

# RESTORE LAKE PEDDER FACT SHEET

## Social Benefits of Ecological Restoration

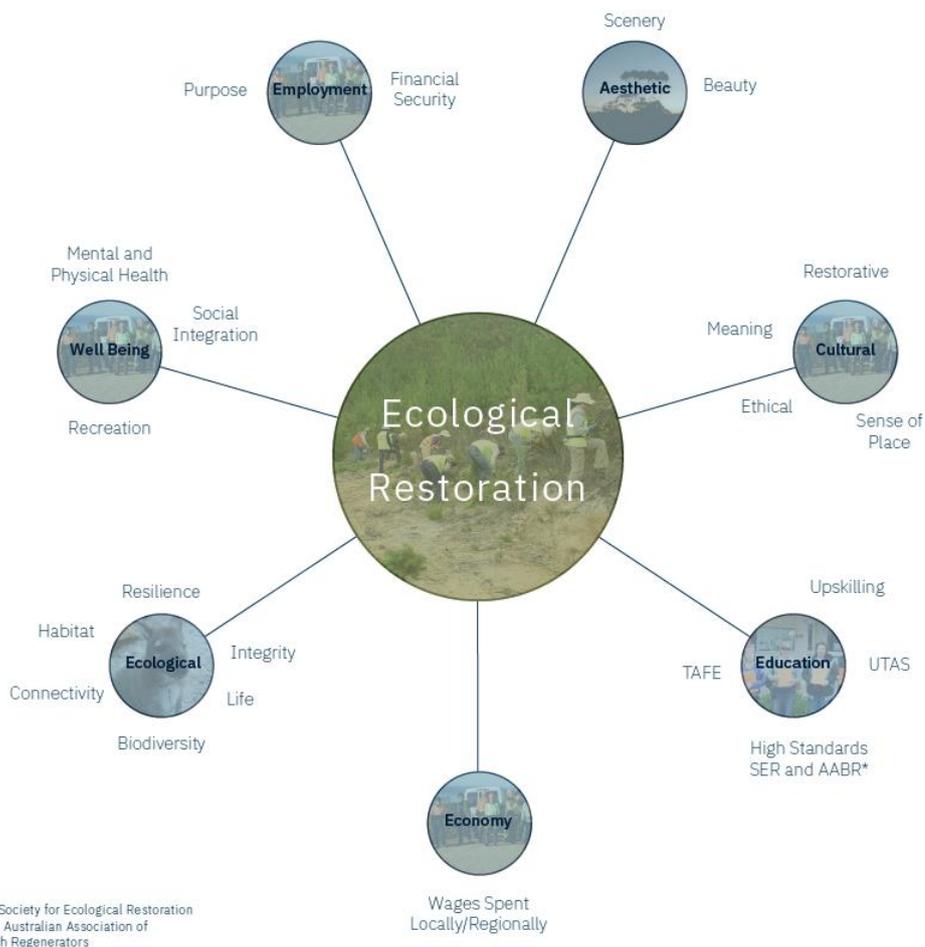
Todd Dudley



Coordinated by  
Lake Pedder Restoration Inc.  
[www.lakepedder.org](http://www.lakepedder.org)

“Good work is fundamental to the human experience, and therefore a necessary component of any conservation philosophy that hopes to create a new land ethic”

Our Land Ourselves (Trust for Public Land USA)



## Social benefits of ecological restoration

The ecological restoration of Lake Pedder would constitute the largest project of that kind ever undertaken in Tasmania. The planning and implementation will require a broad and extensive range of expertise.

**Tasmania has the potential to be a world leader in ecological restoration** and the regeneration of the iconic Lake Pedder could act as a catalyst to prioritise high quality ecological restoration projects across the state in conjunction with best practice environmental education and training through TAFE and UTAS.

### Ecological Restoration

While the environmental value and improvements in ecosystem services<sup>1</sup> of ecological restoration is increasingly evident and documented, there has not been as much research to quantify the undoubted direct social and economic values that can be realised through undertaking well planned high standard ecological restoration projects and program.

One localised economic analysis of the benefits of ecological restoration in a local community is apparent from a project at Skyline Tier (<https://www.nebn.org.au/reports/2020/economic-benefits-restoring-skyline-tier-scamander-plantation>).

The recently released report by Ernst and Young entitled Delivering Economic Stimulus through the Conservation Land Management Sector: (<https://alca.org.au/delivering-economic-stimulus-through-the-conservation-and-land-management-sector/>), was commissioned to identify the potential for conservation land management jobs to help economic recovery in response to the COVID pandemic. Its contents also highlight the widespread and often unmet need for scaling up conservation land management/ecological restoration across Australia. Local and State Governments across Australia are initiating conservation employment initiatives including the **Local Government Association of Queensland** which has identified environmentally focused employment projects as a key opportunity in their COVID stimulus package (<https://www.governmentnews.com.au/qld->

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<sup>1</sup> Ecosystem services are the outputs, conditions, or processes of natural systems that directly or indirectly benefit humans or enhance social welfare. Ecosystem services can benefit people in many ways, either directly or as inputs into the production of other goods and services.

