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MEDIA RELEASE

Nature fund is a triple winner – carbon and nature and jobs

A biodiversity fund of almost \$1 billion, announced on the weekend as part of the federal climate package, has been warmly welcomed by an alliance of 10 environment organisations in Victoria.

“This new fund is a triple winner – less carbon in the atmosphere, more habitat for wildlife and new jobs in the rural sector,” said alliance spokesperson Karen Alexander.

The Victoria Naturally Alliance is made up of 10 state and national environmental organisations that work together on the biodiversity crisis in Victoria.

“Protecting and increasing native habitat actually takes carbon out of the atmosphere and stores it in the trunks, branches and roots of native vegetation,” said Ms Alexander. “That’s good for the climate and good for wildlife.

“It also creates new jobs in the rural sector. When farmers and land managers receive support to pursue climate change action on the land and improve biodiversity, new jobs are created,” she said.

Almost 20% of our greenhouse gas emissions come from clearing native vegetation and inappropriate land management, so significantly reducing clearing and improving land management will reduce emissions very quickly.

A recent study of the environmental renewal project, Habitat 141, in western Victoria, showed creating 250,000ha of new habitat stores an additional 18 million tonnes of carbon over 30 years.

“This is the same as taking 4.5 million cars off the road for one year.”

The fund will also add much needed support to address the crisis in the health of our natural environment.

“In Victoria alone almost a third our native animals are already threatened species,” said Ms Alexander.

She also warned that the new biodiversity fund must be in addition to funds provided by the Caring for our Country program.

“If the funds replace part of the existing Caring for our Country program, it would be simply a case of money being moved around.”

The Victoria Naturally Alliance also welcomes the establishment of the independent Land Sector Carbon and Biodiversity Advisory Board to oversee the funding of biodiversity conservation and activities related to the Carbon Farming Initiative, as well as the announcement that biomass from native forests will no longer be counted as renewable energy.

For comment contact Karen Alexander on 0439 306 829.



The Victoria Naturally Alliance argues that protection of native plants and animals from threats including climate change and habitat loss is essential for a healthy community and economy. www.victorianaturally.org.au



TABLE: Summary of funding initiatives

PROGRAM	FUNDS
Biodiversity Fund: establish, restore, protect or manage biodiverse carbon stores	\$946 million
Carbon Farming Futures program help landholders participate in the Carbon Farming Initiative through research, innovation and on the ground action;	\$429 million
Carbon Farming Initiative purchase of CFI credits not yet recognised internationally (such as from soil carbon projects);	\$250 m
Research and development on ways of reducing pollution and adapting to climate change for the Australian land sectors.	\$46 m
Climate Change Research Program	\$8 m
Ways of storing C and reducing pollution in the land sectors.	\$201 m
Convert research into practical methodologies that are recognised under the Carbon Farming Initiative.	\$20m
There will also be funding to identify ways of integrating carbon farming into normal farm business.	
Grants for landholders to take action on the ground, including testing new ways to increase soil carbon and reduce pollution.	\$99 m
Refundable tax offset to encourage the uptake of conservation tillage farming techniques and participation in soil carbon sequestration research	\$44 m
Information about opportunities under the Carbon Farming Initiative to support communication with landholders through the Landcare network and other providers.	\$4 m
Extension and outreach activities. Similar to community inspired approach which proved successful through the \$34 million FarmReady Program.	\$64 m
Ongoing Indigenous Carbon Farming Fund to support indigenous participation by developing skills, governance arrangements and methodologies;	\$22 m
Natural resource management regions to plan for climate change impacts and help landholders participate in the Carbon Farming Initiative through research, innovation and on the ground action.	\$44 m
The Carbon Farming Initiative will support environmental programs like the Gondwana Link and others across Australia. This will be an important part of improved biodiversity health into the future.	
TOTAL	\$2003 m

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