

# **Biodiversity Conservation Trust Northern Inland Koala Conservation Tender**

## **Information Session - August 2022**

- **Leith Hawkins, Regional Manager**
- **Frances Wright, Team Leader**
- **Anthony Collins, Senior Landholder Support**



# Acknowledgement of Country

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We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout NSW – on the land each of us is tuning in from today - and recognise their ongoing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.



Protecting biodiversity. Bringing benefits to landholders (Photo credit: Ben Vincent. Revegetation part of SNEL HiCUB project)



# Agenda

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- About the BCT and our objectives
- Overview of our landholder programs
- Conservation agreements
- The conservation tender
- Northern Inland Koala Conservation Tender:
  - What is the process?
  - Things to consider in your bid
  - What are we looking for?
- Q & A



Protecting biodiversity. Bringing benefits to landholders. Photo credit: John Turbill

# About the Biodiversity Conservation Trust

Established in 2017  
as part of  
biodiversity  
management  
reforms

Focused on  
private/leasehold  
land conservation

Partnering with  
landholders to  
conserve and  
manage  
biodiversity

BCT has received funding from the NSW Government under the NSW Koala Strategy to support the Northern Inland Koala Conservation Tender.



# BCTs Objectives

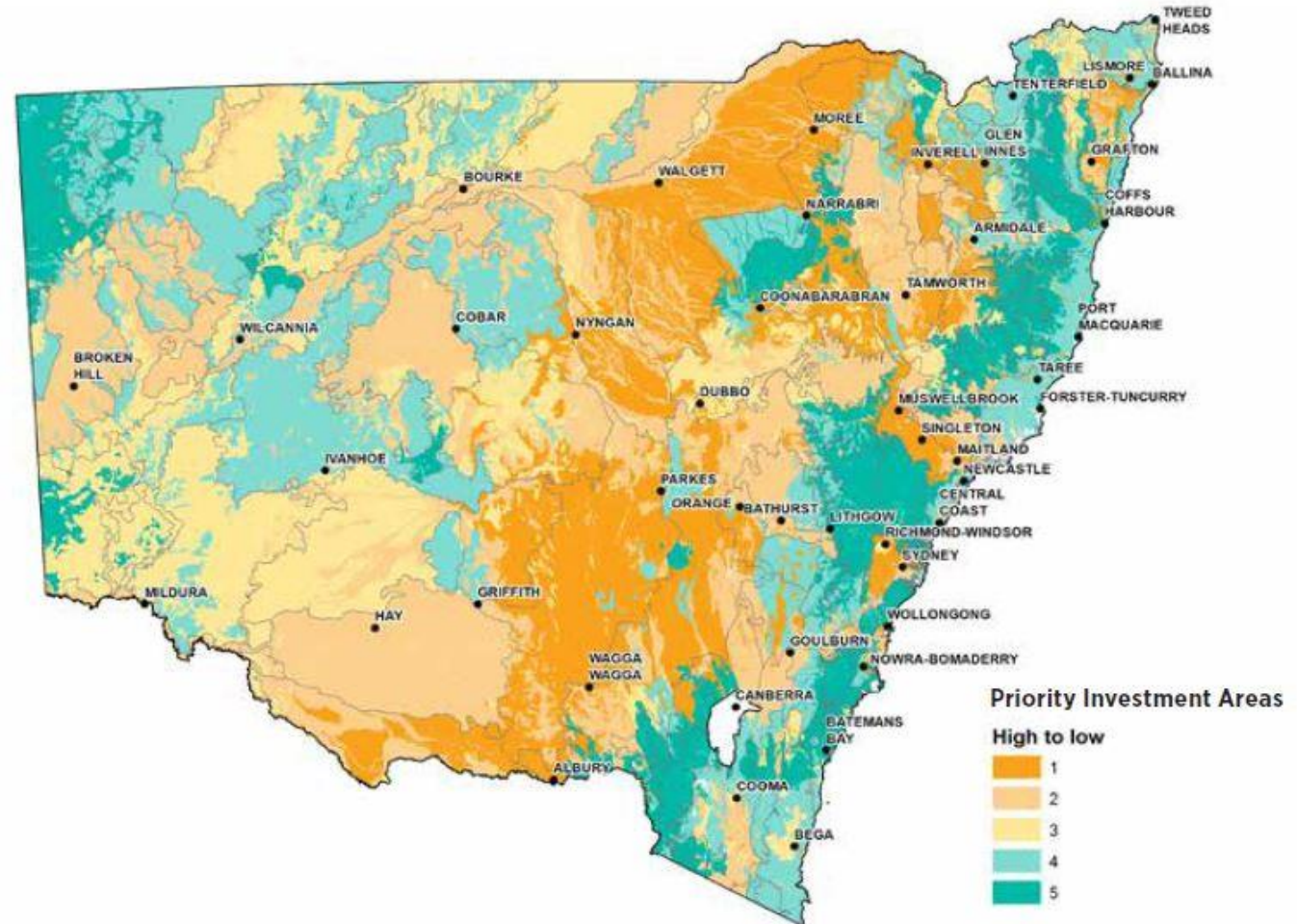
- Encourage landholders to enter into long-term agreements
- Assist in biodiversity conservation
- Prioritised investment using the Biodiversity Conservation Investment Strategy (2018)
- Provide a means of income diversification

