

Growing Carbon Pilot Project

Landowner information sheet

The Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority (PPWCMA) is working in partnership with Yarra Valley Water, Melbourne Water, City West Water and Western Water, in the Greater Melbourne region, to explore the potential to utilise local revegetation projects to generate carbon offsets that also provide environmental and social benefits. This pilot is called the 'Growing Carbon' project.

PPWCMA is now seeking Expressions of Interest from landowners or land managers in the greater Melbourne region to participate in this pilot project. Landowners will need to be willing to consent to a long-term agreement involving a significant revegetation project on their property.

Revegetation projects will be seeking to restore native vegetation and will use a range of indigenous species specific to the local area and each site.

Background

Victoria's water industry is committed to taking actions on climate change and achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible. It acknowledges that providing clean drinking water and disposing of sewage result in significant greenhouse gas emissions, and achieving net zero emissions will require a variety of actions including:

- increasing energy efficiency to directly reduce emissions, by minimising the amount of energy used in water supply and sewage treatment,
- increasing the use of renewable energy to reduce indirect grid emissions and
- using 'carbon offsets' such as planting trees to store carbon to offset any remaining emissions.

This pilot project is seeking to support water corporations in this region to achieve net zero emissions by providing opportunities for local revegetation projects that will provide carbon offsets as well as other local environmental and social benefits.

What are the benefits?

Landowners participating in the pilot will directly benefit through:

- Improved biodiversity
- Healthier soils, vegetation and animals
- Improved soil structure and fertility
- Building drought resilience and farm productivity
- Greater water efficiency
- Improved aesthetics and amenity

Participating landowners will also be eligible for a regular maintenance payment to maintain and protect the plantings.

Broader benefits of this project including:

- Improving water quality through reducing sediment and nutrient input into waterways.
- Improvements in biodiversity through the creation of new habitat corridors including supporting habitat for threatened species.

- Creating local employment opportunities by using environmental contractors to undertake revegetation activities.
- Working with Traditional Owners and supporting employment opportunities to implement revegetation projects.
- Improvements in community health and wellbeing through the creation of new green spaces and improved amenity of public spaces.

The purpose of the Growing Carbon pilot is to develop a collaborative approach in generating carbon offsets that also builds the landscape climate resilience and local environmental and socio-economic benefits outlined above.

What is involved?

Landowners interested in participating in this pilot project will be contacted by PPWCMA staff to arrange an initial meeting. In this meeting PPWCMA staff will provide detailed information about the opportunity and what is involved, landholders will be encouraged to ask questions and talk through potential options. This meeting may also involve a site visit to areas of the property being considered for revegetation to discuss the landowners plans for the property and options for planting design.

If the landowner is interested in proceeding with the project a further meeting will be arranged. This will be an opportunity to discuss and negotiate contractual arrangements and develop a basic property plan and detailed site revegetation plan, in consultation with the landowner.

Once a landowner is committed to being involved in the project there are a number of legal and administrative steps involved in registering and proceeding with the project. These include:

- Providing consent to register an Emissions Reduction Fund project through the Clean Energy Regulator on an agreed area of land on your property.
- Entering into a Forestry and Carbon Management Agreement (under the Climate Change Act 2017) and assigning the forest carbon rights to the Port Phillip and Westernport CMA. This is registered as a caveat on the property title. If your property currently has a mortgage your bank must also provide consent.
- Enabling PPWCMA to undertake the planting of the agreed area using local native plants. This is at no cost to the landowner and includes fencing (if required), site preparation, planting, and six-months of post-plant establishment maintenance.
- Allowing the PPWCMA to undertake regular project audits to measure the rate of carbon sequestration.

Your role

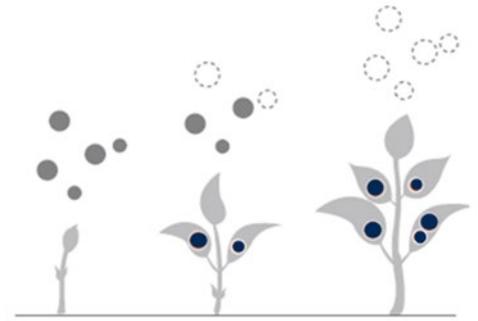
- Once established, the landowner will be required to maintain the vegetation for a duration of 100 years.
- Manage the area in accordance with the Forest and Carbon Management Agreement. Under the agreement landowners will be allowed to conduct activities that do not significantly affect the growth of the vegetation and therefore the amount of carbon stored. The agreement will detail allowable and not allowable activities. This will likely include keeping stock out of revegetated areas. In some cases, it may be appropriate to allow sustainable grazing of the area once vegetation has reached a suitable age.



What is a Carbon Offset?

Carbon offsetting is a mechanism that allows organisations or individuals to invest in projects which capture or 'sequester' greenhouse gas emissions, to counter their own unavoidable emissions.

Capturing and storing carbon in vegetation is one way to sequester greenhouse gases and provide biodiversity benefits at the same time.



This Project

The Growing Carbon project is seeking to register a carbon offset project with the Australian Governments Emissions Reduction Fund, administered by the Clean Energy Regulator. This project will generate Australian Carbon Credit Units which the partner water corporation can use to offset their unavoidable greenhouse gas emissions.

For projects to be registered with the Emissions Reduction Fund they must meet strict eligibility criteria and involve an activity that achieves emission reductions using an approved method. In this case we are seeking to use the Reforestation by Environmental Plantings method. Projects are also required to use approved auditors to track and report the growth of vegetation and calculate the amount of carbon sequestered.

Under this scheme carbon sequestered in vegetation can only be used to offset emissions if it is stored long term. For this reason, sequestration projects that store carbon in vegetation are required to maintain the vegetation for a duration of 100 years.

Next steps

If you are interested in learning more about this opportunity, please complete the attached Expression of Interest Form and return to PPWCMA. A PPWCMA Officer will contact you to arrange a time to meet and visit your property.



Expression of Interest

- I am a private landowner and am interested in participating in the Growing Carbon project
- I am interested in having a site visit from PPWCMA to find out more information

Project Location

Property Address: _____

Suburb: _____

Contact Details

First Name: _____

Surname: _____

Postal Address: _____

Preferred Contact Number: _____

Email: _____

Current Land Use

- Dairy
- Hobby farm
- Grazing
- Horticulture/Orchard/Vineyard
- Other (please specify): _____

Approximate property area (ha): _____

Approximate area being considered for revegetation (ha): _____

Return the Expression of Interest form to:

Kacie Melfi at Kacie.melfi@ppwcma.vic.gov.au

The PPWCMA values your privacy and is committed to protecting any personal information it collects. The information collected in this form is for the purpose of managing the Growing Carbon project, including reporting to partners, government investors and contractors. Your personal information will not be used for any other purpose or disclosed without your consent, except as required by law. To access your personal information, modify your details or enquire about how your personal information is managed, please email enquiries@ppwcma.vic.gov.au or phone 8781 7900.

