



Biodiversity  
Conservation  
Trust

# **Biodiversity Conservation Trust**

## **Restoring Murray Woodlands**

### **Biodiversity and Carbon Conservation Tender**

*Enhancing threatened woodlands with carbon plantings*



**Landholder Guide | 2022-2023**

The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout NSW and recognises their ongoing connection to land, waters and culture.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging and seek to engage with Aboriginal people genuinely and collaboratively in the delivery of private land conservation programs.

The Restoring Murray Woodlands Biodiversity and Carbon Tender area is predominately within the traditional lands of the Wiradjuri, Wamba Wamba, Baraba Baraba and Yorta Yorta 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, totem species and significant ceremonial areas and spiritual places and bio-cultural indicators

**The United Nations General Assembly declared 2021–2030 as the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration with the main target of preventing, halting and reversing degraded, damaged and destroyed ecosystems worldwide.**

- United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030

This *NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust Landholder Guide* is a detailed guide to a biodiversity and carbon tender.

Interested parties are encouraged to attend a NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust information session, or view a recording of such a session. Registration for information sessions, or recordings, are available on the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust website at [www.bct.nsw.gov.au](http://www.bct.nsw.gov.au)

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Restoring Murray Woodland Biodiversity and Carbon conservation tender focuses on the restoration and conservation of three highly threatened ecological communities, Box Gum Grassy Woodlands, Inland Grey Box Woodland and Sandhill Pine Woodlands.

Each of these communities once covered large areas of the most productive agricultural land in NSW, and as a result have been heavily cleared for agriculture. Existing remnants are often small and fragmented or sometimes only represented as scattered paddock trees or derived grasslands.

Private land conservation is key to increasing the extent, quality, and connectivity of these remaining small remnants of threatened woodland.

To support landscape regeneration and restoration, this conservation tender offers landholders the opportunity to combine protection of eligible remnant vegetation through a Conservation Agreement with the Biodiversity Conservation Trust (BCT) with a new environmental plantings pilot carbon project in accordance with the Clean Energy Regulator's Emissions Reduction Fund (also known as Australian Carbon Credit Unit Scheme<sup>1</sup>)

Participating landholders will bid for annual management payments to manage conservation on remnant areas, in perpetuity, as well as the establishment costs for an environmental plantings pilot carbon project to generate Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs). Both the areas of remnant vegetation and eligible carbon project areas will be secured under an in-perpetuity conservation agreement.

Eligible landholders will be required to register and undertake a new [environmental plantings pilot carbon project](#) in accordance with the rules of the Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF) before entering into a Conservation Agreement with the BCT. The environmental plantings pilot removes the cost of project audits, simplifies project registration and crediting processes, and introduces an optional easier way to sell ACCUs to the Australian Government.

Landholders participating in the tender will bid for annual management payments from the BCT to manage conservation on remnant areas in perpetuity. To be consistent with the BCT intention of achieving protection and reforestation of vegetation in perpetuity, applications to register an environmental plantings pilot carbon project with the CER to generate ACCUs will need to select a permanence period of 100 years.

The Clean Energy Regulator will administer the environmental plantings pilot, including project registration, assessment and compliance checks to ensure compliance against the scheme rules and issuing ACCUs. The CER registered projects will re-establish Murray woodlands areas with mixed species plantings under the ERF. Carbon project areas can generate ACCUs for a crediting period of 25 years. The project proponent for an eligible Environmental Planting Pilot project must give the CER an offsets report for a reporting period in order for the project to receive ACCUs. The first reporting period must begin at the start of the crediting period for the project which must not be shorter than 6 months or longer than 5 years.

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<sup>1</sup> The Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF) will undergo a name change soon to the Australian Carbon Credit Unit Scheme (ACCU Scheme). At the time of writing online materials and the Carbon Farming Initiative Act (CFI Act) still refer to the ERF.

The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust will fund the establishment of environmental plantings in the carbon project area and provide in-perpetuity maintenance payments beyond the carbon crediting period. Landholders will be responsible for any management costs of the environmental plantings during the crediting period. Both the areas of remnant vegetation and carbon planting areas will be secured under an in-perpetuity conservation agreement.

Further to opportunities for landscape restoration and regeneration under the Clean Energy Regulator's ERF, the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust is collaborating with Murray Seed Services and Telstra.

Murray Seed Services will provide revegetation advice, native seed and tube stock and undertaking the initial carbon plantings.

Telstra may offer long term contracts to successful landholders to purchase ACCUs generated over the life of their carbon project.

This *NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust Landholder Guide* is a detailed guide to this biodiversity and carbon tender.

Interested parties are encouraged to attend a NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust information session, or view a recording of such a session. Registration for information sessions, or recordings, are available on the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust website at [www.bct.nsw.gov.au](http://www.bct.nsw.gov.au)

The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust looks forward to working with landholders in the Murray region on this exciting approach to landscape restoration and protection.

## NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust

The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust is a statutory, not-for-profit, body established in 2017 as part of NSW Government legislation, the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*.

The agency's purpose is to protect and enhance biodiversity by providing mechanisms for landholders to enter into co-operative agreements to manage and protect private land with significant conservation and biodiversity value.

More than 2,000 landholders have conservation agreements with the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust and collectively manage more than 2 million hectares, or 2.8 percent of NSW, to deliver shared biodiversity conservation outcomes.

The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust's Conservation Management Program invests about \$50 million annually into conservation tenders, fixed price offers, a revolving fund and co-investment partnerships.

This tender offers the opportunity to combine conservation agreements to restore, extend and connect small remnant patches of threatened woodlands with new local mixed species environmental plantings pilot carbon projects to establish new forest cover areas that can generate ACCUs.



*Figure 1. Inland Grey Box Grassy Woodland in the Riverina. Photo: Stuart Young (NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust)*

## 2. TENDER COLLABORATIONS

To deliver the Restoring Murray Woodlands Biodiversity and Carbon conservation tender, the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust has collaborated with three organisations: the Clean Energy Regulator, Telstra and Murray Seed Services, run by Local Land Services (LLS).

1. The Clean Energy Regulator administers the ERF, including the registration of carbon farming projects and the issuance of ACCUs for eligible carbon abatement.
2. Telstra may offer long term contracts to successful landholders to purchase the Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs) generated over the life of their carbon project.
3. Murray Seed Services will provide seed and tube stock, undertake the carbon plantings, and provide revegetation advice.

### Murray Seed Services

Murray Seed Services is an operation of Local Land Services within the Murray Region. It has collected provenance seeds and provided restoration services in the Murray Riverina area for the past 20 years.

