

## Scott Morrison's Address to the National Press Club- February 1 2021

Finally, caring for our country. For millennia, Indigenous Australians have lived the principles of caring for country.

I believe those principles must underpin how our Government exercises our environmental stewardship.

In addition to carrying on the work on:

- emissions reduction;
- climate resilience;
- implementing our export ban on waste plastic, paper, glass and tyres and;
- rolling out \$600 million in funding for new and upgraded recycling facilities around the country to build a world-class waste management sector.

This year we will turn the spotlight on agriculture and the environment - soils, water and oceans.

Australia's soils are estimated to store some 3.5 percent of the total global stocks of soil organic carbon against our 5.2 percent of global land area.

Native vegetation clearance and poor soil management have, and continue to result in, the loss of soil organic carbon. That's what makes the National Soils Strategy so important.

The Strategy will be delivered as part of the 2021-22 Budget the Treasurer will hand down later this year. It will include practical actions and focus on the development of a national monitoring program to assess the condition of Australian soils, research and development, and to assist with implementation, capacity building and extension.

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It will be a fitting legacy to the great work and advocacy of our former Governor-General, and national soils advocate, the late Major General Michael Jeffery.

The National Soils Strategy is one pillar of our Ag2030 plan that's backing the sector's ambition to be a \$100 billion industry.

The importance of investing in the health of our soil, water and landscapes was borne out by the recent independent review of our national environmental legislation, and by the findings of the Bushfires Royal Commission.

While we have always contended with extreme weather, our new normal is increasing and more severe droughts, floods, fires and storms. We will continue to harness the natural resourcefulness and innovation of Australians to ensure we adapt and build resilience to these challenges.

This will be a project that both Minister Littleproud and Minister Ley will work on together.

In 2021, we will also continue the roll out of the \$1 billion 'Phase Two' of the National Landcare Program that supports regional communities through controlling weeds, improving soil health, fencing off sensitive waterways and remnant vegetation, and re-planting species. Practical stuff that makes a big difference.