



# Media Release

Sunday, February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2013

## NEW PROGRAM TO SUPPORT SMALLHOLDERS IN NORTHERN TASMANIA

A new program aiming to assist smallholders realise sustainable lifestyle and production outcomes has been launched today.

NRM North's Small Farm Living Program was launched by the Federal Member for Bass, Geoff Lyons, at a field day in Lilydale.

Mr Lyons said two years funding through the Australian Government's Biodiversity Fund would support small landholders look after the natural resources on their land and help develop farm management plans to increase connectivity and biodiversity across the landscape.

"I am pleased to be here today to launch NRM North's Small Farm Living Program and wish them all the best for this fantastic initiative and for their ongoing work with natural resource management," Mr Lyons said.

NRM North's Chief Executive Officer, James McKee, said smallholders played a significant role in the landscape and in the community.

"There are around five thousand smallholders in the NRM North region alone and they manage an estimated 100,000 hectares of land and there are important natural values on those properties," Mr McKee said.

"Small farms often provide employment for others and contribute to agricultural food supply.

"But unfortunately, they often aren't engaged in training and knowledge exchange for best-practice land management and conservation issues."

NRM North's Biodiversity Coordinator, Kate Thorn, said the program included property planning assistance tailored to smallholders, local workshops and field days, and small grants for activities such as protecting native bush and planting native windbreaks.

"The project will initially focus on the Tamar and Meander Valley areas, but resources such as a Property Planning Workbook and the new web-based Small Farm Living resource centre will be available to smallholders across the northern region and beyond."

The launch of the program coincided with a Small Farms Field Day at Lilydale which was organised by NRM North and Lilydale Landcare.

The field day featured displays, speakers and demonstrations on topics including chainsaw maintenance, beekeeping, fencing, weed management, stock handling and grazing management for smallholders.

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