

# FOR LANDHOLDERS: **TREES FOR CARBON & YOU**

*Are you a landholder wanting to  
plant native forests to capture carbon  
on your land and get paid for it?*



## WHO IS ECOFUND?

Ecofund is a Queensland Government initiative that aims to help balance the earth™ through the protection of Queensland's natural environment, including expanding national parks and other conservation areas. We aim to help increase these valuable areas in Queensland to 20 million hectares by 2020.

## CARBON FORESTS AND LANDHOLDERS

Landholders may benefit from using their land for carbon forests by receiving financial incentives. Landholders will also have the opportunity to protect the unique environmental values of their land and contribute to protecting Queensland's vulnerable wildlife habitats.

For landholders to be eligible as carbon forest providers, your property should contain areas of cleared land which you wish to see revegetated. These areas must have been clear of trees on 31 December 1989 or lawfully cleared after 1 January 1990.

Ecofund can help landholders evaluate the suitability of their property as a carbon forest.

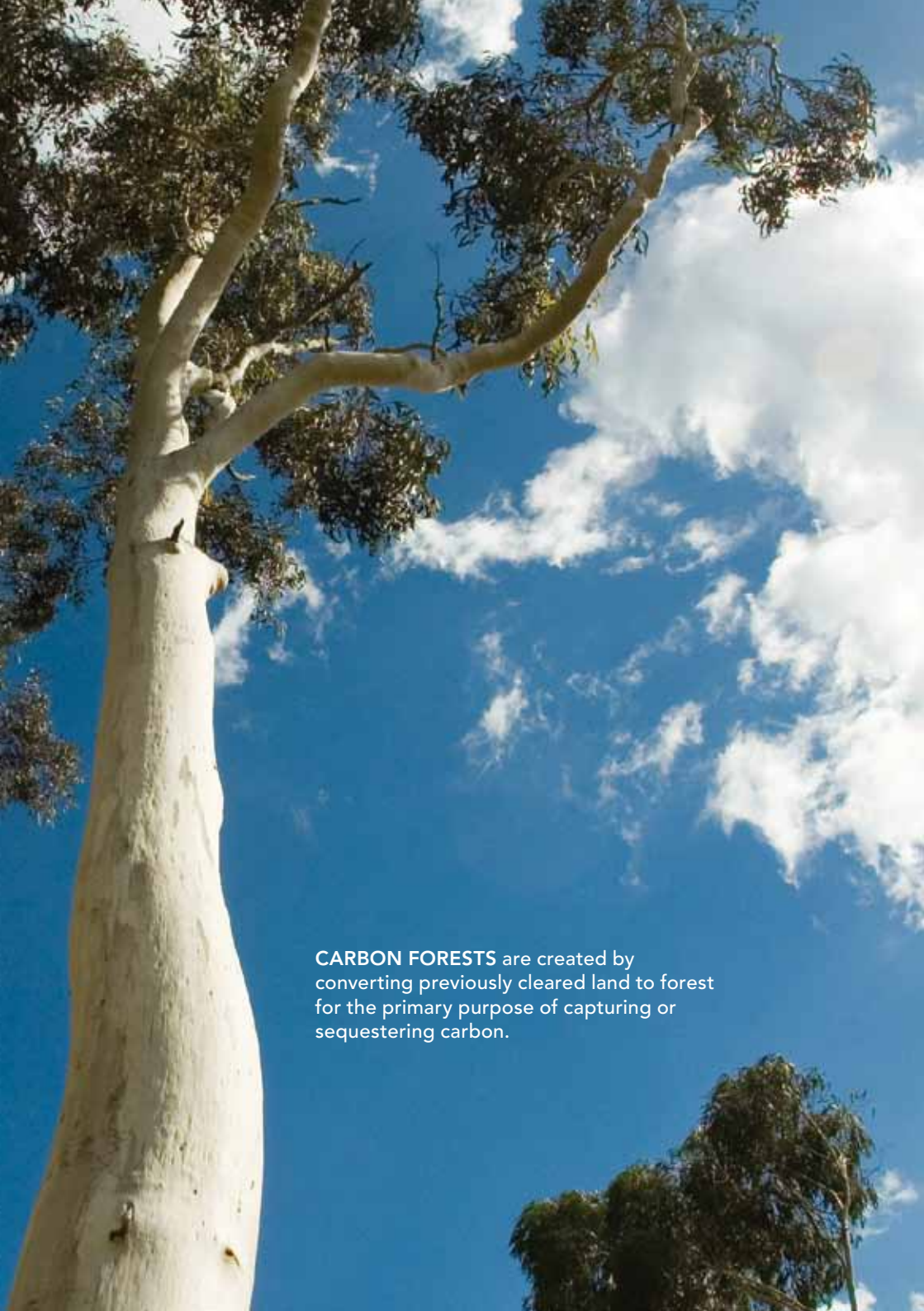
Not eligible for a carbon forest? Your property could still have environmental values that you can be paid for. Please contact Ecofund for more information.

