



Biodiversity  
Conservation  
Trust

# **Biodiversity Conservation Trust** Darling Baaka Conservation Tender

Landholder Guide | August 2022

**NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust**  
**Darling Baaka Conservation Tender**

The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust acknowledges the Traditional Custodians throughout NSW and recognises their ongoing connection to land, waters, biodiversity and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging, and commit to genuinely, collaboratively engage and partner with Aboriginal people in the delivery of our private land conservation programs.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### **Biodiversity Conservation Trust**

The Biodiversity Conservation Trust (BCT) is a statutory, not-for-profit, body established in 2017 as part of NSW legislation.

Our purpose is to protect and enhance biodiversity by providing mechanisms for landholders to enter co-operative agreements for the management and protection of private land that is significant for the conservation of biodiversity.

We currently have over 2,000 private land conservation (PLC) agreements with landholders who collectively manage over 2 million hectares, or 2.8 percent of NSW, for biodiversity conservation.

Through our Conservation Management Program—our conservation tenders, fixed price offers, revolving fund, and co-investment partnerships—the BCT invests about \$45 million per annum to support the resulting funded conservation agreements.

### **How is private land conservation funded through the BCT?**

Our private land conservation programs offer an opportunity for landholders to secure long-term funding for protecting and managing biodiversity. Eligible landholders can earn annual management payments as part of a conservation agreement with the BCT.

For more information, visit our website: <https://www.bct.nsw.gov.au/conservation-tenders>

### **This guide**

This guide is to assist landholders who are interested in participating in the Darling Baaka conservation tender. The BCT is offering landholders with native vegetation an opportunity to diversify their income by earning annual management payments for conserving native vegetation on their property.



**Figure 1:** River Red gums along the Darling Baaka River. Photo by Rachael Payne.

## CONSERVATION TENDERS

Conservation tenders are a key pathway by which interested landholders can participate in the BCT's Conservation Management Program, to enter a funded conservation agreement.

The BCT invites landholders who think they may have important native vegetation in the tender area (See Figure 2) to express their interest in a site assessment by submitting an Expression of Interest form. This can be done by mailing or emailing an expression of interest form available from the [BCT website](#), or by contacting the BCT on 1300 992 688.

Expressing interest in a site assessment does not create a binding obligation to participate in the tender. For sites that are eligible and prioritised for a site assessment, BCT field staff and ecologists will work with the landholder to:

- identify the environmental values on the site
- nominate a potential conservation area
- agree on the land management actions needed to protect and manage the native vegetation and,
- prepare a management plan for that area.

Once this is agreed, the landholders will be invited to submit a tender or 'bid', using a standard template. The bid will include the management plan and a schedule setting out the annual payments that the landholder wishes to receive to implement the plan and deliver the conservation management actions. It is entirely up to the landholder to determine the price they require to conserve and manage the nominated site in accordance with the agreed management plan.

Successful landholders will be offered a **conservation agreement which can be in-perpetuity or for a minimum 15 years fixed term**. Payments will be made in accordance with the landholder's bid and will continue for the term of the agreement.

## 2. WHERE IS THE DARLING BAAKA CONSERVATION TENDER BEING OFFERED?

The **Darling Baaka conservation tender** is defined by the Darling Riverine Plains (DRP) bioregion with the eastern extent of the Bourke-Brewarrina local government area (LGA) boundary and the Victorian border at Wentworth as the western extent. Importantly, the DRP within this extent has been buffered by one kilometre, with any 'loops' between DRP areas, particularly that between the main branch of the Darling River and the Anabranche, being included.

The tender area is predominately within the traditional lands of the Barkandji, Ngemba and the Murrawarri people. Creation stories and songlines are deeply embedded in the landscape and cultural values are found throughout the tender area, such as scar trees, middens, burial and significant ceremonial areas and spiritual places. The Baaka is the lifeline for Aboriginal people in the far west and continues to provide important resources to support hunting and gathering activities, and habitat for totemic species such as the Murray Cod, yellowbelly kanagaroo and emu.

A map is provided below in Figure 2.