Local Land Services is a regional-focused NSW Government agency delivering quality customer services to farmers, landholders and the wider community.

Murray Seed Services will support revegetation works, providing advice, seeds and plantings services to undertake plantings in this tender. It will prepare carbon project implementation plans for carbon plantings areas in consultation with approved landholders and the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust.

Murray Seed Services will manage initial carbon project plantings and, if required, in fill plantings within the first 5 years where success rates do not meet the revegetation requirements. After year 5, subsequent plantings will be the responsibility of the landholder, at their cost.

For more detail, see *Attachment 2: Revegetation Information*.

### Telstra

The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust is collaborating with Telstra for the Restoring Murray Woodlands Biodiversity and Carbon conservation tender to accelerate conservation on private land and create high-integrity carbon credits.

Participants in the conservation tender will generate ACCUs which they can hold, sell to generate income, or surrender to meet offset obligations.

Telstra may offer long term contracts to successful landholders to purchase ACCUs generated over the life of their carbon project. This offer may provide certainty to landholders entering the tender that they will be able to find a purchaser of their ACCUs for the lifetime of the carbon project.

### Clean Energy Regulator

The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust has collaborated with the Clean Energy Regulator to align the tender design with the eligibility requirements of the ERF, in particular with respect to additionality and newness of plantings.

The Clean Energy Regulator will support eligible project proponents to meet requirements through additional tools, resources and guidance to report on project activity and model carbon abatement through FullCAM for the environmental plantings pilot project.

### 3. CONSERVATION TENDERS

Conservation tenders are a key pathway by which interested landholders can enter into a funded conservation agreement through the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust’s Conservation Management Program.

The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust invites landholders from across the tender area (see map, Figure 3) to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) if they have eligible threatened native vegetation, and an intent to extend this area with environmental plantings under a carbon project (see examples in Figure 2).

An EOI does not create a binding obligation to participate in the tender.



For an EOI form, visit [www.nsw.bct.gov.au](http://www.nsw.bct.gov.au), find the **Get involved** tab and click on **View current conservation tenders**.



Mail the completed EOI form to: **Private Locked Bag 5023, Parramatta, NSW. 2124.** Alternatively email to [tenders@bct.nsw.gov.au](mailto:tenders@bct.nsw.gov.au)

This tender invites landholders to enter into an in-perpetuity conservation agreement and register an environmental plantings pilot carbon project under the ERF.

Successful landholders entering into a conservation agreement will receive in-perpetuity land management payments from the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust and earn ACCUs in the carbon project area, credited when they report to the Clean Energy Regulator. Projects will be credited ACCUs for 25 years from the project start date, and ACCUs earned can be sold to generate income, either to the Australian Government or to private buyers, such as Telstra.

In addition to revegetation in a carbon project area, participants can include restoration plantings in degraded remnant vegetation areas, with the aim of enhancing and restoring existing woodlands. Note that these plantings are not eligible to establish ACCUs.

The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust will work with participants to tailor the species planted for the best ecological outcomes in both the remnant areas and the carbon project areas. The species list will be tailored to the local environment and can include reintroducing missing plant species, such as certain forbs or grasses or planting a shrub layer.

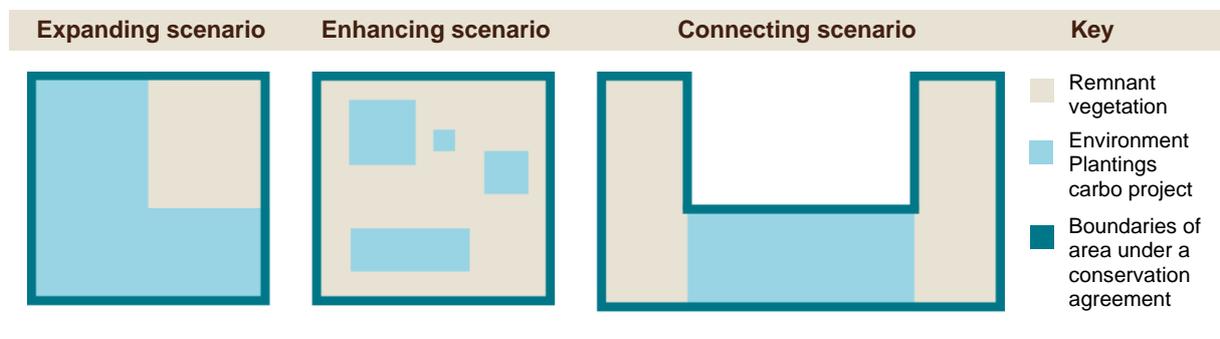
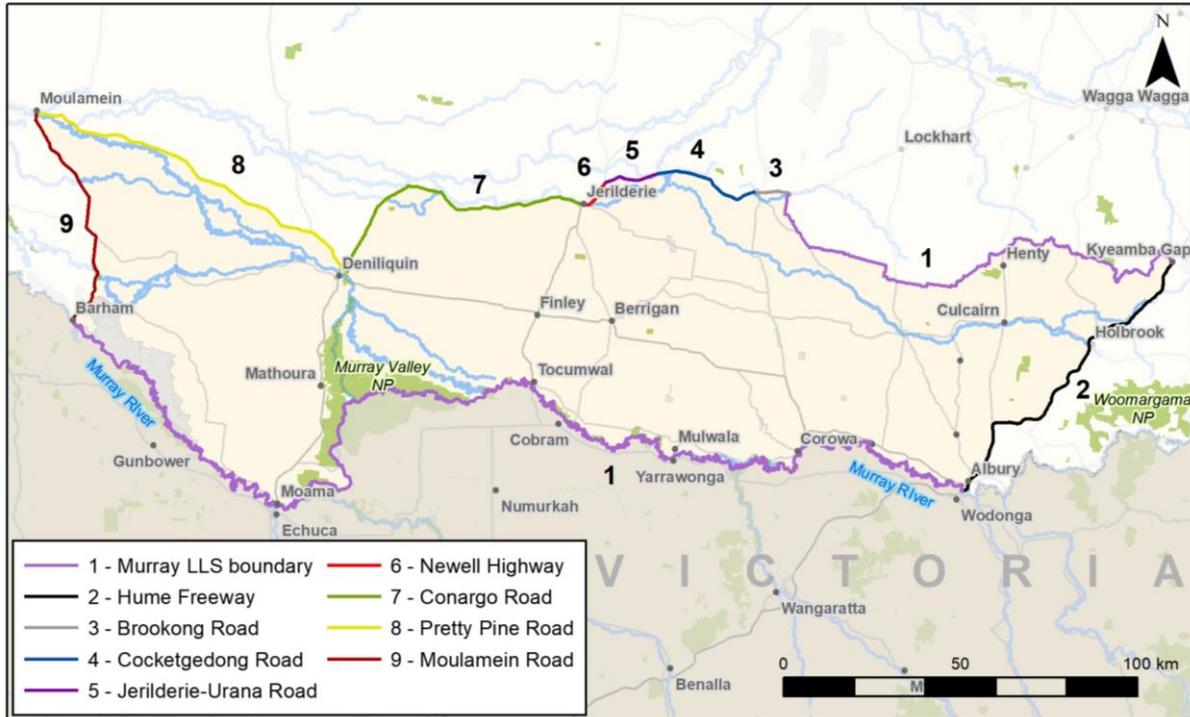


Figure 2. Examples of environmental plantings pilot carbon project is expanding, enhancing, or connecting remnant vegetation.