Criterion 1:  
High  
environmental  
value

Criterion 2:  
Connectivity  
and resilience to  
climate change

Criterion 3:  
Comprehensive,  
adequate and  
representative

Criterion 4:  
Threats and  
pressures



# BCT Programs Overview



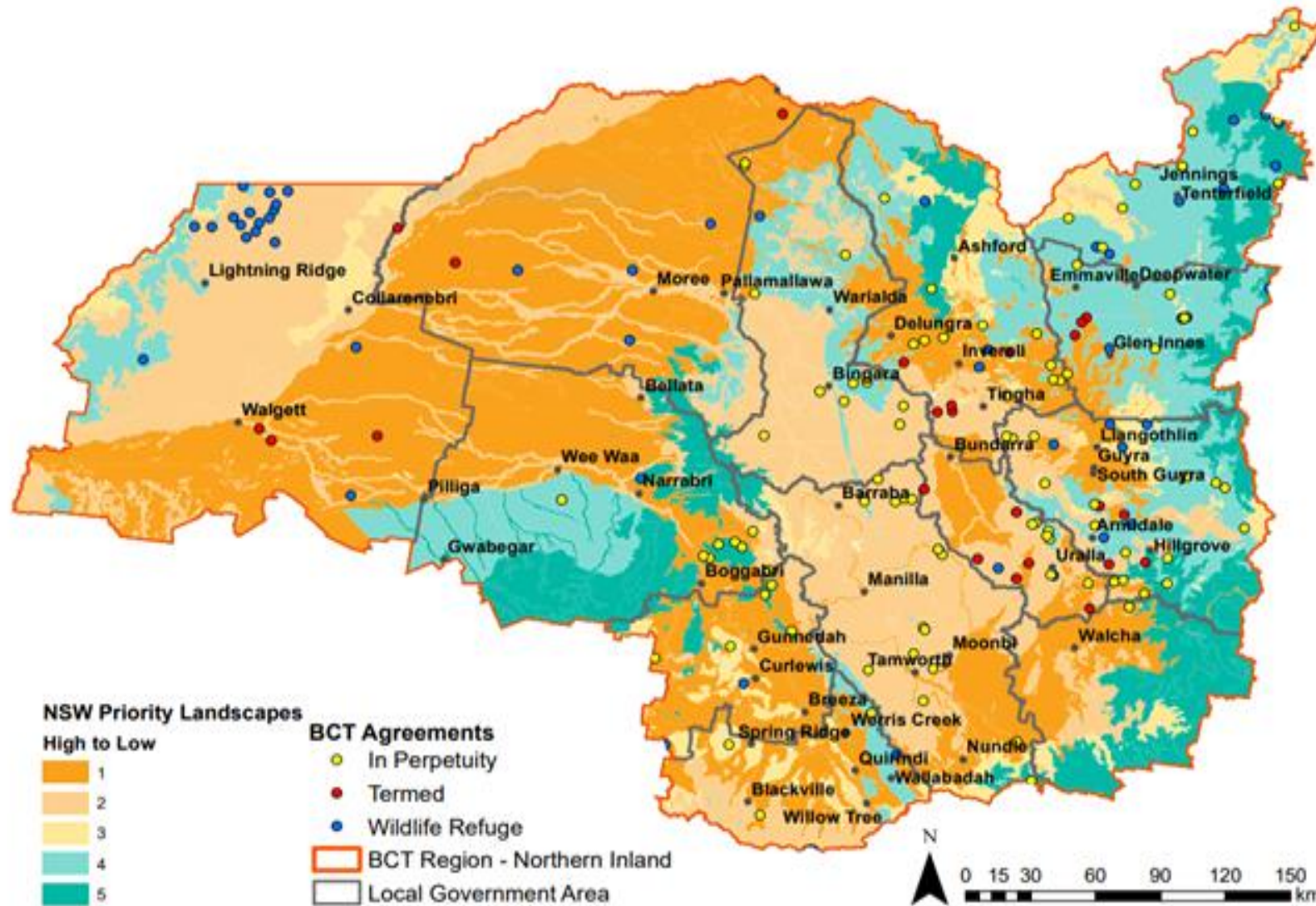
- **Voluntary agreements without annual payments**
- Conservation Agreements and Wildlife Refuges
- Access to grants