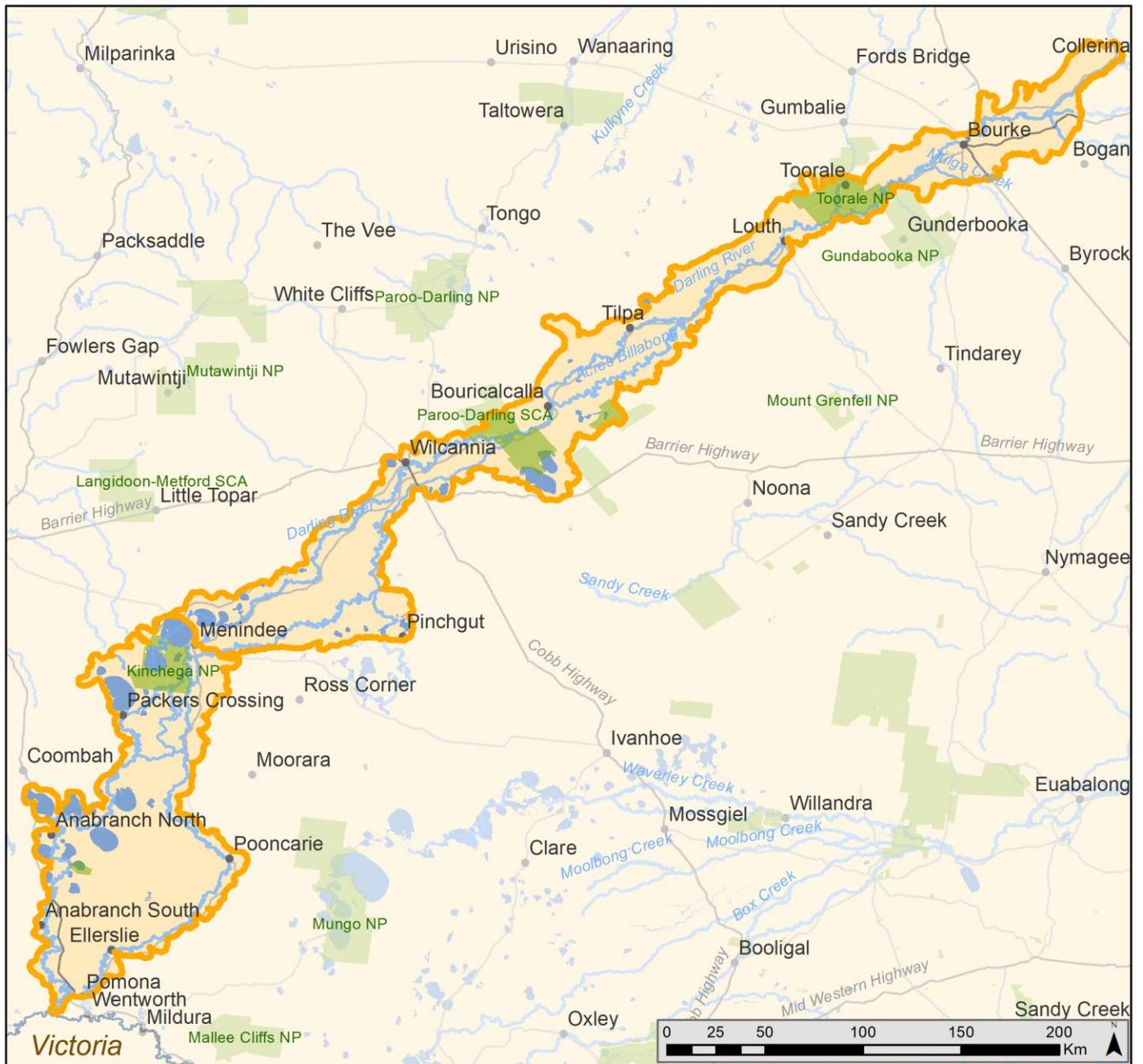
The tender area represents a significant landscape scale biodiversity corridor largely comprised of the Darling Riverine Plains (DRP) bioregion which falls entirely within the Murray-Darling Basin. The tender area is dominated by an extensive network of rivers, creeks and wetlands on alluvial floodplains. Current conservation reserves make up less than 7% of the tender area and do not cover the full range of plant communities present. The tender area has been developed to best enable protection and management of priority conservation assets, and to secure conservation and management of native vegetation and habitat along this significant riverine corridor. Due to the variable seasonal quality of rainfall across the tender area, native vegetation areas near known fish habitat drought refuge areas are also of interest.

A large number of threatened ecological communities (TECs) are known to occur or potentially occur within the tender area. Some of the more commonly known TECs being targeted in the area: Brigalow-Gidgee, Coolibah-Black Box, myall, plains mallee and popular box grassy woodlands. There are also 24 recorded threatened flora species, including the purple-wood wattle (*Acacia carneorum*).

Many endangered fauna species are found within the tender area, including the inland subspecies of red-tailed black-cockatoo, Australian bustard, pink cockatoo, painted burrowing frog, kultarr and stimson's python.

