

GASCOYNE RIVER CATCHMENT REHYDRATION AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE PROJECT

PROJECT SUMMARY

COMMENCED NOVEMBER 2022



\$544,400
Royalties for Regions
\$1,019,766
Total project cost

GDC ROLE

The Gascoyne Development Commission are the contract managers for the project, having identified this project as a key opportunity to support pastoral sector growth and development while maintaining the natural capital of the Crown land estate under pastoral use. The Commission will support the GCG in the proposed pilot project, and the long-term sector-wide implementation of the pilot's findings.

BACKGROUND

Land rehydration is a major priority for the \$30 million dollar Gascoyne pastoral industry. The Gascoyne Catchments Group's (GCG) pilot project aims to trial land management practices at a local and catchment level with peer-to-peer knowledge sharing, networking and support.

The results will be used to prove the effectiveness of sustainable practices in pastoral land management. The trial will provide an evidence base for different land management techniques, along with a model that is grounded in support, strong networks, knowledge exchange and lasting land management practices.

The project will also map a pathway for improved two-way engagement between pastoralists and Traditional Owners.

PLANNED OUTCOMES

Improve the ecological health of the Gascoyne River catchments through undertaking targeted hydrological interventions that improve soil moisture and vegetation cover.

Prove rehydration methods and techniques that are best suited to local conditions.

Raise awareness and adoption of optimal rehydration and land management practices among pastoralists.

Support sustainable growth of the pastoral sector in the Gascoyne Region, and resilience under a changing climate.

Maintain and improve natural capital, including soil health, carbon sequestration and biodiversity to improving overall rangeland condition and resilience.



TARGET OUTPUTS

Trial a catchment-scale survey and prioritisation process to identify the best (most cost effective) sites within the catchment for land rehydration works to occur.

Design rehydration works using traditional ecological knowledge, by creating opportunities for pastoralists to engage with Traditional Owners in the design and implementation of on-ground works and create a road map for engagement with Traditional Owner groups rehydration methods and techniques that are best suited to local conditions.

Trial rehydration works on a minimum of seven pastoral stations.

Monitoring, evaluation and knowledge sharing: The results of each trial site will be communicated to pastoralists across the catchment.



THE SOLUTION

The pilot project directly responds to the two major threats to the WA pastoral industry: land degradation and climate change.

Local on ground trials coupled with peer-to-peer networking and knowledge exchange are needed to make a case for adoption by pastoralists. This will lead to widespread practice change, which therefore leads to widescale surface water infiltration, reduced overland flows and reduced erosive potential.

THE FUTURE

The long-term outcome is to improve soil rehydration and therefore reduce threats to business viability arising from the changing climate. Through the trials, GCG will have the tools and techniques to roll out the project to the wider pastoral community across the region. GCG intends to work with key stakeholders and industry to further extend the momentum, planning and works once the pilot is complete.

Approximately 60% of the project funding will be spent locally.

The pilot will also provide opportunities for strengthening relationships between pastoralists and Traditional Owners. Native Title is recognised over vast swathes of the Gascoyne Catchment, and meaningful engagement with Aboriginal custodians is key to ensuring that the project is designed in accordance with traditional ecological knowledge of country, and traditional land management practices, protecting cultural heritage values associated with the Gascoyne catchment.

\$48,400 of the project budget is allocated to directly supporting engagement with Traditional Owners.

Traditional Owner engagement will ensure these values are properly protected. The long term goal will be to mitigate the erosive potential of overland flow and the impacts on downstream communities, including the Carnarvon horticultural district and the Gascoyne commercial and recreational marine fishery.