- **Funded agreements with annual payments**
- Conservation Agreements
- Fixed Price Offer & Conservation Tenders



# Existing agreements

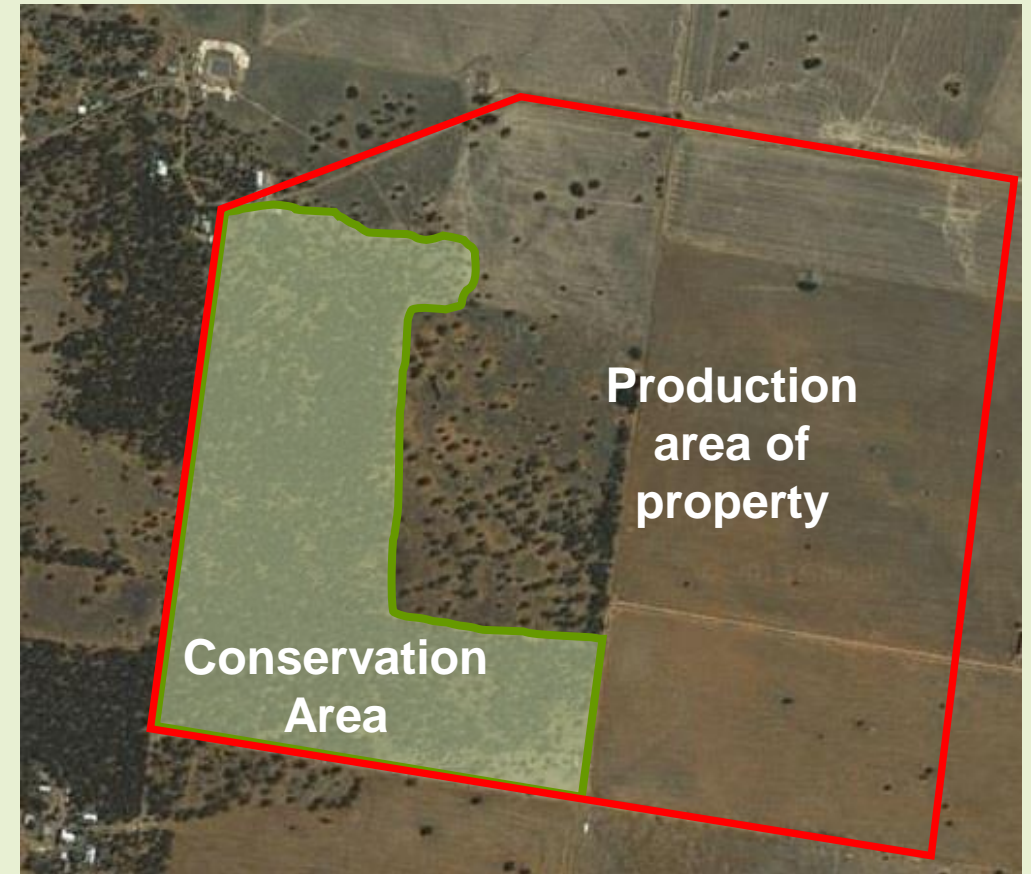


## Agreements under the BCT

- ❑ 365 landholders signed or in process of signing conservation agreements
- ❑ \$161.7 million invested to support conservation agreements
- ❑ Covers 195,635ha
- ❑ 82% are in-perpetuity
- ❑ 18% are term agreements
- ❑ Funded agreements range from \$5 to \$418 / ha / annum

# What is a Conservation Agreement?

- Intent of the agreement is to promote management and protection of biodiversity across a specific area of your property
- Agreement is binding and registered on title
- Length of the agreement is in-perpetuity
- Contains a conservation management plan that specifies management obligations
- If bid is funded, contains a payment schedule with annual management payments in perpetuity