If your site is eligible for a site assessment, the BCT field staff will identify if these values are on your site. For sites that are eligible to participate in the tender, having these values on your site will influence your Biodiversity Value Score. The Biodiversity Value Score is explained under 'Assessment of Bids'.

**NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust**  
**Darling Baaka Conservation Tender**



*Figure 2: Darling Baaka conservation tender area*

### **3. TENDER PROCESS**

Conservation tenders are conducted in a three-stage process. Landholders will initially be invited to express their interest in a site visit. You can determine if your site is suitable for the tender by referring to the 'eligible sites' section below, or by contacting the BCT on [1300 992 688](tel:1300992688).

#### **Phase 1 Expression of interest and site assessment**

**Step 1.** Submit an expression of interest (EOI) for a site assessment. EOIs will be prioritised, and the highest-ranking sites offered a site assessment. Landholders with highest-ranking sites will be contacted by the BCT to arrange a time for site visit and assessment.

**Step 2.** Site assessment to confirm site size and vegetation<sup>1</sup>. The BCT will then commence preparation of a management plan in consultation with you, including proposed conservation management actions. A Biodiversity Value Score will be developed (see 'Assessment of Bids' section).

**Step 3.** The proposed management plan, including conservation management actions, is provided to you with a bid form to enable you to participate in the tender.

#### **Phase 2 Bid phase**

**Step 4.** Landholders submit their bid after being sent the final management plan. All bids are held within a secure location until after the final bid closing date when they are assessed.

**Step 5.** The tender period has closed, and the BCT assessment panel evaluate all bids for final eligibility and value for money. Successful bidders are provided an opportunity to enter into a conservation agreement under the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 (NSW) with the BCT and receive annual conservation management payments for the term of the agreement. An example agreement can be found on [the BCT website](#).

#### **Phase 3 Entering a conservation agreement**

**Step 6.** For those successful bidders that decide to proceed with a conservation agreement the BCT will send the executed agreement to the NSW Land Registry Services to be registered on the title of the land. It will be binding on successors in title and not just the current owner of the land. The BCT will then be notified by the NSW Land Registry Services that the conservation agreement has been registered on title. Finally, the BCT will contact you, provide a welcome pack and process the first conservation management payment.

Landholders who enter conservation agreements are provided ongoing support under the BCT [Landholder Support Program](#).

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<sup>1</sup> Sites that clearly do not meet minimum size or vegetation condition requirements may be informed at this point that they will not proceed further in the tender process.

## **4. SUBMITTING AN EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR SITE ASSESSMENT**

The first step to participation in the tender is to submit an expression of interest (EOI) for a site assessment. This can be done by mailing or emailing an EOI form available from the website, or by contacting the BCT on [1300 992 688](tel:1300992688). For the EIO opening and close dates please see the 'Tender Opening Dates' section.

The BCT will undertake a desktop assessment to ensure that your site is located within the tender area and meets the minimum size requirements. EOIs will then be prioritised with the highest-ranking sites offered a site assessment. If your site is ineligible or not prioritised to participate further in the tender, the BCT will contact you to discuss alternate options that you may wish to consider.

If you submitted an EOI over the phone, and you are eligible for a site assessment, a BCT field officer will bring a record of the EOI to the site visit, and you will be asked to confirm the details.

Submitting an EOI does not mean that you are required to submit a bid, however it ensures that your site will be assessed for eligibility.

The BCT reserves the right to extend the EOI period or close the EOI period early if a sufficient number of applications are received.

## **5. ELIGIBILITY**

### **Eligible Sites**

Eligibility criteria for the Darling Baaka conservation tender are:

- The site proposed for conservation management must be within the tender area (Figure 2)
- The site must contain a single patch of at least 100 hectares of native vegetation
- The native vegetation must be in moderate to good condition

The BCT may accept additional patches of less than 100ha having regard to: the presence of threatened ecological communities, landscape context (adjoining vegetation and tenure), and viability of patch size. Additionally, the BCT may accept additional patches outside the tender area where the minimum size and condition requirement have been met by land that is within the tender area. The BCT reserves the right to limit the area of land that is permitted outside the tender area and/or modify the assessment of land outside the tender area. The BCT further reserves the right to prioritise sites for assessment based on the area proposed within the tender area.

