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FUNDING FOR HIGH CONSERVATION VALUE AREAS

Western Catchment residents who have land of high conservation value in their area should contact their local Western Catchment Management Authority (CMA) office to learn about funding opportunities through the 2009 Incentive Program.

Western CMA Biodiversity Project Officer, Erlina Compton, says there was a high level of interest last year and is hoping more people apply before the September 25 deadline.

"In 2008 we funded twelve projects involving fourteen properties, resulting in improved management of a total area of 4,694 hectares," Ms Compton said.

"These included nine riparian sites, three wetland sites, one cultural heritage site and one site for the protection of a specific vegetation community. It's great to be able to help people with the management of these very special areas on their property and to ensure they are looked after for future generations," she said.

Paul and Deborah Kaluder of Naree Station, 150 km north-west of Bourke, secured funding through the High Conservation Value program in 2008 to protect the Mukudjeroo Waterhole, one of the few permanent waterholes in the Cuttaburra Creek. They installed 6 km of fencing and two solar pumps and two alternative watering points for stock.

As a result, they are now able to protect approximately forty hectares including the waterhole, fringing vegetation and some adjacent Yapunyah woodland. As a permanent source of water, the Mukudjeroo Waterhole is an important refuge for water birds and other bird species and provides a nesting place for White Necked Heron, Royal Spoonbills, Yellow Billed Spoonbills, Little Egrets, Darters, Pelicans and Cormorants. It is considered culturally significant to the local Aboriginal people.

Max Swain of Wirrabilla Station near Collarenebri also received funding last year to protect an area on his property of great cultural significance to the people of the Kamilaroi Nation. He has erected 4 km of total grazing pressure fencing, installed a solar pump and seven off-river watering points to better manage fifty hectares of wetlands.

The wetland areas contain a number of scarred trees, occupation sites, implements, hearth sites and middens. Elders from the Kamilaroi Nation have told of creation stories linking an area of the river known as 'Devil's Hole' to the Aboriginal fish traps, known as Baiame's Ngunnhu, downstream at Brewarrina.

The High Conservation Value program is one of eight areas of funding offered through the Western CMA's Incentive Program.

Up to 100% of funding is available for eligible projects. Funding can cover infrastructure costs such as total grazing pressure fencing, installation of alternative watering points and ongoing costs of conservation actions such as fox baiting and feral goat and pig control.



MEDIA RELEASE



The type of areas to be funded include culturally significant sites, uncommon vegetation types or landscapes, including artesian mound springs, native animal habitat, wetlands and riverine corridors.

"This is the last major funding round before 2011 so we are very keen to hear from anyone who believes they have a suitable area on their property. We can arrange a property visit and assist people with the application process. In certain circumstances, the Western CMA will fund a cultural site assessment with all information held in confidence," Ms Compton said.

For more information call 1800 032 101 or visit www.western.cma.nsw.gov.au

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For further information please contact:

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Captions:

Paul Kaluder of Naree Station.

Western CMA Aboriginal Community Support Officer, Blackie Gordon, at the Old Brewarrina Mission Wetland. The wetland is being restored by the Ngemba Billabong Restoration and Landcare Group using funding from the 2008 High Conservation Value program. As well as being an important wetland, it is an area of great cultural significance, with evidence of multiple living sites, hearth sites and scarred/carved trees.