## 4. WHERE IS THE TENDER BEING OFFERED?

The Restoring Murray Woodlands Biodiversity and Carbon conservation tender area is bounded by the Murray River to the south and a boundary along major roads through the towns of Albury, Holbrook, Henty, Jerilderie, Deniliquin, Moulamein and Barham, as mapped in Figure 3.



## 5. TARGETED THREATENED WOODLANDS

The tender is targeting vegetation of the following priority threatened woodland ecosystems:

- Inland Grey Box Woodland<sup>2</sup>
- White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland<sup>3</sup>
- Sandhill Pine Woodland<sup>4</sup>

The tender area covers a highly fragmented landscape, dominated by agriculture.

Conservation reserves make up less than 3 per cent of the current tender area and do not adequately include threatened vegetation communities.

The tender area has been developed to best support the improvement and re-connection of priority threatened woodland communities which are habitat for many threatened woodland birds, bats, frogs, and gliders.

<sup>2</sup> [Inland Grey Box Woodland in the Riverina](#) as determined by the NSW Threatened species scientific committee.

<sup>3</sup> [White box Yellow Box Blakely's red gum Woodland](#) as determined by the NSW threatened species scientific committee.

<sup>4</sup> [Sandhill Pine Woodland in the Riverina](#) and [Buloke Woodland in the Riverina](#) as determined by the NSW threatened species scientific committee.

More than 100 threatened flora and fauna species are found within the tender area, including Squirrel Gliders, Sand-hill Spider Orchids, Regent Honeyeaters, Swift Parrots and Southern Bell Frogs. In addition to these, the tender will benefit declining woodland birds such as red-capped robins and rufous whistlers.

Landholders can access a map of the tender area from the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust website, or directly [via this link](#).

This map will assist in determining whether a property is within the tender area and to identify whether a site is within the indicative distribution of the priority threatened woodland communities, depicted in Figure 4.

Landholders who identify that their property does not include indicative mapping of priority threatened woodland ecosystems are encouraged to contact the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust to review the threatened woodlands for their property, or to discuss other options for their site.

If a site is deemed eligible for site assessment, NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust field staff will confirm presence of one of the three priority threatened woodland plant communities.

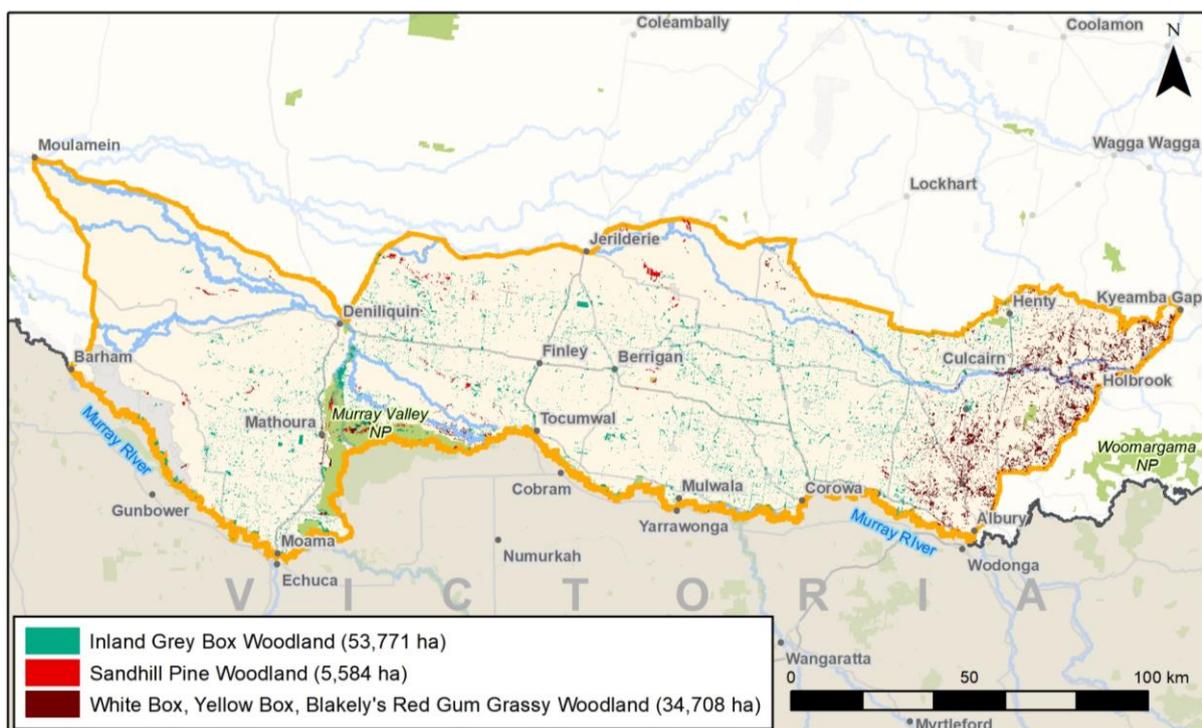


Figure 4. Distribution of the priority threatened woodland plant communities within in the tender area.

## 6. ESTIMATING YOUR POTENTIAL CARBON CREDITS

For landholders wishing to investigate the potential carbon credits on their land the CSIRO has developed the Landscape Options and Opportunities for Carbon abatement Calculator (LOOC-C).

LOOC-C allows you to quickly assess options for certain projects offered under Australia's carbon emissions programme, the ERF.

LOOC-C is easy to use, allowing you to map your project area in [an interactive map](#), and is one way you can estimate how much carbon abatement your pilot project will generate.

Based on the information you provide, this tool models the total carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>-e) the carbon project may sequester over 25 years. You can earn one ACCU for each tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>-e) sequestered in the environmental plantings pilot project area. Note this estimate represents total attainable abatement and does not include the 5% abatement reduction required for the 'risk of reversal' buffer.