If your site is within the tender area and prioritised for site assessment, the BCT field staff will contact you to arrange a time to meet with you for a site assessment. This assessment will identify if your site contains moderate to good condition vegetation with reference to adopted

benchmarks<sup>2</sup>. The bid evaluation stage will confirm whether the site contains sufficient moderate to good condition vegetation to be an eligible site, regarding adopted benchmarks and proposed management actions. Up to 10% of the total area proposed may constitute vegetation in poor condition<sup>3</sup>.

The identification of a conservation area on your property is ultimately a matter for you, and your participation in the tender is entirely voluntary.

For sites that progress in the tender process, the site assessment will result in the site being assigned a Biodiversity Value Score. This score is explained online in the Assessment Metric document which can be found [here](#).

Sites that are Crown leasehold land will be required to meet the Crown Lands policy with respect to biodiversity conservation agreements. See [biodiversity conservation agreements on crown land](#) information on the Industry NSW website. The consent of Crown Lands will be required for any conservation agreement with the BCT.

Public protected areas<sup>4</sup> and public owned and managed land<sup>5</sup> are not eligible to participate in this tender. Travelling Stock Reserves (TSRs) that are 'active'<sup>6</sup> and TSRs that are Stock Watering Places (SWPs) in the Western Land Division of NSW are not eligible under the Darling Baaka conservation tender. See [Travelling stock](#) information on the Industry NSW website.

In the case of TSRs in the Western Lands Division of NSW that overlay a Western lands lease and are no longer used for travelling stock, emergency management or biosecurity, the BCT reserves the right to consider the inclusion of such land where, in the BCT's assessment, it is compatible with the objectives of the tender, and other logistical and administrative considerations. Sites will be required to meet the Crown Lands policy with respect to TSR dealings and eligibility will be subject to Crown Lands revocation or removal of lease conditions that establish and maintain a TSR. See [Travelling stock](#) information on the Industry NSW website.

In order to meet the objectives of the BCT's Aboriginal Engagement Implementation Plan, the BCT will consider, at its discretion, the eligibility of publicly owned and / or managed land that is subject to a process that may see transfer of ownership to Aboriginal landholders.

Additional eligibility criteria may apply to these sites such as provision of any necessary consents from current landholders to enable site assessments and participation in the tender process, and information indicating the process for transfer is well progressed and will be resolved in a reasonable timeframe. If the expression of interest form was not submitted by the Aboriginal stakeholders who may have ownership transferred, the BCT will require that

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/native-vegetation/vegetation-condition-benchmarks>

<sup>3</sup> The BCT reserves the right to limit the total area of poor condition native vegetation or consider sites with greater than 10% native vegetation in poor condition to be eligible at its absolute discretion.

<sup>4</sup> For example, land reserved under Part 4 or Part 4A of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*, and flora reserves or special management zones within the meaning of the *Forestry Act 2012*.

<sup>5</sup> Publicly owned and managed lands mean land owned and managed by state, federal and local government authorities, bodies, departments, statutory corporations, state – owned corporations and other similar entities, and for land owned by such entities.

<sup>6</sup> TSRs that continue to be used for travelling stock, emergency management or biosecurity purposes as part of the TSR network as defined by Industry NSW.

the expression of interest form is signed and supported by the Aboriginal stakeholders at or prior to the site assessment.

Relevant parties should note, that the BCT will not enter into an agreement on land subject of an ongoing process regarding ownership until the relevant process is finalised. Landholders who have a site that may meet these discretionary criteria should contact the BCT prior to submitting an EOI. Examples where this policy may apply include land subject to a Native Title Claim under the Commonwealth Native Title Act 1993 or an Aboriginal Land Rights Claim under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 where the Native title status of the site is determined, or in the process of being determined.

### Eligible Entities

The applicant must be:

- an Owner of the land<sup>7</sup> – as defined by the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 (NSW)*, and
- an Australian citizen<sup>8</sup>, registered for tax purposes in Australia and holding an Australian bank account, or
- an Australian registered company, registered for tax purposes in Australia, registered for GST and holding an Australian bank account, and
- fit and proper persons to enter into a conservation agreement with the Biodiversity Conservation Trust, and
- willing to enter into a conservation agreement with the Biodiversity Conservation Trust

A separate expression of interest and bid is required for each property<sup>9</sup>. The BCT may consider an exception to this rule where the legal entity owns properties that are adjoining, and one management plan and registered conservation agreement is proposed for the adjoining properties. This is subject to: the minimum size and conservation asset eligibility criteria (e.g. condition or confirmation of particular habitat) being met on each property, and the BCT assessing that the proposed configuration of the conservation area across multiple adjoining properties is compatible with the objectives of the tender, and other logistical and administrative considerations.

