

Private Conservation Takes Lead as State Unable to Protect Endangered Ecosystems

Carbon Neutral launches Perenjori Hills Sanctuary to safeguard critical bushland as Auditor General flags major government shortfalls

20 AUGUST, 2025— Perenjori Hills Sanctuary, AUSTRALIA

Carbon Neutral has launched a new private conservation sanctuary in Western Australia's Midwest, protecting over 1,000 hectares of endangered bushland at risk of being degraded by feral goats, cats and weed invasion.

The move comes just weeks after the WA Auditor General warned that most Threatened Ecological Communities (TECs) in the state are receiving little or no active protection—particularly those located on private land.

In response, rural landowners—including Carbon Neutral—are stepping in to fill the gap. As landholders of the 1,000-hectare Perenjori Hills Sanctuary, Carbon Neutral and its partners plan to actively manage the site's TEC, showcasing a model of stewardship that could inspire broader action across the wheatbelt.

The newly established **Perenjori Hills Sanctuary** covers bushland listed in 2023 as part of the Koolanooka Vegetation Complex, which is recognised as a TEC under both state and federal legislation. It sits in one of the world's 36 global biodiversity hotspots and is home to rare plant communities and vulnerable species including the Malleefowl and Pink Cockatoo.

"The Auditor General made it clear: we can't afford to wait for public systems to catch up," said Ray Wilson, Corporate Solutions at Carbon Neutral. "This sanctuary shows what can be done when private landholders step up."

POLICY INACTION LEAVES CRITICAL HABITAT EXPOSED

The Auditor General's 26 June report found that 72% of WA's TECs fall outside government-managed reserves, with no comprehensive monitoring and little engagement with landholders. The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions has listed just 65 TECs since the Biodiversity Conservation Act came into effect, despite identifying nearly 400 others in need of protection.

"We're dealing with ecosystems that are already teetering on the edge," Wilson said. "Without urgent action on private land, we'll lose them."

NEW MARKET-BASED APPROACH TO BIODIVERSITY FUNDING

Carbon Neutral is also piloting a Nature Credits scheme, enabling businesses to invest in measurable conservation outcomes—similar to carbon offsetting, but focused on biodiversity. This mechanism is designed to fill the policy and funding vacuum flagged in the Auditor General's report.

"The Department hasn't secured the resources needed to protect TECs. Our model gives the private sector a way to step in now—not in ten years," said Wilson.

While the Australian Government is currently developing a national biodiversity credits scheme, it does not yet support ecosystem protection—only vegetation establishment—leaving critical habitats like those in Perenjori Hills without support. Carbon Neutral’s Nature Credits model is designed to bridge this policy gap and could pave the way for other bushland owners of TEC sites to fund conservation.

A REPLICABLE MODEL FOR PRIVATE LAND CONSERVATION

Perenjori Hills targets six conservation priorities, including:

- Koolanooka and Wheatbelt Woodlands TECs
- Threatened bush bird and small mammal communities
- Malleefowl and pink cockatoo populations

Carbon Neutral’s model bridges this policy gap and presents a replicable opportunity for wheatbelt farmers and companies with a biodiversity footprint to take meaningful action through the purchase of Nature Credits. This pilot could lay the foundation for long-term investment and stewardship across the region.

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About Perenjori Hills Sanctuary

Established in 2023, the Perenjori Hills Sanctuary covers over 1000 hectares of bush area in the area of Perenjori, Western Australia. By purchasing Nature Credits, supporters of Perenjori Hills Sanctuary can see real, measurable and verified positive biodiversity outcomes.

About Key Stakeholders

Volunteers from the Carbon Neutral Citizen Science Program team will assist with flora and fauna monitoring as well as research under ecologist supervision. National Trust (WA) will manage the Conservation Covenant and Stewardship Program. The program is led by animal ecologist Dr. Nic Dunlop, whose leadership brings decades of expertise to the initiative. A former Chair of BirdLife Australia (WA) and recipient of the [Bessie Rischbieth Conservation Award](#), Dr. Dunlop has spent over 40 years advancing citizen science in Western Australia, specialising in ecological monitoring and field-based mentorship. His experience in mobilising and training citizen scientists ensures the project is grounded in rigorous scientific practice and meaningful community engagement.

About Carbon Neutral

[Carbon Neutral](#) is one of the longest standing and most experienced carbon project developers in Australia. For 20+ years Carbon Neutral has developed large-scale, biodiverse reforestation and carbon offset initiatives.

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