

Caring for our Country

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Caring for Our Country is an Australian government initiative for the next five years that replaces the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT1, NHT2) and several other government Natural Resource Management programs. The stated goal of Caring for Our Country is to have an environment that is healthy, better-protected, well-managed, resilient, and that provides essential ecosystem services in a changing climate. These are very lofty goals. Following a review of the existing NHT program by Turnbull & Associates, there has been a radical rethinking of governance, funding, monitoring and reporting. Significant issues remain to be tackled in the areas of: community capacity building for NRM activities; valuation of ecosystem services; appropriate and affordable monitoring techniques; integration of the carbon economy; and development of environmental stewardship. This session will examine some of these issues, and draw comparisons with efforts in the international arena.