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<sup>7</sup> Under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* owner of land includes: (a) every person who, either at law or in equity (i) is entitled to the land for any estate of freehold in possession, or (ii) is a person to whom the Crown has lawfully contracted to sell the land under the [Crown Land Management Act 2016](#) or any other Act relating to the alienation of lands of the Crown, or (iii) is entitled to receive, or is in receipt of, or if the land were let to a tenant would be entitled to receive, the rents and profits in respect of the land, whether as beneficial owner, trustee, mortgagee in possession or otherwise, and (b) a person who leases land under the [Crown Land Management Act 2016](#), and (c) any other person who, under the regulations, is taken to be the owner of the land, but (unless the regulations otherwise provide) does not include a beneficiary of a trust relating to the land.

<sup>8</sup> Australian citizens residing outside of Australia are eligible, provided they are registered for tax purposes in Australia and hold an Australian bank account.

<sup>9</sup> BCT defines a property according to the description provided by the Valuer General for the purposes of land taxation and council rates and is identified by a single Property Number.

Eligible landholders who have submitted a bid under the Paroo and Warrego Catchments (PWC) conservation tender are eligible to submit an EOI. If the landholder is successful in the PWC tender they will be offered the opportunity to enter the PWC conservation agreement OR proceed in the Darling Baaka (DBK) conservation tender.

In the case of multiple properties owned by a single legal entity, the BCT reserves the right to limit the number of properties offered site assessments to maximise tender efficiency and diversification of participation.

Bids are to be made by a unique legal entity with legal rights to enter into the conservation agreement with the BCT (generally a person, persons or a company). The entity listed on title must be consistent for all parcels that form the proposed conservation area. Where parcels have different ownership structures on title, a separate EOI (and bid) is required. Multiple bids for the same land area will not be permitted. The BCT will accept one bid per management plan.

Eligible participants must nominate for a fixed-term (minimum 15 years) or in-perpetuity agreement. Participants are not permitted to nominate different term agreements for different parts of the property within the same bid.

The BCT reserves the right to limit the number of successful bids per unique legal entity, having regard to factors such as diversity of investment, tender objectives and progress towards building a comprehensive, adequate and representative protected area system.

Landholders (including Sole traders, Partnerships, Companies and Trusts) should refer to the BCTs [Landholder guide on taxation issues](#) for eligibility, administrative requirements and documentation the BCT needs to confirm ownership capacity.

Landholders will be required to declare any conflicts of interest when submitting a bid. Persons who have associations that are considered by BCT to represent a conflict of interest which is unable to be managed will not be eligible. If a landholder believes they may have a conflict of interest it should be discussed with the BCT staff during the initial site visit.

A “conflict of interest” is an actual, potential or reasonably perceived conflict between a person’s private interests and their involvement in the NSW BCT conservation tender, including their potential entry into and obligations under a conservation agreement with the NSW BCT under the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016. An “interest” that may be relevant includes:

- shareholdings, trusts or nominee companies, property holdings,
- interests and positions in corporations, partnerships, businesses, trade unions, or professional, business or community associations and organisations.
- memberships of Boards or Committees.
- membership or association with voluntary organisations; and
- family or other relationships formed through work, education, or engagement with the local community, including sporting, social, cultural, or voluntary activities.

BCT staff and Board members (and their close family members) and delivery agents (contractors and directors of delivery agents) involved in the delivery and evaluation of a BCT

conservation tender, are not eligible to participate in that tender. Any EOI received from such parties will not progress further in the process.

## **6. GOOD CONDITION VEGETATION**

Paddocks that you may consider as native pasture may also support good condition vegetation particularly if they contain remnant patches of woody vegetation with tree species, such as coolabah, black box, brigalow and gidgee. Areas dominated by wetlands (or artesian springs) could also be of a high conservation value.

It may be difficult for you to know if the native vegetation that you propose to protect is eligible. If your expression of interest is high ranking based on desktop assessment, the BCT will assess the site condition of your proposed conservation area with reference to adopted benchmarks. Final assessment of vegetation condition will occur after the bid has been submitted and can be influenced by management actions that the landholder proposes to undertake within the conservation area to improve vegetation condition.

## **7. SITES WITH EXISTING AGREEMENTS AND OBLIGATIONS**

Landholders who have sites with existing conservation agreements or similar obligations may be eligible to apply, depending on the type and duration of the agreement or obligation.

The BCT will limit the number of site assessments for existing in-perpetuity agreements to 25% of total site assessments.

The BCT will further reserve the right to limit the total number of successful applicants with existing in-perpetuity agreements to ensure the majority of available funding is targeted towards new agreements.