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF CARBON FORESTS TO LANDHOLDERS?

The benefits to you as a landholder include:

- » an income stream from otherwise marginal or unproductive land
- » financial assistance for land management actions such as weeding, fencing and fire management
- » engaging in sustainable land management and conservation
- » recognition of your actions and achievements
- » protecting habitats for threatened species
- » assisting in the protection of Queensland's biodiversity
- » contributing to an increase in Queensland's protected areas
- » improving the environmental values of your property.

*So you're interested in becoming a carbon forest provider and you want to know more? Here are answers to some of the questions you may ask. If you would like to talk to us please give us a call.*



**CARBON FORESTS** are created by converting previously cleared land to forest for the primary purpose of capturing or sequestering carbon.

## BENEFITS TO YOU AS A LANDHOLDER

**What is a carbon forest?** Carbon forests are created by planting trees for the purpose of capturing carbon. As the trees grow they capture carbon, or a more technical term is sequestering carbon. Any area on your land can be used for a carbon forest. The land might have previously been used for agriculture, could be a small, inaccessible paddock; a marginal patch with negligible production benefits or an area with high environmental values.

Benefits of a carbon forest can include:

- » improving water quality
- » providing shade
- » acting as a wind-break
- » providing wildlife habitat
- » reducing dryland salinity.

**What kinds of financial benefits could I receive by providing my land for a carbon forest?** You can negotiate to receive either an upfront payment to use your land for a carbon forest or a share of revenue from the sale of carbon as it is captured and stored in your trees. You can also be paid for ongoing management activities. In some local government areas, your council may provide rate rebates and in certain circumstances concessional tax treatment may apply.

## BECOMING A CARBON FOREST PROVIDER

**How do I know if my land can be used for a carbon forest?** Your land may be eligible for a carbon forest if you have:

- » areas on your land that were clear of trees on 31 December 1989
- » areas on your land that were lawfully cleared after 1 January 1990

- » areas on your land that were clear of trees on 31 December 1989 that you have revegetated since (not natural regrowth)
- » areas on your land that were lawfully cleared after 1 January 1990 that you have revegetated.

Please contact us so we can assess the potential of your land to provide a carbon forest and advise you on the options and benefits that may be available to you.

**My land isn't eligible for a carbon forest. Are there other options?** Yes. Landholders can be paid for protecting the environmental values on their land. Please contact Ecofund for more information.

**Why 31 December 1989 and 31 December 2008 important dates for carbon forests?** Australia approved the Kyoto Protocol at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at the end of 2007. Under this agreement, 31 December 1989 is a baseline for measuring which areas of land are counted as forests and which are not.

**Does size matter?** Yes – the minimum area needs to be 0.2 hectares. Sites greater than 20 hectares offer the greatest benefit for landholders and investors.

**I don't own my land, am I still eligible as a carbon forest provider?** Yes. It is possible to have a carbon forest on either freehold or perpetual leasehold land. We can provide advice on the ability of non-perpetual leasehold land to be used for the establishment of carbon forests.

**How does a carbon forest work on perpetual leasehold land?** State-owned perpetual leasehold land may be used for a carbon forest in the same way as freehold land.

**What is carbon and why do I want to capture it?** Carbon is short for carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>). CO<sub>2</sub> is one of six greenhouse gases largely contributing to global warming. By capturing and storing carbon in trees, you can reduce the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere.



**balance the earth.**

[www.ecofund.net.au](http://www.ecofund.net.au)

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### Why would someone pay me to capture carbon?

Businesses or individuals who release large amounts of greenhouse gases may be willing to pay you to grow trees on their behalf, to reduce the impacts of their carbon pollution.

### I'm interested in providing my land for a carbon forest. What steps will be involved in this process?

1. Contact Ecofund and register your interest at [info@ecofund.net.au](mailto:info@ecofund.net.au) or phone 07 3017 6460.
2. Ecofund will assess the eligibility and potential of your land as a carbon forest.
3. Ecofund will list your property on our register for potential carbon forest sites.
4. Ecofund will contact you when we have funding or an investor interested in your property.
5. Ecofund will work with you to provide the information you need to make a decision that is right for you.

You will be involved in all the decisions at each stage of your land becoming a carbon forest.

This process includes:

1. Negotiating an appropriate upfront payment for access to your property or an on-going share of carbon revenue from the carbon forest on your land.
2. Assisting in the preparation of a management plan for the carbon forest on your property.
3. Deciding who will manage the carbon forest – either yourself or a land management contractor.
4. Legally securing the carbon forest on title.
5. Appropriate signage on the carbon forest site if required.

## SECURING A CARBON FOREST

### How does my property become a carbon forest?

The carbon forest on your land will be protected on your property title under a Natural Resource Product Agreement (NRP Agreement).