The relevant figures will be displayed under the *Reforestation by Environmental or Mallee Plantings Method*.

Under the environmental planting pilot, landholders may enter into a carbon purchase agreement with another party, sell to the Australian Government through the Powering the Regions Fund or hold onto the ACCUs to meet their own emissions reduction goals. The latest ERF auction prices can be found [here](#)<sup>5</sup>.

Participants can also sell ACCUs on the secondary market, often through a broker. Current secondary market prices can be found [here](#)<sup>6</sup>.

Please note, as you embark on an environmental planting pilot project you will be led through more detailed processes which establish the variables for your project and provide a better estimate.

An initial LOOC-C desktop assessment will provide a general idea of the income generation of your project but should not be relied on to make final business decisions.



**To use LOOC-C to map your project area and estimate the likely carbon abatement your project may generate, visit [looc-c.farm](https://looc-c.farm)**

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au/ERF/Auctions-results>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.accus.com.au/>

## 7. TENDER TIMELINES

The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust will call for Expressions of Interest (EOIs) to participate in the Restoring Murray Woodlands Biodiversity and Carbon Conservation Tender from **30 January 2023**. EOIs will close at 11:59pm on **24 February 2023**.

This conservation tender consists of five phases, over a minimum period of 12 months.



Figure 5. Activity through the five phases of the Restoring Murray Woodlands tender

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

**Step 1.** Check your eligibility and submit an expression of interest (EOI) for a site assessment. NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust staff will discuss your EOI with you. EOIs will be prioritised, and the highest-ranking sites offered a site assessment. Landholders with highest-ranking sites will be contacted by the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust to arrange a time for site visit and assessment.

**Step 2.** Site assessments will confirm site size, location, and vegetation<sup>7</sup>. The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust will prepare a management plan in consultation with you,

<sup>7</sup> Sites that clearly do not meet minimum size or vegetation condition requirements will be informed they will not proceed in the tender process. The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust will discuss other program options with you.

including details of proposed conservation management actions and planning for the environmental plantings carbon project.

**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. The management plan will cover the relevant agreed actions for the remnant vegetation area and the actions required for the carbon project area. The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust will work with the Clean Energy Regulator to ensure management actions in your conservation agreement are compatible with those in your registered carbon project.

### **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 closes, and the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust evaluation panel evaluates all bids for final eligibility and value for money.

### **Phase 3: Registering your Environmental Plantings Pilot Carbon Project with the Clean Energy Regulator**

**Step 6.** Successful bidders are notified by the BCT and apply to register their carbon project via the Clean Energy Regulator [Client Portal](#) and complete the Client Enrolment process. Visit the Clean Energy Regulator [website](#) for more information about how to register an Emission Reduction Fund project.

**Step 7.** Once the environmental plantings pilot project application is declared (registered) as an eligible offsets project by the CER, successful bidders are provided an opportunity to enter into a conservation agreement under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (NSW) with the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust and receive annual in-perpetuity conservation management payments. Landholders with a registered carbon agreement can be linked to Telstra staff to discuss long term contracts to purchase ACCUs generated over the life of their carbon project.

### **Phase 4: Entering a conservation agreement**

**Step 8.** For successful bidders that proceed with a conservation agreement, the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust 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 NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust will then be notified by the NSW Land Registry Services that the conservation agreement has been registered on title. Finally, the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust will contact you, provide a welcome pack and process the first conservation management payment.

### **Phase 5: Undertake management actions including revegetation activities**

**Step 9.** Landholders will start managing their conservation areas according to a management action plan. The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust and Murray Seed Services will be in contact to co-ordinate works for the environmental planting pilot carbon project area. Murray Seed Services will provide the initial seeds and planting services. If required, it will follow up or infill planting in the first five (5) years to replace early losses where required densities are not being met. To be eligible for follow up plantings, landholders must manage the site as recommended by Murray Seed Services and in accordance with the

conservation agreement. Landholders will be responsible for all other management actions including implementing restoration plantings in the remnant areas (if included).

## 8. ELIGIBILITY

The Restoring Murray Woodlands Biodiversity and Carbon tender has eligibility criteria relating to the land, the applicant, and the vegetation on site.

The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust has eligibility criteria for entering the tender to establish a conservation agreement, and the Clean Energy Regulator has eligibility criteria for registering an environmental plantings pilot project. There is significant overlap in the eligibility criteria, which this chapter will step through.

NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust and Clean Energy Regulator staff are available to assist landholders work through any of the detail.

### Eligible applicants

To participate in the Restoring Murray Woodlands Biodiversity and Carbon tender, applicants need to meet several eligibility criteria.

#### *NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust applicant criteria*

To be eligible for a NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust conservation agreement an applicant must:

- be an Owner of the land<sup>8</sup> – as defined by the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (NSW), and
  - be an Australian citizen<sup>9</sup>, registered for tax purposes in Australia and holding an Australian bank account; or,
  - be an Australian registered company, registered for tax purposes in Australia, registered for GST and holding an Australian bank account, and
- be fit and proper person/s to enter into a conservation agreement with the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust and meet the Fit and Proper Person (FPP) test of the Clean Energy Regulator as part of the Client Enrolment process, and
- register an environmental planting pilot project with the Regulator (CER) **prior** to entering a conservation agreement with the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust, and
- be willing to enter into an in-perpetuity conservation agreement with the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust

A separate expression of interest and bid is required for each property<sup>10</sup>. The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust 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 approach will be subject to the minimum size and conservation asset eligibility criteria being met on each property, for example, the condition or confirmation of a particular habitat.

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<sup>8</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>9</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>10</sup> NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust 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.

In addition, the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust assessment of the proposed configuration of the conservation area across multiple adjoining properties will need to find that it is compatible with the objectives of the tender, along with other logistical and administrative considerations.

The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust reserves the right to consider a bid where size criteria are met across two properties, under a single legal entity, at its discretion.

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

A separate Expression of Interest (EOI) and bid is required for properties owned by different entities.

Bids are to be made by a unique legal entity with legal rights to enter into the conservation agreement with the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust. 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 NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust will accept one bid per management plan.

Eligible participants must nominate for an in-perpetuity agreement to accommodate the environmental plantings project and the required 100-year permanence period (*Attachment 1* provides details on the permanence period). Participants are not permitted to select a shorter permanence period with the Clean Energy Regulator.