# Management obligations within conservation area

- ☐ Provide adequate fencing to control or exclude domestic stock but allow for movement of koalas
- ☐ Control exotic weeds and feral animals
- ☐ Provide annual report to BCT
- ☐ This agreement does not diminish your existing responsibilities under other acts



# What is a Conservation Tender?

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- Market based, using a reverse auction design
- Tenders are used for targeting particular conservation assets
  - restricted in geographic scope to target highest priority areas
  - competitive
  - In-perpetuity agreements
  - Landholders submit a bid as \$/year to enter into a Conservation Agreement and undertake agreed management actions





# Northern Inland Koala Conservation Tender

- BCT will offer funding to eligible private landholders in **Armidale and Uralla LGAs** to protect important areas of koala habitat
- What is the process?
- Things to consider in your bid
- What are we looking for?





# Step 1- Expression of interest

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- Submit an EOI for a site assessment
- EOIs checked for eligibility, prioritised and ranked
- The highest ranked eligible sites offered a site visit
- Eligibility criteria:
  - be within the tender area; and
  - support a 20ha patch of priority koala habitat, and
  - any non-priority habitat be in moderate to good condition (this will be determined by the BCT during site assessment).
- Can be submitted by post, online or via phone





# Step 2 – Site Assessment

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## BCT

- Confirms eligibility
- Contacts landholders who have been prioritised for a site assessment
- Collection of vegetation, koala habitat and infrastructure information to begin preparation of Management Plan
- Assess Biodiversity Values (eg koala habitat)





# Step 3 – Conservation Management Plan

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- Preparation of Management Plan
  - An agreed draft conservation management plan prepared by BCT in consultation with the landholder
  - Contains a map and proposed management actions
  - Bid form provided
  - Landholder returns plans with requested changes
  - BCT provides final management plan
  - Landholder submits bid with agreed conservation management plan





## Step 4 – Submit Bid

- Landholders submits a bid
- Evaluation panel assesses bids



$$\text{Biodiversity Value Index (BVI)} = \frac{\text{Biodiversity Value Score (BVS)}}{\text{Bid Price}}$$





# Step 5 – Successful Bids chosen

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- BCT Board considers highest ranked bids.
- Successful bidders made an offer and choose to enter into a Conservation Agreement





## Step 6 – registered on title and agreement signed

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- Bids that are approved by the board, proceed to agreement signature and registration on title
- Annual management reporting is required to BCT = annual payments in accordance with agreement





# Step by step Process

29th August - 9th of September 2022	September 2022	September 2022	October/November	February 2023	27th February - 10th of March	April 2023	June 2023	July 2023
Submit EOI	Site Prioitisation	BCT to contact landholders	Site Assessment and Management Plan development	Verified managment plans sent	Landholder Bid preparation	Bid Evaluation	Board Approval and Landholders Notified	Agreements Signed and Registered
Landholder	BCT	BCT	Landholder and BCT	BCT	Landholder	BCT	BCT	Landholder and BCT



