

Stories of NRM

Local government, regional solutions – matching emissions reduction with landscape opportunities



“Where land price is high, NRM projects are scarce. But where the land price is lower, we can align Councils who don’t have land to undertake carbon offsets with Councils who do.”

Chris Pitfield
Project Manager

In 2021 Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CMA) successfully brokered a partnership between ten local governments (councils) and the regional NRM organisations (CMAs) within the Barwon South West region of Victoria to design and test the feasibility of a circular carbon offsets program.

The main objective of the program is to support the region’s councils to offset their carbon emissions locally – matching local government areas with high carbon neutrality targets with local government areas with high carbon offset potential. By playing this ‘matchmaker’ role, the two Catchment Management Authorities, Corangamite and Glenelg-Hopkins, are able to identify areas where carbon offset projects can also achieve other significant environmental and social gains.

The funding for the project has been supplied through the Victorian Government’s Regional Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2021/2022 Grants.

WHAT HAPPENED?

In addition to the ten councils and two CMAs, significant expertise and technical skills have been added to the project. Participating parties include Mullion Group (FLINTpro) as system developers; South Pole, for carbon offset governance/certification; DELWP, investor in design and feasibility and the

Barwon South West Climate Alliance, who will play a supporting role once the project is established. Additional businesses and investors may also be brought in as the project matures.

It’s early days in the project, but the projected outcomes from the project are to:

- Achieve **regional NRM outcomes** including improved water quality, soil health and habitat connectivity, as well as adaptation to climate change.
- Support **local community groups and private landholders** undertaking NRM projects through a new investment stream.
- Support and sustain the **local revegetation industry** including seed banks, nurseries, and other revegetation industry related small businesses, thereby avoiding the current ‘boom and bust’ government investment cycles.
- **Leverage** future state, federal and non-government investment into local NRM programs.

- **Support and invest** in regional green, blue and teal carbon industries and research, as well as encourage the sustainable advancement of these industries.

In summary, through partnering with local government and others regional NRMs can help to:

- Provide at-scale investment opportunities for government and businesses seeking to offset their emissions.
- Ensure investment in carbon farming projects will achieve additional environmental, social and economic benefits.
- Provide regional solutions for regional problems – thus increasing local knowledge, understanding, and profile of environmental programs.

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

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