



Damian Spratt and Patrick Spratt prepare seedlings for Green Army projects in Broome. Picture: Tom Harley

Mission of conservation

■ Glenn Cordingley

An environmental project aimed at helping remediate a contaminated wastewater treatment plant in Broome has been announced under the Federal Government's Green Army banner.

The work is part of a string of other initiatives involving employment of young local people to help beautify the Kimberley.

Thousands of trees would be planted around the contaminated Broome South wastewater treatment site between the sewage ponds and the beach fronting Roebuck Bay, near the golf course.

Another GA team would also mass-plant super fruit-bearing gubinge and other trees alongside the Water Corporation's sister WWT plant at Broome North, off Crab Creek Road, following an agreement recently signed with the agency.

Broome-based indigenous resource centre the Mamabulanjin Aboriginal Corporation would oversee several GA projects in the town and its surrounds in coming months, including the creation of a gubinge plantation at Skuthorpe, about 23km east of Broome.

The Department of Lands is accepting proposals for initiatives that promote horticultural activity for the recently released 682ha swathe of land at Skuthorpe.

Long-term Broome resident and MAC environmental consultant Tom Harley said the GA projects were of huge importance to Broome and the

Kimberley. "We are catching up with environmental issues that have resulted from 20 years of neglect in the region," he said.

"The trees at Broome South will be planted to absorb nutrients that have leached into the soil. There is a lot more to do from here, but what often happens is the Government changes and their plans change and everything gets canned."

Member for Durack Melissa Price said the projects complement the work her government has done in the region in the past 12 months including its commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 26 to 28 per cent lower than 2005 levels by 2030.

"These participants will not only be generating real environment and conservation benefits for our community, but they will be gaining valuable practical training and experience to help them prepare for the workforce or further training and improve their career opportunities," she said.

Other GA regional projects soon to be rolled out include seed collection, plant propagation, site preparation and revegetation in Jarlmadangah/Looma, while others involve indigenous rangers and remote communities including Bidyadanga, Beagle Bay, Fitzroy Crossing and One Arm Point.

The project builds the capacity of Aboriginal traditional owners to care for country through local provenance seed collection and propagation to use in the rehabilitation of degraded areas of the Fitzroy River floodplain.



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