Generally, if management activities are required or are already funded under an existing agreement, then the BCT will not provide further funding for those activities.

To find out more about the eligibility and treatment of sites with existing agreements or similar obligations please refer to the Existing obligations and agreements [table available on the BCT website or contact the BCT](#).

Those landholders who are not eligible to participate in this tender are encouraged to contact the BCT to discuss other options that may be available.

## **8. TENDER OPENING DATES**

The BCT will call for EOIs to participate in the Darling Baaka conservation tender from the 8 August 2022. EOIs will close at 11:59pm on 2 September 2022.

## 9. PREPARING FOR THE SITE VISIT

The following activities occur during the site visit:

- Where an EOI has been lodged by phone, you will be asked to confirm the details captured on the EOI form.
- The BCT will assess the site against the BCT's site eligibility criteria.
- You have an opportunity to ask any questions about the program to ensure you understand the program and what is being offered.
- You and the BCT field staff will commence discussions to develop a management plan and identify conservation management actions. A management plan is required to enable you to participate in the tender. This will require you to:
  - identify what part of the property you are proposing to manage for conservation.
  - identify what types of conservation management actions you are willing to do (for example: weed and feral animal control).
  - discuss other matters such as existing agreements, Aboriginal cultural values on site that may need consideration (see the Aboriginal places and objects on private property fact sheet on the [BCT website](#)), potential conflicts of interest and other information we may require to allow the development of a conservation agreement (such as mortgagee consent).

The BCT has a range of useful resources for landholders which can be found on the [other resources tab](#) of the BCT website.

BCT field staff will undertake an assessment of the site to develop a Biodiversity Value Score (BVS). A site will require a BVS to participate in the tender (for more information about the BVS refer to 'Assessment of bids' below).

## 10. SUBMITTING A BID

You will need an agreed BCT management plan in the format set by the BCT to be able to submit a bid.

A draft management plan and bid form will be sent to participants by the BCT after field staff have visited your property and discussed your management options with you.

After you receive your draft management plan, you will be given a short time within which you can request an amendment to the management plan prior to submitting your bid. All bids are required to be received by the tender closing date.

The BCT's field staff will offer as much support as possible to landholders interested in making a bid. For probity reasons, BCT field staff will not be permitted to advise you on your bid costing and will not know what bid price is likely to comprise a successful bid. You should consider seeking expert financial and/or legal advice as appropriate to your circumstances.

Your bid form will require you to nominate the annual conservation management payments you will require to implement the management plan. You will be asked to nominate the

figures in today's dollars. For successful bids, the conservation agreement will provide for future years payments to be indexed (increased) in line with inflation.

For successful bidders, the BCT will calculate the present value (PV) of the full payment schedule to calculate the amount to be set aside by the BCT to cover all future annual payments.

Additional information is available to assist eligible participants on how to develop their bid (Attachment 1: BCT conservation tender - Preparing a bid).

All agreements with the BCT will include a provision for periodic review every five years. In limited circumstances, the BCT may agree to amend the conservation management actions and/or reset the forward schedule of payments, if this is well justified and funds are available.

## **11. ASSESSMENT OF BIDS**

All bids are required to be received by the tender closing date. The closing date for this tender is 11:59pm on **8 September 2023**.

Bids are held within a secure location until after the bid closing date and will then be assessed by a BCT assessment panel.

The BCT reserves the right to consider a bid received after the closing date where the integrity and competitiveness of the tender process is not compromised.

The BCT Assessment Metric document can be found on the [BCT website](#).

## **12. TENDER CONDITIONS**

Before submitting a bid, you need to be satisfied that the proposed management payments are correct and financially and practically viable to enter into a conservation agreement.

Bids must be submitted by a legal entity with the capacity to enter a contract. The BCT may ask a landholder to provide evidence of its legal status or capacity to enter a contract.

Your bid must be accompanied by a 'fit and proper person' declaration, and a 'conflict of interest' declaration. The BCT, in its discretion, will consider whether the applicant is a fit and proper person, and how any conflicts of interest will be managed. Where the BCT forms an opinion that the applicant is not a fit and proper person or a conflict cannot be managed, the BCT will exclude the bid from further consideration.

Bids must be in writing and in English and the bid price must be in Australian dollars.

Facsimiled submissions will not be accepted.

Bids should be sent by email to [tenders@bct.nsw.gov.au](mailto:tenders@bct.nsw.gov.au)

Alternatively, bids can be sent via registered post to **Private Locked Bag 5023, PARRAMATTA NSW 2124**.

