



The Honorable Anthony Albanese MP
Prime Minister
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

5 September 2022

Dear Prime Minister

Australia's Blueprint for Thriving Landscapes Introducing the Whole of Landscape Approach to Land Use and Management

I write to you as the founding chair of the ACNC registered environmental charity The Australian Landscape Science Institute ('TALS Institute') and as a lifelong student of the Australian environment.

As I approach the twilight of my life's work, I have established TALS Institute to carry forward and share the insights I have gained from a lifetime of observing the cycles of nature and experimenting with simple solutions to complex land management problems. My life's work has included the development of Natural Sequence Farming which has been widely recognised as one of the few truly sustainable agriculture models around the world. The legacy that I wish to leave is a Whole of Landscape approach to policy and practice in this country. This would realise our vision of restoring Australian landscapes by empowering communities with methods for reinstating the natural system functions that once made this land thrive in abundance.

I believe that the Australian community and its leaders, including yourself, have the opportunity to build a legacy of prosperity that can extend to all members of our society based on a mature understanding of, respect for and commitment to the wisdom of natural systems. By educating and training our children, our farmers, our trades, our producers, our professionals and our neighbours in the Whole of Landscape approach, and by making investments now in our natural infrastructure (such as our rainforests, rivers and wetlands) based on functioning models already tried and tested successfully around Australia, we are assured of greater drought, flood and fire resilience, increased fertility of our productive zones, carbon sequestration, and a more beautiful and healthy landscape right across Australia.

I ask for your support and guidance in realising this vision and request the chance to meet with your team, to brief you further on the Whole of Landscape approach and our three point plan to establish:

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- Whole of Landscape Advisory Panel
- Certified Education & Training Program
- Community Landscape Restoration Projects

The time is now. We have experienced a new intensity of loss, disruption and trauma due to droughts, fires and floods. Less obvious are the creeping effects of widespread erosion and salinity. These phenomena are all inter-related and driven by the feedback loops of a changing climate that is resulting from landscape degradation and disruption to natural sequence cycles of plant succession and nutrient flows. The visible impacts are compounded by less visible, yet still damaging land management practices and policies that are reductionist, outdated and unaligned with the demonstrable principles of complex natural systems.

The Whole of Landscape approach emphasises the need to adopt two fundamental shifts:

1. Water: Moving from water drainage to water storage in the landscape

We need any and all interventions to slow and spread water through the landscape so that it builds field capacity and does not erode watercourses. This includes using contours, installing small scale check dams and leaky weirs, restoring chains of ponds to help restore wetlands and expanding riparian zones as natural infrastructure for water retention and filtration. This will in turn recharge the daily 'small' water cycle of plant evapotranspiration and dew cycles to moderate landscape temperatures and minimise weather extremes.

2. Plants: Moving from plant suppression to plant progression

It is essential that we recognise the intricate balancing function of all plants in complex ecosystems and allow the succession of pioneer plants to build soil structure, manage the transport and filtration of water and moderate temperatures of landscapes. Efforts to suppress non-native or weedy species need to be redirected into maximising vegetative cover across the landscape to allow successive cascades of plants to recycle and add nutrients, improve soil microbiome and structure, sequester carbon and filter and slow water.

These two paradigm shifts could transform policy and practice of land management and allow severely degraded Australian landscapes to rapidly regenerate and allow ecosystems to provide abundance with minimal human intervention. TALS Institute is working with scientists, primary producers, academics, policy makers and the general public to trial and roll-out programs based on the Whole of Landscape approach. I **attach** a Briefing Paper which includes a Joint Declaration of preminent scientists and stakeholders confirming the critical importance of the Whole of Landscape approach.

We value connected communities that can collaborate to make simple changes to land management practices, based on independent trialed and applied scientific advice, that generate transformational improvements in landscape function, health and abundance. This is why we are building our movement, based on Australia's Blueprint for Thriving Landscapes (attached) to:

- call on the Federal Government to establish an independent ‘Whole of Landscape’ Advisory Panel that would provide advice to Ministers, the public service, industry and community practitioners on the fundamental natural systems principles based on the blueprint provided by the ancient Australian landscape.
- train practitioners in the Whole of Landscape approach and to set up Tertiary and VET modules, NGO & community group modules and certified “Train the Trainers” modules
- get ‘boots on the ground’ by a community engagement platform for the rollout of landscape restoration projects across all of Australia from the tropics to the temperate zones.

Australians from all over the continent, of all political leanings and all walks of life can see the value and importance of this movement. Australians unify behind their love of our landscapes and their desire and dedication to see them thrive. Investing in our natural infrastructure and bringing our policies into alignment with the fundamental principles of natural living systems would be a mature, responsible and ultimately unifying legacy we could leave for this nation and future generations. We call on you and your colleagues to support us to realise this blueprint for transformation to abundant and thriving landscapes across Australia.

I look forward to your response and the opportunity to meet with you and your team to progress this vitally important mission.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Andrews OAM

Chair and Director

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- Australia’s Blueprint for Thriving Landscapes (briefing paper)
- Video: [Reading Your Landscape - Landscape Literacy Field Day with Peter Andrews OAM](#)