The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust 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 NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust's *Landholder Guide on Taxation Issues*, available on the Trust's website or by request. This guide outlines the eligibility, administrative requirements, and documentation the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust 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 the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust to represent a conflict of interest that 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 NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust 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 Biodiversity Conservation Trust conservation tender, including their potential entry into and obligations under a conservation agreement with the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust 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.

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

#### *Clean Energy Regulator applicant criteria*

To be eligible to enter an environmental plantings pilot project the applicant must:

- be the freehold title holder, native title holder or registered native title body corporate for all carbon project areas.
- have the legal right to carry out the carbon project<sup>11</sup>. To have legal right the applicant entity must have:
  - the right to carry out the project activities on or for the sites or assets included in the project; and
  - a lawful and exclusive right to be issued all Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs).
- select the CER's 100-year permanence period option for the carbon project area which is a BCT requirement for the Conservation Agreement
- submit a permanence plan when registering carbon project with the Clean Energy Regulator (CER) registration

Prior to carbon project registration with the CER, the applicant must **not**:

- have acquired or leased a tangible asset (other than land or a minor asset) that is for use wholly or mainly for the purposes of the carbon project;
- have made a final investment decision in relation to the carbon project;
- have commenced construction work for the purposes of the carbon project, including:
  - preparing soil for seeding or planting that is for the purposes of the project
  - seeding, planting or fertilising plants that are for the purposes of the project
  - installing an irrigation or drainage system for the purposes of the project.
- be required to carry out the project activities under a Commonwealth, State or Territory law; or
- include activities or receive funding under specified government programs. Projects receiving BCT funding are not excluded from participation.

There are other circumstances where your project may be excluded from participating:

- The project can't take place on land that has been cleared in the last seven years (or five years if you have recently moved onto the property)
- The project can't take place on land that has been illegally cleared at any time in the past
- The project can't involve planting a known weed species
- The project can't be established under a forestry managed investment scheme

More information the ERF eligibility and newness requirements can be found [here](#)

It is important to note, to be eligible for receiving both carbon credits and NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust annual management payments the carbon project must be correctly registered prior to the execution of the conservation agreement. The NSW Biodiversity

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au/ERF/Want-to-participate-in-the-Emissions-Reduction-Fund/Planning-a-project/Legal-right>

Conservation Trust and Clean Energy Regulator will support you with the registration process.

## Eligible Sites

The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust has specific eligibility criteria relating to the conservation agreement and the Clean Energy Regulator has site eligibility criteria for the environmental planting pilot project.

### *NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust site criteria*

To be eligible for the Restoring Murray Woodlands Biodiversity and Carbon Tender the site must:

- be within the tender area (Figure 3), and
- be privately owned freehold tenure land, and
- cover an area that is at least 20 ha, comprising a combination of:
  - patch(es) of priority threatened woodland ecosystem (Inland Grey Box Woodland<sup>12</sup>, Sandhill Pine Woodland<sup>13</sup>, Buloke Woodland<sup>14</sup> or White Box-Yellow Box-Blakley's Red Gum Grassy Woodland<sup>15</sup>) in suitable condition, that total a minimum of 5 ha<sup>16</sup>, and
  - adjoining area/s suitable for a reforestation by environmental plantings pilot project<sup>17</sup> of at least 5 ha and not exceeding 50 ha, at least 30m wide, and cannot exceed three times the remnant priority threatened woodland area.
  - areas of non-priority native vegetation are in moderate to good condition.

### *Vegetation Condition Requirements*

Priority threatened woodland ecosystems in suitable condition are defined as either an area of native vegetation that can be classified via site assessment as priority threatened woodland ecosystems<sup>(11,12,13,14)</sup>, or a paddock tree if:

- The paddock tree is alive, has a DBH of >50cm, and
- The paddock trees are within an environmental plantings pilot carbon project area or restoration area.

For the purposes of the site assessment, each paddock tree has a nominal area of 0.1ha.

Areas of other non-priority native vegetation communities forming part of the proposed conservation area must have at least 90 per cent of vegetation in moderate to good condition.

Moderate to good condition is defined as:

- vegetation that contains sufficient species to be able to identify the original vegetation class.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/Topics/Animals-and-plants/Threatened-species/NSW-Threatened-Species-Scientific-Committee/Determinations/Final-determinations/2011-2012/Inland-Grey-Box-Woodland-in-the-Riverina-minor-amendment-Determination>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/threatened-species/nsw-threatened-species-scientific-committee/determinations/final-determinations/2011-2012/sandhill-pine-woodland-in-the-riverina-minor-amendment-determination>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/threatened-species/nsw-threatened-species-scientific-committee/determinations/final-determinations/2011-2012/allocasuarina-luehmannii-woodland-minor-amendment-determination>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/threatened-species/nsw-threatened-species-scientific-committee/determinations/final-determinations/2000-2003/white-box-yellow-box-blakelys-red-gum-woodland-endangered-ecological-community-listing>

<sup>16</sup> minimum priority threatened woodland ecosystems patch size is 5 ha, this can be made up of smaller patches if connected to other priority vegetation by environmental plantings or non-priority vegetation. Total priority vegetation area must meet minimum eligible area requirements. NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust will assess viability of smaller patches at site assessment and reserve the right to exclude non-viable patches.

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au/ERF/Choosing-a-project-type/Opportunities-for-the-land-sector/Vegetation-methods/Reforestation-by-Environmental-or-Mallee-Plantings-FullCAM/environmental-plantings-pilot>

- not contain any more than 10 per cent non-priority native vegetation in poor condition, as determined by the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust vegetation assessment at the time of the site visit.

Paddocks 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 yellow box, white box, white cypress pine, buloke or grey box.

Although areas dominated by wetlands or river red gums are not part of the eligibility criteria, they can be included in a conservation area if the minimum area of priority threatened woodlands is met. If you are unsure whether the vegetation you propose to protect is eligible, contact the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust to discuss.

If your expression of interest is high ranking based on desktop assessment, the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust 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.

#### *Environmental plantings pilot carbon project site criteria*

To be eligible for an environmental plantings pilot carbon project of the Clean Energy Regulator, the proposed environmental carbon planting area must:

- be clear of forest cover for at least 5 years prior to the date of application.
- not have woody biomass or an invasive native shrub species that needs to be cleared for planting to occur, other than known weed species required or authorised by law to be cleared
- not be a landscape planting
- be a mixed-species environmental planting, consist of a mixture of tree and shrub species that:
  - (a) are native to the local area of the planting;
  - (b) are sourced from seeds:
    - (i) from within the natural distribution of the species; and
    - (ii) that are appropriate to the biophysical characteristics of the area of the planting;
  - (c) may be a mix of trees, shrubs, and understorey species where the mix reflects the structure and composition of the local native vegetation community; and
  - (d) are established through planting.
- Must be able to attain forest cover, that is, the trees in the planting must be reach over 2 metres tall and provide more than 20 per cent crown cover across the land

To be included in a conservation agreement, the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust has specifications to ensure the environmental carbon plantings contribute to increasing threatened woodlands:

- The plantings must include a mix of trees, shrubs, and understory species native to the local area.
- The environmental planting area that will form part of the BCT Conservation Agreement must be at least 30m wide, cover a minimum of 5 ha and cannot exceed three times the remnant priority threatened woodland area up to a maximum of 50 ha.