[councils-draw-up-battle-plan-against-covid-19/](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-05-26/nt-government-proposes-gamba-army-for-war-on-weeds/12283808) as has the NT Government <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-05-26/nt-government-proposes-gamba-army-for-war-on-weeds/12283808>. The Tasmanian Parliament also recently passed a motion to explore implementation of a job guarantee which could include restoration projects.

Activities could include comprehensive training packages as well as on ground practical activities such as weeding, seed collection, feral animal control, walking track construction/maintenance, wildlife surveying/monitoring, fencing and revegetation including assisted natural regeneration, direct seeding and tree planting. Such programs can deliver economic security, social integration, enhanced skills and qualifications and ecological sustainability in one package.

## **Tasmanian Context**

Rural **employment, health and education** indicators in Tasmania are all below par . The cost of disengaged, dysfunctional and unqualified/low skilled community members is high both economically and socially, but it is avoidable in many cases. One solution to this existing seemingly intractable problem, exacerbated by COVID-19 economic impacts, is to establish employment programs focused on employment and training in conservation land management/ecological restoration in regions with either long term unemployment or underemployment and in the shorter term those that have been heavily impacted by the economic impacts of COVID-19.

Previous Green Army and Green Corps projects have provided strong anecdotal evidence that purposeful, strategic and well-organised conservation land management activities, combined with accredited TAFE training units such as Conservation Land Management will achieve excellent economic, social (including improved mental and physical health), educational and environmental outcomes in disadvantaged rural and other affected communities. However, to sustain the outcomes of conservation land management activity and to build on the significant gains and training opportunities, there needs to be ongoing rather than short term programs.

There is a currently a large, unmet need for more people on the ground to deal with problems such as weed management which are well beyond the current resources of Councils, government agencies, businesses, landowners and managers. Many members of rural communities enjoy doing outdoor practical work, have skills that are relevant to undertaking environment and land management activities, and will gain the benefits of greater social connection, improved physical and mental health, skills and qualifications.

Active involvement in ecological restoration projects can also cultivate a range of ethical responses including:

- Building human connections with nature i.e. sense of place, ecological citizenship and responsibility
- Facilitate increased understanding of natural ecosystems i.e. ecological literacy
- Influence individual environmental values and behaviour such as increased respect for living things, developing ecological conscience and ethics, appreciating the intrinsic value of nature and respecting limits to human use of the earth

### **Characteristics of a Conservation Land Management employment program**

The following criteria are suggested to maximise the effectiveness and economic, social and environmental outcomes and builds on the successful Indigenous Ranger model of northern Australia. These criteria would mean development of a program that:

- pays a proper wage
- is not age restricted which allows for a better mix of age groups in crews
- provides for extensive training/education opportunities in Conservation Land Management i.e. Conservation Land Management Certificate courses through TasTAFE
- is ongoing rather than a six-month project
- is opt-in rather than coercive
- is designed using Best practice standards for Conservation Land Management (i.e. ensuring projects adopt accepted methodology and standards (SER National standards for the practice of ecological restoration in Australia)
- where participants are guided by knowledgeable supervisors
- is derived from bottom up local community group focus (i.e. projects are driven by community groups in partnership with Local Councils, Parks and Wildlife etc).

## Conclusion and thoughts

A well planned and implemented Conservation Land Management program can build a healthier, better educated local community living in a well-cared for natural environment.

Conservation employment and training can be viewed as a preventative health policy as well as providing a range of other economic, social and environmental benefits. There is a significant "social dividend" in terms of cost benefit in terms of having a healthy community compared to the costs of managing physical and mental health dysfunction (i.e. youth suicide/smoking/drug and alcohol abuse/domestic violence/homelessness etc). Such schemes can deliver a level of economic security and social integration that can help ameliorate many current sources of disadvantage and dysfunction.

One source of funding could come from transferring the costs of Centrelink payments, administration, and training courses into wages for a Green Job Guarantee program. Alternatively, funding certainty and continuity could be ensured by establishing a National Environment Levy along the same lines as the Medicare levy.

The **UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration begins in 2021** and a Conservation Land Management Employment and Training program would be both timely in recognising this initiative in Australia and in helping address the economic and employment impacts of COVID-19. Creating more opportunities for participation in land management will mean projects can be scaled up as well as supporting existing local environment projects and the needs of local communities.

In order to transition towards a more ecologically sustainable society we must create livelihood options which contribute towards the protection, maintenance and restoration of our unique natural heritage.

This factsheet was prepared by Todd Dudley to understand the potential social benefits that could be realised from the full ecological restoration of the original Lake Pedder and surrounding ecosystems in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. Released August 2020.

For more information go to [www.lakepedder.org](http://www.lakepedder.org).