# Things to Consider

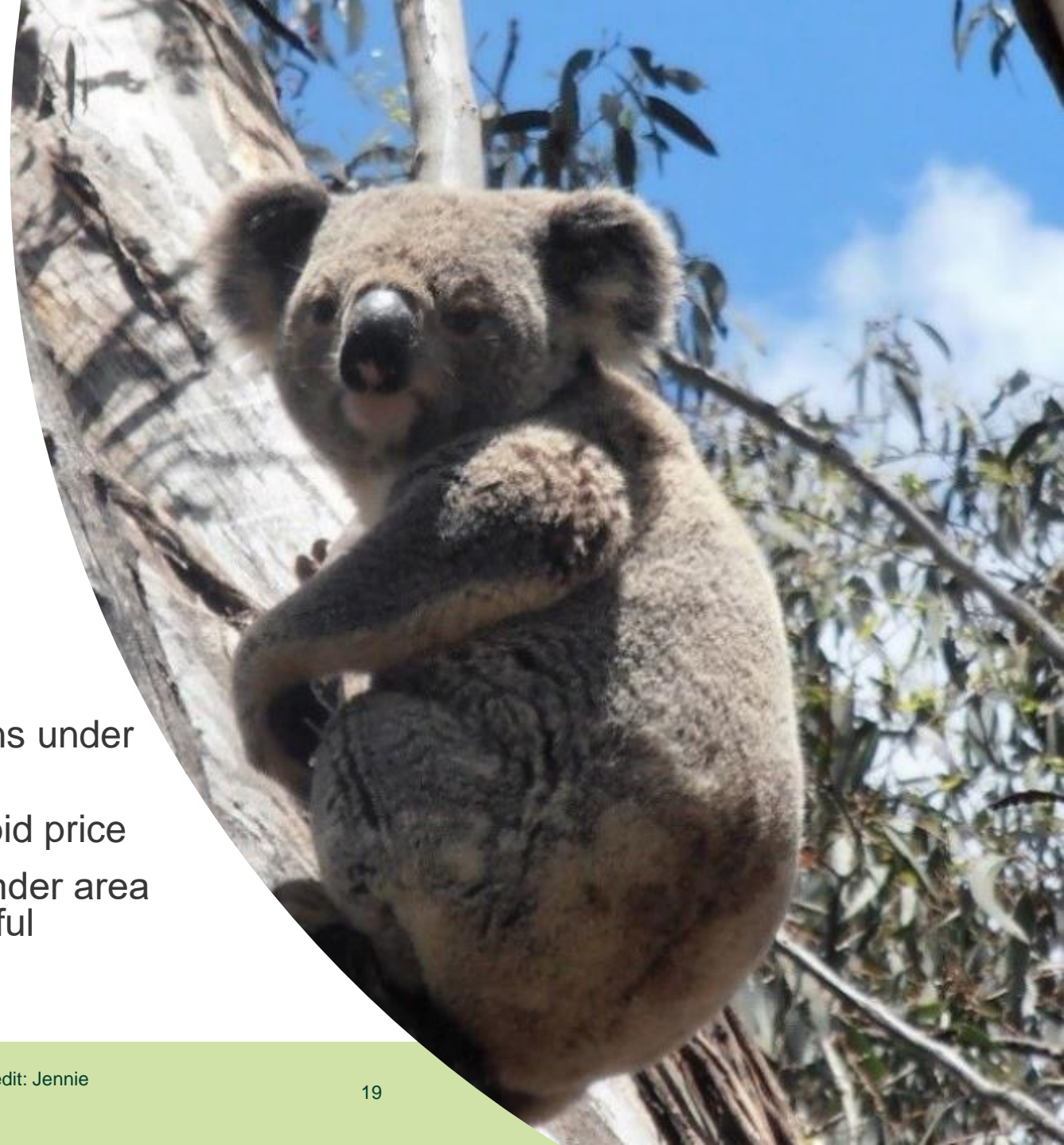
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To be competitive...

- Larger patch sizes
- Management actions to improve the site

When costing your bid...

- Ensure your pricing is realistic to meet your obligations under the management plan
- For probity reasons BCT staff cannot advise you on bid price
- The BCT's Fixed Price Offer rates for LGAs within tender area will be used as a minimum or 'floor' price for successful bidders