#### **How will eligibility for a conservation agreement be confirmed?**

The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust will initially conduct a desktop assessment to confirm the applicant's eligibility. If your site is within the tender area and prioritised for site

assessment, NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust 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; sufficient priority woodlands and carbon planting area and if any other native vegetation is in moderate to good condition with reference to adopted benchmarks<sup>18</sup>. Up to 10 per cent of the non-priority native vegetation area proposed may constitute vegetation in poor condition<sup>19</sup>. The bid evaluation stage will be a last check on whether the site meets eligibility criteria.

For sites that straddle the tender boundary, the minimum size and condition requirement must be met by land that is within the tender area.

The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust 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 NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust further reserves the right to prioritise sites for assessment based on the area proposed within the tender area.

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.

Crown lands, Public protected areas<sup>20</sup>, Travelling Stock Reserves (TSR) and public owned and managed land<sup>21</sup> are not eligible to participate in this tender.

The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust 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.

In the case of Aboriginal ownership transfers, if the expression of interest form was not submitted by the Aboriginal stakeholders who may have ownership transferred, the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust will require that the expression of interest form is signed and supported by the Aboriginal stakeholders at or prior to the site assessment.

Relevant parties should note, the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust 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 NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust 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.

## 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.

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/native-vegetation/vegetation-condition-benchmarks>

<sup>19</sup> The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust 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>20</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>21</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.

The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust may limit the number of site assessments for existing in-perpetuity agreements to 25 per cent of total site assessments.

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

Generally, if management activities are required or are already funded under an existing agreement, the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust 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 NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust website or phone Trust staff on **1300 992 688**.

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

## 9. SUBMIT AN EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

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 NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust on **1300 992 688**.

**An expression of interest does not create a binding obligation to participate in the tender.**

The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust will undertake a desktop assessment to ensure 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 NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust 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 NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust 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, but it ensures your site will be assessed for eligibility.

The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust reserves the right to extend the EOI period or close the EOI period early if an excessive number of applications are received.

The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust will call for **EOIs** to participate in the Restoring Murray Woodlands Biodiversity and Carbon conservation tender from **30 January 2023**. EOIs will close at 11:59pm on **24 February 2023**.

## 10. 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 NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust will assess the site against the 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 NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust 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 and the environmental planting carbon project
  - 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, potential conflicts of interest and other information we may require for the development of a conservation agreement (such as mortgagee consent).

Murray Seed Services staff will also provide revegetation advice on the environmental planting carbon project during the site visit phase.

NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust 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.

The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust has a range of useful resources for landholders which can be found on the other 'Resources' tab of its website. You will find guides to taxation, existing obligations and agreements and variations of NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust agreements policy.

### **Aboriginal Cultural Heritage**

Our natural landscapes are full of Aboriginal cultural significance whether it is stories, connections or signs of Aboriginal land management and occupation; all are Aboriginal cultural heritage. Aboriginal cultural heritage is of high conservation value and Aboriginal sites and artefacts are protected by NSW law.

The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust will support landholders to minimise the risk of land management in conservation areas causing harm or damage to Aboriginal cultural heritage.

In areas where there is a high risk of impacting Aboriginal cultural heritage the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust recommends land holders undertake a cultural heritage assessment, funded by the Trust. In most cases day to day land management will not impact cultural heritage, it is only where ground disturbing works or vegetation disturbance is planned that an assessment should be considered.

The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust will fund cultural heritage assessment on successful sites in identified high risk areas where high impact management actions are planned. For example, sandhills in the Riverina have a high chance of containing burial sites. On sandhills a cultural heritage assessment is recommended prior to revegetation or ripping rabbit warrens. River flats close to creek lines also have a high likelihood of artefacts, cooking hearths or campsites so high impact activities in these areas should also consider a cultural heritage assessment.

If you have knowledge of any Aboriginal objects or places within your conservation area, you should discuss them with NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust staff at the site visit stage to inform the approach to cultural heritage assessment.

If a cultural heritage assessment raises the potential for harm to Aboriginal cultural heritage the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust will work with the landholder to modify the planned activity and avoid harm. A cultural heritage assessment is a great opportunity to learn more about the Aboriginal cultural values on your property.

## 11. RECEIVE AND NEGOTIATE A MANAGEMENT PLAN

Once a site visit has identified the location and eligibility of the proposed conservation area, remnant vegetation and carbon planting area, NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust staff will draft a management plan based on previous discussions and share with you for review and comment.

The management plan forms part of the agreement and aims to ensure the conservation area is managed in an agreed way to improve remnant vegetation and outcomes of the environmental plantings pilot carbon project. The management plan identifies the main management actions, their location and timing and the minimum standard to be achieved.

Management actions on *remnant vegetation areas* will be funded by the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust in-perpetuity. Management actions on *environmental plantings pilot carbon project* area will be funded by the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust in-perpetuity from the end of the carbon crediting period.

There are several management actions that are core to the management plan. They cover weed management, feral animal control, stock management and revegetation actions.

As an example of weed management; a proposed conservation area may have several mature boxthorns. The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust and landholder discuss management actions and timings and agree the landholder will remove the mature boxthorn by the end of the second year of the agreement, and that the landholder will complete annual checks and treatment on new or resprouting boxthorn in-perpetuity.

### Revegetation Actions

During the site assessment and management plan negotiation phase, Murray Seed Services will work with the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust and landowners to develop revegetation options. All revegetation will be done with the primary aim of enhancing the conservation of the target woodland ecological communities.

There are two distinct revegetation types to consider in your conservation area: *carbon plantings* to establish the carbon project area is essential to participate in the tender and optional *restoration plantings* to enhance remnant woodland areas.

#### *Carbon plantings*

Carbon plantings will generate ACCUs and be implemented in accordance the Environmental plantings pilot carbon project of the ERF. The Biodiversity Conservation Trust will manage the establishment of high integrity biodiverse plantings through a directly funded contract with Murray Seed Services.

