



PO Box 525
Alstonville 2477
Phone (02) 6626 1329
jackie.luethi@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Media Release

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Australian Government announces \$297'000 carbon assessment project for Richmond Landcare Incorporated

Richmond Landcare Incorporated in partnership with NSW Department of Primary Industries and Best Energies Australia will receive \$297'000 over three years under the 2008-09 Landcare Sustainable Practices grant component of Caring for Our Country.

"This project, "Soil carbon sequestration and rehabilitation: Landholders develop, implement and assess biochar", is a continuation of the successful project funded under the 2007-08 NLP Community Support round. The pilot phase of the project assessed carbon fractions in soils at ten sites on the north coast, and biochar trials were established on over 130 plots", said Jackie Luethi, Community Landcare Coordinator at Richmond Landcare Inc.

"The aim of this project is to demonstrate and encourage the uptake of biochar applications to improve the sustainability of agricultural systems and to mitigate climate change", Ms Luethi said

There is growing interest globally in the properties and use of biochar. Trials to date have demonstrated its potential to sequester carbon, benefits to soil health and increased plant growth.

"The on-ground activities as part of this project to further investigate the claims listed above, will include additional biochar demonstration plots being established on 3 farms. In total, six field demonstration sites will be managed by the project, under varying soil types and cropping situations in the Northern Rivers. These sites will be used to test carbon sequestration in soil and benefits to soil health, as well as reductions in soil greenhouse gas emissions", said Ms Luethi.

"The soils on the trial sites will be sampled by scientists from the NSW Department of Primary Industries with assistance from Richmond Landcare members and farmers. This means that landholders are directly involved in this innovative study", said Ms Luethi.

"As a result of this project information will be obtained on the significance of sustainable management practices on climate change and carbon storage in soil."

Media contact: Jackie Luethi, 6626 1329.