landcare is. There are only two projects funded for WA and both were concerned with wind erosion. So in WA, if your group is not on the wheat belt tackling wind erosion, there was not a red cent in this week's announcement for you. In Queensland, a number of large projects have been funded, however only a small proportion of funding to this state will go to community landcare," David commented.

"The geographic coverage of the program is hit and miss. NSW and Victoria are well represented, but in the NT large swathes of the southern extent of the Territory entirely missed out on funding. In SA, where most active community landcare groups are found in the Eyre Peninsula, Kangaroo Island and Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges NRM Regions, not one project in these areas received funding," David said.

"All-in-all though, it's a positive step to see specific support for a number of Landcare projects, and we look forward to working with the Australian Government to improve

*Caring for our Country* to ensure the best outcomes for the community and the environment," David concluded.

**Further comment: David Walker**

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