Proposal for a

National Code of Practice for Landscape Rehydration & Restoration

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Proposal for National Code of Practice for Landscape Rehydration & Restoration:

This executive summary outlines a proposal aimed at restoring ecosystems, biodiversity, soil health and agricultural productivity in Australia. The proposed Code addresses the need for progressive regulatory reform to foster landscape rehydration initiatives and overcome current obstacles that hinder environmental restoration projects.

Introduction:

This proposal for a National Code of Practice is aimed at rejuvenating ecosystems, biodiversity, soil health and agricultural productivity through landscape rehydration and restoration. The proposal seeks to address the pressing need for comprehensive regulatory reform to expedite, expand and de-risk landscape rehydration and restoration projects across Australia.

Need for Ecosystem Recovery:

This proposal aligns with the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration's goal to reverse the loss of nature. Australia's environment faces significant challenges due to deforestation, agricultural activities and climate change. It acknowledges the need for resilient landscapes capable of withstanding climate extremes and the importance of water cycling and its critical role in ecosystem survival. Regulatory reform is urgently required to encourage landscape restoration and rehydration, fix the broken water cycle, restore biodiversity, improve soil health and increase agricultural productivity.

Landscape Rehydration Infrastructure (LRI):

The proposal advocates for natural infrastructure and landscape rehydration interventions to restore water cycles, improve water quality and support habitat restoration. These approaches, backed by scientific evidence, replicate nature's optimal water movement patterns, re-establishing functional water cycling crucial for regeneration.

Challenges in Environmental Regulation:

The current environmental regulation system in Australia presents barriers to restoration initiatives. Complex and time-consuming approval processes hinder eco-restoration projects, discouraging environmentally conscious landowners and experts. The focus on short-term risks rather than long-term outcomes impedes landscape restoration efforts.

Proposed solution:

Implementing a National Code of Practice is key to overcoming regulatory barriers. This Code aims to streamline approvals, create an outcomes-based regulatory approach, foster collaboration, de-risk investments, empower communities and create professional pathways for environmental leadership.

Function & benefits of Landscape Rehydration Infrastructure:

The proposal emphasises the positive impacts of LRI on landscape function, resilience to climate extremes, habitat restoration, water quality and soil health.

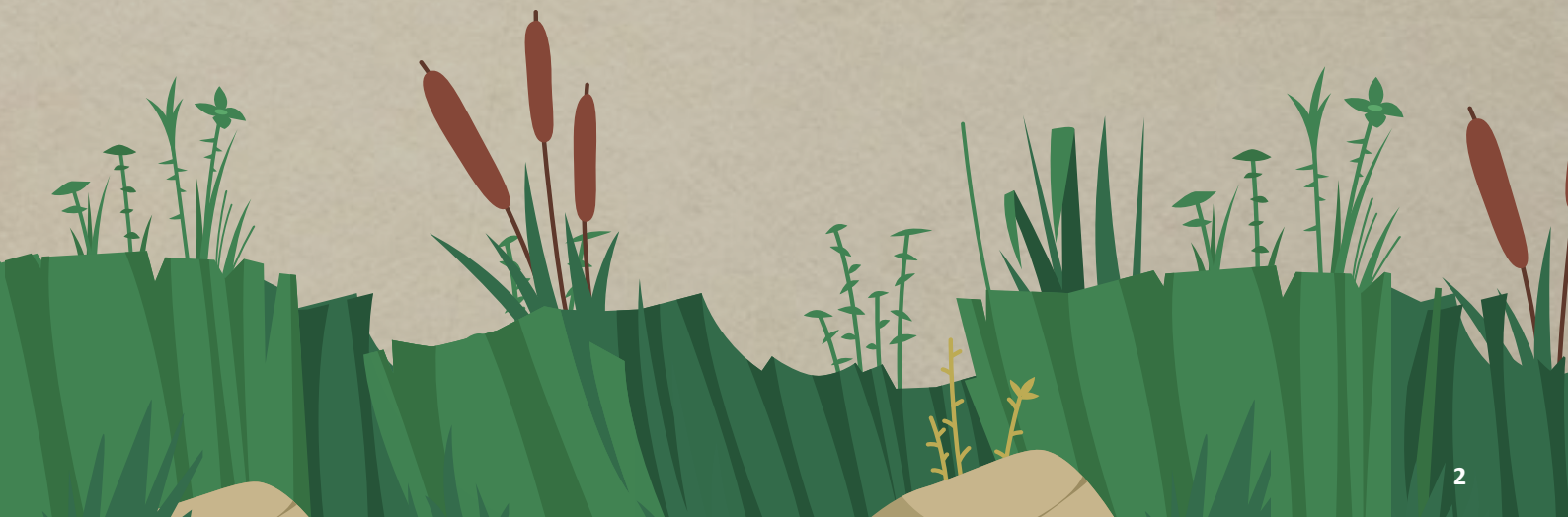**Alignment with Australian Government initiatives:**

The proposed Code aligns with various government reviews and initiatives, emphasizing a shift toward a nature-positive approach, supporting biodiversity restoration and encouraging strategic planning and management of the environment at national or regional scales.

Implementation:

The Code creates a governance mechanism to replace the existing complex process-driven environmental regulation with an outcomes-based approach. It is designed to accelerate climate-resilient restoration projects and address threats posed by climate change.

Conclusion:

The proposed National Code of Practice for Landscape Rehydration and Restoration is a crucial step toward streamlining regulatory processes, encouraging ecosystem restoration and fostering a nature-positive approach.
By prioritising outcomes over processes, this initiative aims to unlock the potential of landscape rehydration and restoration for a more sustainable and resilient future.

The Mulloon Institute acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians and Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters where we live, learn and work.

Mulloon Institute

For environment, farming and society.