A carbon project implementation plan will be developed for areas suitable for an environmental plantings pilot carbon project. This plan will outline site preparation work to be undertaken by the landholder and the site revegetation works including species lists and treatments to be implemented by Murray Seed Services.

Landholders are responsible for all site preparation and ongoing site management costs of the carbon project area for the 25 year crediting period and will be provided specifications by

Murray Seed Services. As part of the ownership of the carbon planting the landholder will monitor the survivorship of the plantings and complete weed and pest management. Site management to maximise the opportunity for successful and continued seedling survival is the responsibility of the landholder.

The preparation of the conservation management action plan within the conservation agreement and the carbon project implementation plan will be developed with the landholder and not finalised until both the landholder and the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust are agreed.

#### *Restoration plantings within the remnant vegetation area*

Restoration plantings are an optional management action which can be used to enhance areas of degraded remnant woodland vegetation. These areas will be identified as restore zones and may be enhanced through the supplementary planting of shrubs, forbs and grasses.

The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust will assist landholder with identifying suitable restoration areas and planning the restoration. It is the landholder's responsibility to complete the restoration actions either themselves or via a contract, including but not limited to site preparation, sourcing plants, and carrying out plantings.

The landholder's tender bid should consider all costs related restoration areas.

## **Review Carbon Project Requirements**

The Clean Energy Regulator has staff available to assist landholders ensure their proposed environmental plantings pilot carbon project is eligible. The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust recommends landholders consult with the Clean Energy Regulator prior to making a bid.

The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust will work with landholders and Murray Seed Services prior to bid submission to follow the Clean Energy Regulator guidance to ensure revegetation specifications meet the environmental plantings pilot carbon project requirements.

### **NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust**

**1300 992 688**

[www.bct.nsw.gov.au](http://www.bct.nsw.gov.au)

[info@bct.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@bct.nsw.gov.au)

### **Clean Energy Regulator**

**1300 553 542**

[www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au](http://www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au)

[land@cleanenergyregulator.gov.au](mailto:land@cleanenergyregulator.gov.au)

## **12. SUBMITTING A BID**

For sites deemed eligible and prioritised for a site assessment, NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust 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;
- agree on a carbon project area and revegetation actions; and,
- prepare a management plan for the conservation area.

Once the management plan 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 schedule setting out the annual payments the landholder wishes to receive to implement the plan and 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. Guidance on what to consider is included in *Attachment 3: Preparing a Bid*.

You will need an agreed NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust management plan in the format set by the Trust to submit a bid.

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 NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust's field staff will offer as much support as possible to landholders interested in making a bid. For probity reasons, NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust 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, see *Attachment 3: Preparing a Bid* for more details. For successful bids, the conservation agreement will provide for future years payments to be indexed (increased) in line with inflation.

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

All agreements with the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust will include a provision for periodic review every five years. In limited circumstances, the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust 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.

See *Attachment 3: Preparing a Bid* for assistance in what to consider when preparing your bid.

## 13. 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 **18 August 2023**.

Bids are held within a secure location until after the bid closing date and assessed by an assessment panel of the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust.

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

An information package on how to submit a bid, bid conditions and how bids are assessed for this tender will be made available to all landholders who reach the final bid stage.

## 14. REGISTER YOUR CARBON PROJECT

Once all bids have been received and evaluated, successful landholder will be notified and offered a conservation agreement.

If the landholder decides to accept the offer, they will then need to register their environmental plantings pilot carbon project with the Clean Energy Regulator prior to the conservation agreement being executed. The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust will assist with this process.

To register under the environmental plantings pilot carbon project, a project registration application must be submitted to the Clean Energy Regulator outlining how the pilot project meets ERF and environmental plantings pilot carbon project eligibility criteria, and be consistent with the environmental plantings method.

The Clean Energy Regulator's [Environmental Plantings Pilot Guidance](#) is available online.

### **A permanence plan for your carbon project area**

The Clean Energy Regulator's [template for an environmental plantings pilot project permanence plan](#) [downloadable document] describes how the carbon will remain stored in the project area for the permanence obligation period.

In the situation where there is an event that releases the stored carbon (for example, a severe bushfire or mechanical land clearing), the landholder must:

- take all reasonable steps to prevent the on-going loss of the sequestered carbon;
- identify the impacted area and quantify the impact; and,
- notify the Clean Energy Regulator of the disturbance within 60 days.

Once you have submitted your pilot project registration form, your application will be assessed by the Clean Energy Regulator. Allow up to 90 days for assessment. If your application is incomplete, you may be asked to provide further information or to resubmit your application during this process. For this reason, it is recommended you review all guidance in this guide and supplied by the Clean Energy Regulator prior to starting your client enrolment process and application to register an environmental plantings pilot project..

Once registered the landholder will be notified by the Clean Energy Regulator. The landholder will then notify their contact officer at the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust of the successful declaration of the carbon project.

## **15. CONSERVATION AGREEMENT EXECUTION**

Once the environmental plantings pilot carbon project is registered, the landholder can sign the conservation agreement. It will then be signed by the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust Chief Executive Officer and registered on title by NSW Land Registry Services.

Once registered on title the agreement becomes active and the first annual management payment is made to the landholder to begin works.

## **16. UNDERTAKE REVEGETATION ACTIVITIES**

Once the agreement becomes active and the first annual management payment is made, the landholder can start managing the conservation as per the management plan and the revegetation plan.

The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust will work with landholders and Murray Seed Services to confirm the required site preparation and to organise when the revegetation of the carbon project area will occur.

If the landholder has committed to restoration actions, these will be detailed in the management plan. Landholders are advised to contact their preferred restoration provider early to ensure availability of supply and confirm when the restoration work will commence.

More info on revegetation can be found in *Attachment 2: Revegetation Information*.

## 17. CARBON PROJECT ACTIVITY DATA

The Clean Energy Regulator will use geospatial tools to confirm project activity, verify abatement is being achieved and monitor for reported disturbances, such as fire impacts or die-back.

### *Geographic information and mapping software*

The Clean Energy Regulator will use geographic information and mapping software to verify and monitor your planting area/s to ensure it meets Emission Reduction Fund (ERF) scheme and method requirements. The Regulator may adjust your geospatial map for ERF scheme requirements and to ensure the carbon abatement is modelled correctly. The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust will provide initial mapping information for this process.

### *Remote sensing*

Satellite and aerial imagery will be sourced throughout the life of your project to confirm the planting location and attainment and maintenance of forest cover.

