

LOCAL AWARD CONNECTS TO GLOBAL GOALS



The team of Zero Emissions Byron is thrilled to announce they were recently awarded \$25,000 under the Resilience and Regeneration grants through the Northern Rivers Community Foundation for their project: Ecocultural Fire Training for Biodiverse and Bushfire Resilient Communities.

During 2025 in conjunction with Jagun Aboriginal Alliance Corporation, Madhima Gulgunand and Byron Shire Council, the project will build capacity among key land management stakeholders to support and implement ecocultural fire across the Northern Rivers.

The removal of Aboriginal fire from the Northern Rivers since colonisation has increased destructive wildfires that severely threaten the region's outstanding biodiversity and undermine rural community resilience. The shift in landscape fire now threatens human, plant and animal communities and severs a key pathway for Aboriginal custodians to connect with, and care for Country. While there is growing community awareness of the need to restore cool controlled burning for biodiversity, cultural revival and bushfire resilience, it is hindered by a limited understanding among land managers and landowners of how to implement such fire management programs. Good Fire, under the right conditions and with expert oversight, is cool, controlled and staged in mosaic patterns over several years.

Zero Emissions Byron has collaborated with Jagun Alliance Aboriginal Corporation to successfully develop plans to restore good fire to conserve biodiversity, improve community bushfire safety and continue connection to Country. The document Good Fire - Healthy Country (<https://zerobyron.org/2023/07/13/good-fire-healthy-country-2023>) and the associated Good Fire Restoration Plan template, were prepared to support organisations develop and implement multi-property fire restoration projects across the Northern Rivers region. These documents were developed through cross-cultural collaboration. Good Fire Restoration Plans are streamlined action plans that provide fire practitioners and landowners with guidelines and actions to restore Good Fire on individual properties.

The focus of the grant stream is to support the resilience and regeneration of our communities. Only five (5) grants were awarded under the Resilience and Regeneration stream, totalling \$124,972 supported by Paul Ramsay Foundation, through the Northern Rivers Community Foundation's Recovery and Resilience Fund and NSW Reconstruction Authority.

The Northern Rivers connects to the global community through one of the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These goals act as a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for

all. The SDGs were set up in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly and are intended to be achieved by 2030.

The Northern Rivers Community Foundation grants are relevant to the United Nations Goals and Zero Emissions Byron is acting on climate action Goal 13!

“We’re excited to provide a far-sighted vision, combining Indigenous ways of caring for Country by befriending fire with emerging approaches for restoring open ecosystems degraded by the absence of fire. The professional development training package provides the basis for ongoing capacity building beyond this project and throughout the Northern Rivers region”, said Dr Anne Stuart, Chair Zero Emissions Byron.

“We applaud and thank The Northern Rivers Community Foundation for their unwavering support and engagement with local issues, which translate to Global outcomes”, declared Dr Stuart.

Landholders interested in developing a Good Fire Plan can register an Expression of Interest to Reinstate Good Fire for Country on the Byron Shire Council website and/or contact landuse@zerobyron.org for more information.



Koonyum Range Good Fire Workshop, May 2023. Photo Credits: J. Ryan & P. Daley