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**National
Landcare
Network**

Media Release

Ag Minister: “Landcare budget is quarantined”

The National Landcare Network has welcomed confirmation from Agriculture Minister Barnaby Joyce that Landcare funding is safe from budget cuts or reallocation.

The Minister met with a delegation from the NLN yesterday at Parliament House.

NLN Chairman David Walker expressed confidence that the assurances would allay the groundswell of concern that had swept through the Landcare community following the announcement of a special allocation of some \$10 million from the Department of Agriculture Landcare budget to Queensland and NSW Government farm water supply programs.

“Minister Joyce has reaffirmed the Coalition’s pre-election commitment that the full Caring for Country and Landcare budgets will be maintained into the new National Landcare Program”. Mr Walker said. “We were pleased to hear that Landcare funding is ‘quarantined’ from funding cuts, notwithstanding the rigorous fiscal savings process being undertaken by the Government.”

“We are confident that Minister Joyce sees that Landcare is an astute and strategic investment for the Government, and not an expense. Under the customary Landcare/Government partnership there is a huge co-contribution made by farmers, often of the order of \$4 or \$5 to the government’s \$1. That co-investment means that farmers have their own ‘skin in the game’, and management change is embedded.”

“The Minister assured us he sees Landcare as central to his goal of improving farm productivity and profitability so that agriculture can continue to underpin Australia’s economy. We see Landcare as central to improving farmers’ drought preparedness and resilience, and helping build rural community capacity to face drought and climate challenges, so we’re all on the same page”.

“Now we are looking forward to having constructive input into the new National Landcare Program, so that it really does meet its objectives of being ‘simple, local and long term’”.

“This is the sort of certainty and practicality that Landcare needs to deliver better production, conservation and community capacity outcomes. The National Landcare Network looks forward to working with Minister Joyce and his Department to achieve these goals”, Mr Walker concluded.

Further comment: David Walker 0428 418 332

National Landcare Network

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