Ensure that where a bid is mailed, sufficient time is allowed for the bid to be received prior to the closing date.

Bids that do not include a fully completed response may be excluded from the tender without further consideration at the BCT's discretion.

It is not intended that the issue of a tender, or a bid in response to it, commits, obligates or otherwise creates a legal relationship in respect of entering into an agreement with a landholder. However, any bid lodged by a landholder will constitute an irrevocable offer by the landholder. A landholder may withdraw their bid by notification in writing to the BCT prior to entry into a conservation agreement.

The BCT reserves the right to seek clarification or additional information from landholders about any information included in their bid, including the proposed bid price structure, to inform the bid assessment process.

The BCT is not bound to accept any bid regardless of the price tendered and, reserves the right to make a direct offer to a bidder following bid evaluation.

The BCT reserves the right to reject bids which set out management payments that would clearly not support implementation of the management plan and actions.

The BCT is not responsible for costs incurred by a landholder in participating in a tender or preparing and submitting a bid. Acceptance of a bid will be subject to the landholder entering a conservation agreement with the BCT.

You can contact the BCT if you have any questions or if you have feedback on [1300 992 688](tel:1300992688). Your feedback is important as it helps us to continuously improve our services to you and will be managed in accordance with the BCT guarantee of service.

## **13. FURTHER INFORMATION**

Call us [1300 992 688](tel:1300992688). Visit our website [www.bct.nsw.gov.au](http://www.bct.nsw.gov.au)

Send us an email: [info@bct.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@bct.nsw.gov.au)

## **14. IMPORTANT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

The BCT has prepared important additional information for landholders who are eligible to participate in a tender. This Information is included in the following attachment:

**Attachment 1: BCT Conservation Tenders: Preparing a Bid**

# Preparing a Bid

This guide is to assist landholders to prepare a bid to participate in a conservation tender under the Biodiversity Conservation Trust's Conservation Management Program.

## Receiving a management plan

The Biodiversity Conservation Trust (BCT) will send you a draft management plan after field staff have visited your property and discussed your management options with you.

The draft management plan will be prepared based on the discussions held with the BCT field staff and agreed management actions.

You should contact BCT field staff on 1300 992 688 after receiving your draft management plan if you require any changes.

## When do I submit a bid?

Bids must be received by the Biodiversity Conservation Trust by 11:59pm on the closing date.

It is entirely up to you to determine the payments you require to conserve and manage your site in accordance with the agreed management plan.

By submitting a bid, you acknowledge that the management plan (and associated management actions) is final and this is the basis upon which you will bid.

## How do I cost the proposed management plan?

Every site will be different, and landholders will have different abilities and existing resources to implement conservation management actions.

Landholders should consider the likely management costs over the term of the agreement.

The BCT anticipates bidders will consider the following types of costs:

- labour costs, including hired or your own
- material costs for undertaking conservation management actions, for example fencing materials, equipment or chemicals for pest and weed control, or plants for re-vegetation (if applicable)
- costs of equipment required to undertake management actions
- the costs of seeking specialist advice on conservation management actions from

contractors, advisors, personal financial advisors, accountants or product suppliers

- costs associated with stock exclusion, such as alternate water sources
- loss in income due to changes in the income producing aspects of the conservation site (e.g. loss of timber production, grazing, or other development opportunity)
- time and costs associated with participation (e.g. reporting).

Landholders may also choose to consider the benefits to be gained from changing management of their native vegetation. Landholders may wish to reduce the price of their bid to reflect these benefits.

Benefits may include:

- increased land values or aesthetic values of the property
- reduced risk or costs for future management
- personal enjoyment and satisfaction from having made a positive contribution toward securing a diminishing conservation asset

## How will you decide how much to bid?

The amount you bid is entirely up to you. You should consider the annual payments you wish to receive for undertaking the actions outlined in the agreed management plan over the term of the proposed agreement.

Bids will be assessed and ranked based on value-for-money. Therefore, the amount you bid will influence how competitive your bid is likely to be with respect to other bidders within the same region.

The BCT encourages you to ensure that you prepare your bid in a way that ensures that you will be able to meet your obligations under the proposed agreement.

All conservation agreements will be the subject of ongoing conservation management payments for the agreement term.

To prepare your bid, you should fill out the bid template. This requires you to nominate the conservation management payments you wish to receive.

You should nominate these figures in today's dollars. The agreement will provide for future years' payments to be indexed (increased) in line with inflation.

For successful bidders that sign a conservation agreement, the BCT will set aside sufficient funds to ensure it can make the agreed annual conservation management payments.