You may also wish to protect your carbon forest in perpetuity as:

- » a nature refuge
- » a statutory covenant or conservation agreement
- » a voluntary declaration under the *Vegetation Management Act* (VDec).

### What is a Natural Resource Product (NRP)

**Agreement?** A natural resource product agreement (NRP Agreement) is a unique contract between a landholder and one or more parties about natural resource products on their land. NRP Agreements

are legislated under the *Forestry Act 1959*. In the *Forestry Act*, natural resource products are defined as, 'all parts of a tree or vegetation, whether alive or dead, including parts below the ground; carbon stored in a tree or vegetation; [and] carbon sequestration by a tree or vegetation.'<sup>1</sup>

**What is a Nature Refuge?** Nature refuges provide a means for private landholders to conserve the significant environmental values on their land while maintaining sustainable land use practices. Nature refuges seek to maintain the balance between environmental and economic sustainability. Nature refuges bind future generations to the conservation arrangements agreed to by the landholder and the Queensland Government. For further information on nature refuges contact the Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) on 13 13 04.

### What is a Statutory Covenant or Conservation

**Agreement?** It is a written agreement that aims to achieve beneficial environmental outcomes for land. A statutory covenant is registered with the Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) on title and binds current and subsequent landholders, ensuring that land and other important natural resources are not diminished in the future. Conservation agreements can be negotiated with a number of local governments and provide ongoing protection of environmental values.

### What is a Voluntary Declaration under the

**Vegetation Management Act 1999?** A voluntary declaration under the *Vegetation Management Act 1999* is commonly referred to as a VDec. It allows landholders to voluntarily protect native vegetation for a range of purposes. The VDec process is aimed at protecting regrowth vegetation, plantings of native vegetation, and in certain circumstances remnant vegetation. Once a VDec is made it is binding on all current and future owners of the land. It will remain in place until the outcomes detailed in the offset management plan have been achieved.

**Does my whole property need to be secured as a carbon forest?** No, carbon forests can be secured on either part or all of your property. This depends on what areas you decide are available.

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<sup>1</sup> Queensland Government 2002, *Forestry Act 1959*, Queensland Government, Brisbane, (page 124).

## CARBON FOREST MANAGEMENT

**Can I have someone else manage the carbon forest?** Yes, Ecofund can arrange for a third party to continue the management of the carbon forest for the life of the NRP Agreement. In this case you relinquish any responsibility for the carbon forest and you will not be liable for any costs associated with land management.

**Who will have access to my property?** You and anyone who you agree can access your land for land management purposes. The NRP Agreement will also set out the conditions under which other parties (i.e. like an investor) can access your property.

**If I decide to manage the carbon forest myself, what support will I receive to do this?** You will be paid to manage the carbon forest if you choose to do this yourself. The amount of payment will be based on the management requirements which will be outlined in the management plan.

**What is a management plan?** A management plan outlines how the land will be managed as a carbon forest. It identifies and schedules the activities required to manage the forest. This could include fencing, weed and pest control, fire management and the land use activities that can still be maintained e.g. grazing. Any monitoring and reporting requirements would also be outlined in the management plan.

**Will there be straight rows of single species trees across my property?** Ecofund specialises in recreating forests and revegetating landscapes to restore as close to original state as possible. When possible, Ecofund will work with investors and landholders to re-establish forests with similar characteristics to the surrounding bushland or the pre-clearing regional ecosystem.

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

**If I provide my land for a carbon forest, what are my responsibilities?** You will still own (or lease) the land. If you choose to manage the carbon forest you will be responsible for undertaking the actions identified in the management plan. You will also need to liaise with Ecofund during the management period for compliance and reporting purposes.

**If I provide my land as a carbon forest, will it affect my land value?** Carbon forests usually require restrictions on land use activities and in this sense may be reflected as a reduction in market

value. However, you should consider the potential for a carbon forest to offer desirable features such as enhanced natural values and these may be attractive to a future buyer.

**If I sell my property in the future, what happens to the carbon forest?** The carbon forest is secured on the property title and will remain in effect regardless of who owns the land. Any conditions that were agreed to by the original landholder will continue to apply to the new owners on sale of the property. Any carbon revenue accruing to you will transfer across to the new owner.

## DEFINITIONS

**What is a Regional Ecosystem (RE)?** Regional ecosystems are vegetation communities that are associated with a particular combination of geology, landform and soil.

**What is carbon revenue?** Carbon revenue is revenue from the sale of carbon as it is captured and stored in your trees.

## CONTACT US

If you would like further information on carbon forests, simply want to chat with the Ecofund team or you would like to register your interest as a carbon forest provider please contact us at [info@ecofund.net.au](mailto:info@ecofund.net.au) or on (07) 3017 6460.

*This information should be used as a guide only. Ecofund recommends you seek professional advice regarding your property and how carbon forests may apply to you.*