



**THE HON. TONY BURKE MP**

**Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities**

**THE HON. MARK DREYFUS QC MP**

**Cabinet Secretary**

**Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency**

**Parliamentary Secretary for Industry and Innovation**

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**GRANTS TO KICKSTART INDIGENOUS CARBON FARMING BUSINESSES OPEN TODAY**

The Gillard Government's new grants program to support Indigenous land managers in establishing carbon farming businesses opens today.

Environment Minister Tony Burke and Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change Mark Dreyfus today opened the first round of the Indigenous Carbon Farming Fund – Capacity Building and Business Support stream, an important component of the Gillard Government's Clean Energy Future Plan.

Over the next five years the Australian Government will invest \$22.3 million to help Indigenous organisations and land managers participate in the Carbon Farming Initiative by providing practical financial support and investing in the development of additional carbon farming methodologies.

"The Fund provides practical financial support for Indigenous land managers who either have a carbon farming business ready to go and just need some seed funding to get it off the ground or have a good idea for a project and want to investigate its feasibility," Mr Burke said.

"Getting more Indigenous land managers involved in carbon farming is not just beneficial for the environment but also beneficial for many Indigenous communities, particularly those in regional and remote Australia. Carbon credits earned through carbon farming ventures can then be sold to people or businesses wishing to offset their carbon pollution, creating additional economic benefits for local communities," he said.

Round one of the Capacity Building and Business stream will invest up to \$1.3 million to support Indigenous land managers in the following ways:

- Feasibility and assessment – grants up to \$50,000 to help investigate carbon farming opportunities, assess feasibility, seek specialist advice and explore partnership opportunities
- Business and project development – grants up to \$300,000 to help build a carbon farming business with an existing project plan or completed feasibility assessment. Funding can be

used to establish a carbon farming enterprise, employ a project manager or engage specialist legal, contractual or financial advice.

Mr Dreyfus said the Australian Government has approved four carbon farming methodologies, with another 40 now going through the assessment process. Methodologies outline the rules and instructions for undertaking a carbon farming project.

“There are currently two methodologies which may be of interest to Indigenous land managers, which create opportunities for savanna fire management and environmental plantings. These are proven methods that help reduce greenhouse gas pollution and increase the amount of carbon stored in native vegetation,” said Mr Dreyfus.

“The Australian Government will also invest a further \$5.2 million in the development of more carbon farming methodologies suitable for Indigenous land managers through the Research and Development stream of the Indigenous Carbon Farming Fund. Applications for the first round of this stream are being assessed and a second round will open in 2013,” he said.

The first round of the Indigenous Carbon Farming Fund for Capacity Building and Business Support is now open. Applications close 5pm AEDT Wednesday 12 December 2012.

For more information about the Indigenous Carbon Farming Fund and how to apply visit [www.environment.gov.au/cleanenergyfuture](http://www.environment.gov.au/cleanenergyfuture).

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