All agreements will include a provision for the management plan and associated payments to be reviewed by the landholder and the BCT, and possibly

renegotiated, every five years. In limited circumstances, the BCT may agree to amend the conservation management actions and/or reset the forward schedule of payments, if this is well justified and funds are available.

For probity reasons, BCT field staff will not be permitted to advise you on your bid costing and will not know what bid price is likely to comprise a successful bid.

Discussions with BCT field staff will not be permitted during the period from the receipt of the agreed management plan to the lodgement of the bid, to ensure tender probity.

## How do I submit a bid?

Bids must be received by the BCT by 11:59pm on the closing date.

Facsimiled submissions will not be accepted.

Bids should be sent by email to [tenders@bct.nsw.gov.au](mailto:tenders@bct.nsw.gov.au)

Alternatively, you can post your bid via registered post to **Private Locked Bag 5023, Parramatta NSW 2124**. You should ensure that where a bid is mailed to the locked bag, sufficient time is allowed for the bid to be received prior to the closing date.

## What advice should I seek?

The BCT's field staff will offer as much support as possible to landholders interested in making a bid. However, you should consider seeking expert ecological, financial and/or legal advice as appropriate to your circumstances.

## Assessment of bids

### When will my bid be assessed?

When the tender period has closed, your bid will be compared against all the other bids submitted within the same region.

The BCT will work to keep the length of time between bidding and notification of success to a minimum.

### How will successful bids be determined?

Bids will be compared in a consistent manner according to a numerical index of biodiversity benefit, called the Biodiversity Value Score (BVS).

The Biodiversity Value Score (BVS) enables an objective assessment of the biodiversity value of managing a site within the program. It has been developed consistent with the NSW Government's investment priorities for private land conservation.

The Biodiversity Value Score (BVS) measures four components:

- conservation values on site, and proposed management actions
- the duration or term of the agreement. In some BCT conservation tenders, landholders have the option to select conservation agreements that are term (minimum of 15 years) through to in-perpetuity. The BVS gives greatest weight to in-perpetuity agreements and greater weight to longer-term agreements relative to shorter-term agreements.
- Risks of conservation values being lost or impacted in the future is assessed, having regard to the land and soil capability class of the site<sup>10</sup>
- the eligible area of the proposed site to be protected by the conservation agreement is measured

To rank sites on a value-for-money basis, the BCT will calculate a Biodiversity Value Index (BVI) for each tender by dividing the BVS by the total present value of the proposed management payments for the conservation management of the site.

The Biodiversity Value Index will only be calculated after bids are submitted.

### How can you make your bid competitive?

Your Biodiversity Value Score (BVS) represents the 'value' for conservation that will be produced if you are successful in bidding for and entering a conservation agreement.

You can influence the likely success of your bid by agreeing to undertake the broadest range of conservation management actions that are acceptable to you. The area, condition and type of vegetation included in the conservation area also influences the final BVS.

Your final bid price should reflect your idea of the balance between the benefits of managing the site and the costs of any change in management.

You need to be realistic in your pricing as you need to be able to meet your obligations under the agreement, and sites will be monitored to ensure that outcomes are being achieved.

<sup>10</sup> Sites with eligible existing in-perpetuity agreements will be subject to a reduced Risk score.

You will be accountable for the completing management actions identified in the resulting agreement, if a bid is successful.

Landholders can withdraw a bid at any time before a conservation agreement is signed.

## **How will I be notified of the results?**

Both successful and unsuccessful bidders will be notified by the BCT when the bid assessment process is completed.

If your bid is unsuccessful you will be given feedback on how your bid compared to those that were successful.

If your bid is unsuccessful, it may not mean that your site is not important for conservation. The BCT can provide you with information about other programs and future opportunities.

If your bid is successful, you will be invited to sign a conservation agreement, which will include the agreed

management plan and your proposed payment schedule.

An example of a conservation agreement is available on the BCT website.

## **How will the fairness of the bid assessment process be guaranteed?**

The BCT has implemented an assessment process to ensure that all landholders are dealt with fairly. The BCT's probity advisor has been consulted in developing the BCT's conservation tender.

Bid assessment and ranking will be supervised by an independent probity adviser and approved by the BCT Board. Probity advice will be sought as required throughout the tender process and a probity report on each tender will be provided to the BCT Board. Individual landholder bids and contact details will not be disclosed as part of this report.

For more information you can call **1300 992 688** or visit [www.bct.nsw.gov.au](http://www.bct.nsw.gov.au)