

Minding the Carbon Store – A Global Benchmark

What is Minding the Carbon Store?

Minding the Carbon Store is an innovative project that has saved 12,000 hectares of native Australian vegetation in Queensland from being cleared and burnt. As a result, around 1,250,000 tonnes CO₂e greenhouse gas emissions were avoided in an independently verified greenhouse gas abatement project. This equates roughly with taking 300,000 vehicles off the road for a year.

Minding the Carbon Store effectively enabled Rio Tinto Aluminium to buy stored carbon from Queensland farmers who committed to keep forests on their land intact. This innovative and environmentally responsible company can then use the resulting carbon credits purchased through The Carbon Pool to offset their own greenhouse gas emissions. Several Queensland landowners benefited from the very significant payments for Carbon Rights to their forests.

Minding the Carbon Store is Australia's largest verified greenhouse gas abatement project for emission reductions in a single year. It was supported enthusiastically by farmers, farmer organisations, agribusiness consultants, the Queensland and Australian governments, environment groups and business.

Working together so everyone benefits

Minding the Carbon Store provided significant financial incentives (in one case more than \$A1 million) to landowners to forego their land clearing permits, and opportunities for companies such as Rio Tinto Aluminium to participate in a sustainable, positive way of reducing greenhouse emissions in Australia. Landowners can continue sustainable grazing while being paid to conserve biodiversity, habitat and carbon stocks.

The project was verified and approved under the Australian Government's Greenhouse Friendly™ program. This program encourages companies and communities to invest in and support abatement projects such as energy efficiency, waste diversion and recycling, renewable energy generation, tree planting and now, avoided deforestation. Greenhouse Friendly™ is based on global best practice standards and uses Kyoto Protocol rules to quantify forest related emission abatement.

By working collaboratively with farmers, industry, government and environment groups, and demonstrating innovation and genuine leadership in its field of expertise, The Carbon Pool



has achieved an outcome many thought was impossible with its *Minding the Carbon Store* project.

Outstanding results for the environment

So far, the results from *Minding the Carbon Store* have been outstanding. Aside from the amazing achievements in avoiding 1,250,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions, 12,000 hectares of native Australian vegetation and ecosystems have been protected.

Protecting vegetation communities classified as “of concern” under Queensland legislation was a priority for the project. Ecosystems classified as being of concern are those in which 70–90 per cent of the original vegetation has been cleared or extensively modified. Local occurrences of a number of



vulnerable, rare or threatened species of fauna and flora will also now be protected as a result of *Minding the Carbon Store*.

Of the vegetation communities involved in the project to date, a significant proportion include the eucalypt poplar box tree species. An important feature of poplar box trees is multiple hollows within the trunk and branches of older trees, which provide lodging and nesting sites for a wide variety of birds, mammals and reptiles.

Also, assessment of mulga dominated ecosystems revealed many had become recently “thickened”, which has a detrimental impact on their biodiversity and production value. The sustainable land management allowed by this project, while ensuring the maintenance of existing carbon stocks, can transform these mulga ecosystems back to a more original woodland structure, resulting in significant improvement in their habitat values.

A great start, but what's next?

The *Minding the Carbon Store* model is highly transferable and is a prime example of what can happen when diverse stakeholders with common goals work together to benefit the environment, business and our farming communities.

The next step for The Carbon Pool is to share what has been learnt from this model with a wider stakeholder group, both in Australia and internationally. The more interest we can generate in projects such as *Minding the Carbon Store* from all areas of the community, the more global environment benefits we will all share.

The Carbon Pool is also committed to a significant project involving biodiverse reforestation in coastal New South Wales. The intention is to develop and implement a best practice model for long-term sustainable forestry with combined timber and carbon sequestration outputs.

The success of *Minding the Carbon Store* is one example of how we can work with you. If you or your organisation, as an

intensive energy user, a possible source of carbon sequestration or other stakeholder, is committed to making real progress and being recognised as a leader on global environmental issues within your community or sector, contact us to discuss how.

Further information:

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