

Conservation Tenders under the Conservation Management Program

What is a Conservation Tender and how does it work?

Conservation tenders are a key way interested landholders can participate in the Biodiversity Conservation Trust's Conservation Management Program, to enter a funded conservation agreement.

Landholders who think they may have important native plants and animals on parts of their property may wish to participate.

In high priority parts of NSW, the Biodiversity Conservation Trust (BCT) will invite landholders to express their interest in a site assessment, using a simple form or by contacting the BCT. Expressing interest does not create a binding obligation to proceed to an agreement.

For sites that are eligible, BCT field staff and ecologists will work with each landholder to identify the environmental values on the site, identify the potential conservation area, and prepare a draft conservation management plan.

Once this is complete, the landholders will be invited to submit a tender or 'bid', using a standard template. The bid will include the conservation management plan and a schedule setting out the annual payments that the landholder wishes to receive to implement the plan.

As part of their bid, landholders can choose the term of the agreement, which can be either in-perpetuity or for a fixed term (a minimum of 15 years).

How are bids from landholders assessed?

Landholder bids are ranked by value for money.

The BCT will calculate a biodiversity value score for the proposed conservation management plan for each eligible site. This score will be divided by the bid price to calculate a biodiversity value index, which will be used by the BCT to rank the bids.

Conservation agreements will be offered to sites that provide good value for money until the available funds for

each conservation tender are exhausted.

Tender assessment will be supervised by an independent probity adviser and approved by the BCT Board.

What happens if a bid is successful?

If a bid is successful, the BCT will offer a funded conservation agreement for the landholder to sign.

Successful landholders who enter an agreement will receive annual conservation management payments, as set out in their bid, for the term of the agreement.

The BCT will set aside sufficient funds to ensure it can make the agreed annual conservation management payments over the term of the agreement, including for in-perpetuity agreements.

All agreements will include a provision for the conservation management plan and associated payments to be reviewed and in limited circumstances renegotiated





every five years. Landholders that have signed term agreements will be able to upgrade to in-perpetuity agreements at any time. In either of these scenarios, if the BCT has available funds at that time, the amount set aside by the BCT will be increased commensurately.

Where will conservation tenders occur?

Initially the BCT is running its first four conservation tenders from March to July 2018.

The first round of tenders will invest in selected areas within the following regions:

- Northern Inland: \$3.5 million
- Murray-Riverina: \$8 million
- Central West: \$4.5 million.

The BCT has allocated these funds based on the proportion of priority NSW Landscapes within the three tender areas.

In addition, the BCT has allocated \$2 million for priority koala habitat in North Coast tender area.

The BCT Board may approve a variation in these allocations across the first four tenders having regard to the response from the market and the mix of best value for money bids.

Maps of the eligible areas within these regions are available at www.bct.nsw.gov.au, or by contacting the BCT on **1300 992 688**.

The BCT plans to run conservation tenders within three to five selected areas of NSW from February to May, and from August to November, each year.

The areas selected for conservation tenders will be based on the targets and investment principles set out in the Biodiversity Conservation Investment Strategy. Areas selected will typically include

landscapes that are under-represented or inadequately reserved in the protected area system or which are otherwise assessed by the BCT as a high priority for investment in biodiversity conservation. The BCT may target specific biodiversity assets, such as koala habitat or other high environmental values, as guided by the investment strategy.

Conservation tenders for the Biodiversity Offsets Program

Conservation tenders may also be used under the BCT's Biodiversity Offsets Program (see fact sheet on the Biodiversity Offsets Program).

www.bct.nsw.gov.au

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Trust**