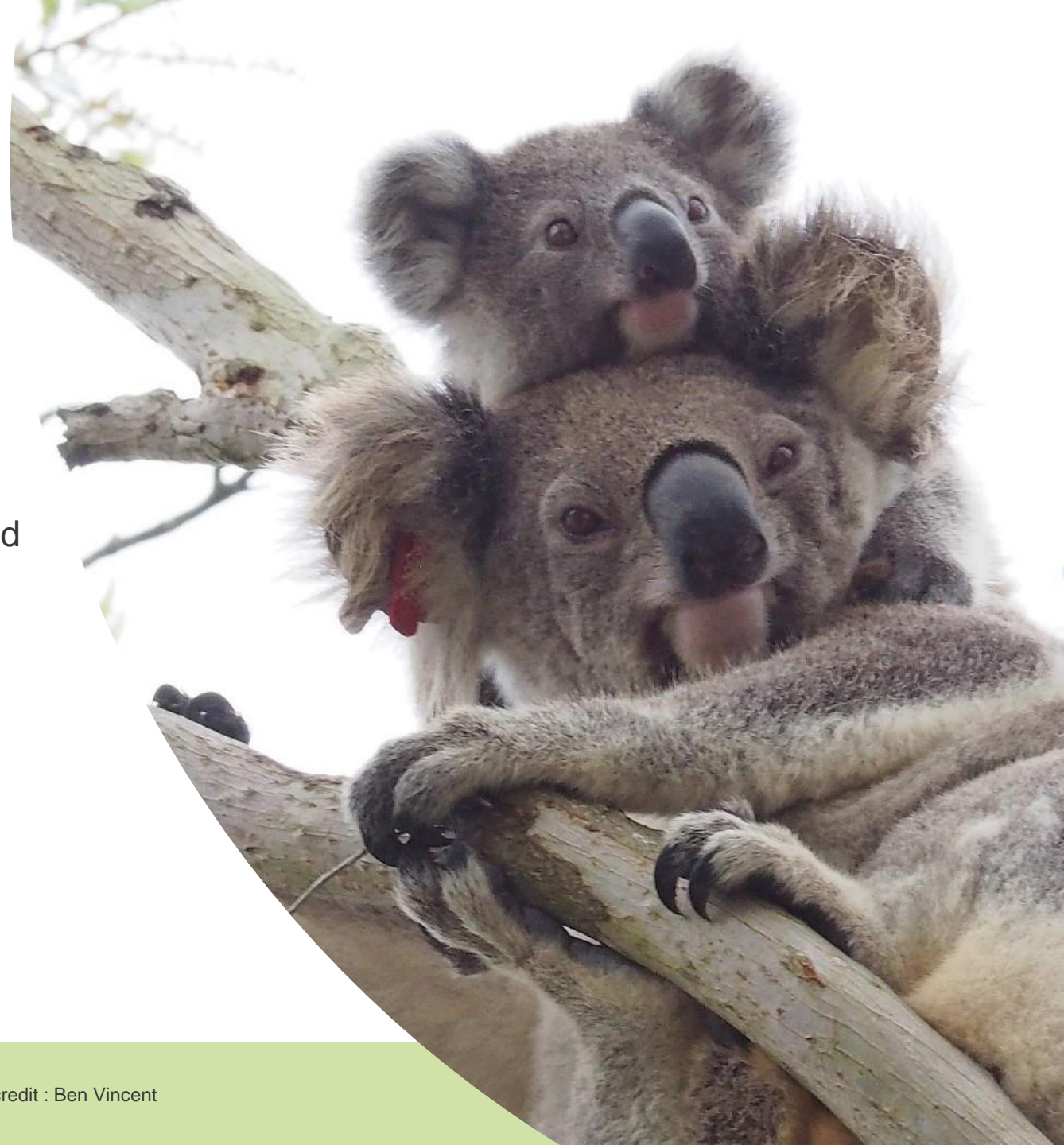


# What are the priority ecological targets for the tender?

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Priority koala habitat :

- Areas will be considered *priority koala habitat* if any of the species from the prioritised koala food tree list occur across a minimum 20 hectares of the site and meet the following requirements:  
2 target koala food trees\* / ha with >30cm dbh
- 27 priority koala food trees from the Armidale and Uralla LGAs areas.
- Non-koala habitat (moderate to good condition) vegetation
- Priority koala habitat and non-koala habitat will be confirmed via a BCT site assessment.







# BCT Principles for grazing

- Use only as a tool to achieve conservation outcomes (control weeds &/or manage biomass)
- Restricted to grassy ecosystems -up to 28 days/yr
- Maintain *Healthy Condition* threshold (80% cover and appropriate sward heights for species)
- Target timing of graze to manage exotic species and avoid key growth times of native species
- Regular monitoring and adaptive responses



# Key dates

Milestone	Date
EOI open	29 Aug 2022
EOIs Close	9 Sept 2022
Site assessment	17 Oct – 11 Nov 2022
Verified Management Plans sent to Landholders	10 Feb 2023
Landholder Bid Preparation	27 Feb – 10 Mar 2023
Bids close	10 Mar 2023
Evaluation Panel	27 April 2023
Bids considered by Board	6 June 2023
Landholders notified	June 2023



# Where to find more information?

**BCT website:** [www.bct.nsw.gov.au](http://www.bct.nsw.gov.au) **Ph:** 1300 992 688

**Or contact the Northern Inland team directly:**

**Anthony Collins**, Senior Landholder Support (Inverell)

**Email:** [Anthony.Collins@bct.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Anthony.Collins@bct.nsw.gov.au)

**Ph:** 0428 732 176

**Frances Wright**, Northern Inland Team Leader (Gunnedah)

**Email:** [frances.wright@bct.nsw.gov.au](mailto:frances.wright@bct.nsw.gov.au)

**Ph:** 0408 413 979



# Questions??