### *Date-stamped, geo-referenced photographs*

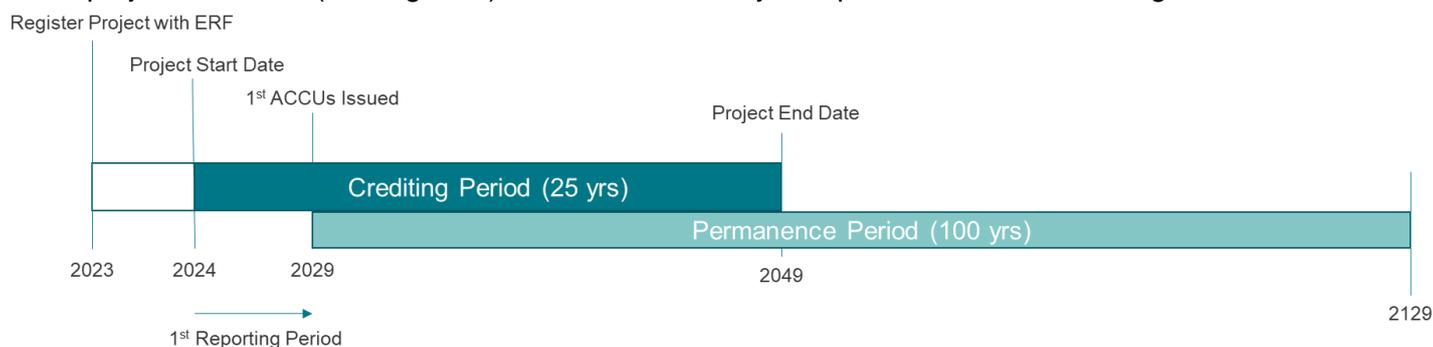
You must supply date-stamped, geo-referenced photographs to demonstrate the establishment and progress of your planting area/s and ensure they meet the requirements of the Clean Energy Regulator.

### **Audit requirements for environmental plantings pilot projects**

Projects registered under the environmental plantings pilot carbon project do not require audits. If at any stage your project ceases to satisfy the eligibility criteria, it will no longer be eligible to participate in the environmental plantings pilot carbon project. At this time audits will be required.

## 18. AUSTRALIAN CARBON CREDIT UNIT (ACCU) GENERATION

The crediting period for your environmental plantings pilot carbon project is 25 years from the project start date (see Figure 6). In that time, when you report on the carbon storage



generated by the pilot project, you can earn one ACCU for each tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>-e) stored in the trees as they grow. You can report and earn ACCUs as often as every 6 months, but you must provide a report at least every 5 years.

*Figure 6. An example timeline for environmental plantings pilot carbon project showing crediting period and permanence period*

As part of the streamlined processing component of the environmental plantings pilot carbon project, the Clean Energy Regulator will use the information in your report to update your mapping and remotely model the ACCUs generated in that reporting period. Guidance will be provided to support you through this process.

See *Attachment 1: Establishing an environmental plantings pilot carbon project*.

## 19. 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 NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust 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 NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust, 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 NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust forms an opinion that the applicant is not a fit and proper person or a conflict cannot be managed, the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust will exclude the bid from further consideration.

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

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**.

Facsimiled submissions will not be accepted.

Ensure where a bid is mailed, 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 NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust'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 NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust prior to entry into a conservation agreement.

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

The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust 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 NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust.

You may phone the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust if you have any questions or if you have feedback on **1300 992 688**.

Your feedback is important as it helps us to continuously improve our services to you and will be managed in accordance with the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust guarantee of service.

## 20. PROGRAM INVESTMENT

The budget available for the Conservation Management Program during 2022/3 is \$45 million. The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust's Conservation Management Plan includes several tenders and an annual round of our Fixed Price Offer Program.

## 21. CONTACTS

**NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust**  
**1300 992 688**  
[www.bct.nsw.gov.au](http://www.bct.nsw.gov.au)  
[info@bct.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@bct.nsw.gov.au)

**Clean Energy Regulator**  
**1300 553 542**  
[www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au](http://www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au)  
[land@cleanenergyregulator.gov.au](mailto:land@cleanenergyregulator.gov.au)

## ATTACHMENT 1: ESTABLISHING AN ENVIRONMENTAL PLANTINGS PILOT CARBON PROJECT

### Who is the Clean Energy Regulator (CER)?

The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust is working closely with the Clean Energy Regulator to deliver this tender.

The Clean Energy Regulator is an independent Australian Government body responsible for accelerating carbon abatement for Australia. One of the portfolios of the Regulator is the Emission Reduction Fund (ERF).

The ERF provides schemes to landholders, communities, and businesses to establish and implement projects in Australia that avoid the release of greenhouse gas emissions or remove and sequester carbon from the atmosphere.

Participants can earn Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs). Each ACCU represents one tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>-e) emissions stored or avoided by a project. ACCUs can be sold to generate income, either to the Australian Government through a

carbon abatement contract, or to companies and other private buyers in the secondary market.

The Clean Energy Regulator will support landholders to understand their opportunity and obligations in setting up a carbon project on their property.

### Environmental Plantings Pilot Carbon Project

To participate in this tender, you will be required to undertake a new **environmental plantings pilot carbon project** under the ERF.

The environmental plantings pilot carbon project has made it easier for farmers and landholders to use the **environmental plantings method** and directly participate in the ERF. The lifecycle of an environmental plantings project is shown in Figure 7.

Environmental plantings projects involve planting a mixture of native and local tree, shrubs, and understorey species to establish new and permanent forest cover. These projects earn one ACCU for each tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>-e) stored in the project trees as they grow.

ACCUs are issued for the carbon stored and are estimated using the Full Carbon Accounting Model (FullCAM). The Clean Energy Regulator will do annual project mapping and modelling to make it easier for landholders to report on carbon storage and earn ACCUs.

The environmental plantings method has specific project reporting requirements. This includes regularly monitoring, mapping and modelling project activity in each carbon project area for the purpose of calculating carbon storage and earning ACCUs. The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust and Clean Energy Regulator will support landholders with their reporting requirements.

The crediting period for your environmental plantings pilot carbon project is 25 years from the project start date. In that time, when you report on the carbon storage generated by the pilot project, you can earn one ACCU for each tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>-e) stored in the trees as they grow. You can report and earn ACCUs as often as every six months, but you must provide a report at least every five years.

As part of the streamlined processing component of the environmental plantings pilot, the Clean Energy Regulator will assist you with mapping and modelling your pilot project to make it easier to report and earn ACCUs. Additional guidance will be provided to support you through this process.

Landholders may enter into a carbon purchase agreement with another party, sell to the Australian Government through the Powering the Regions Fund or hold onto the ACCUs to meet their own emissions reduction goals.

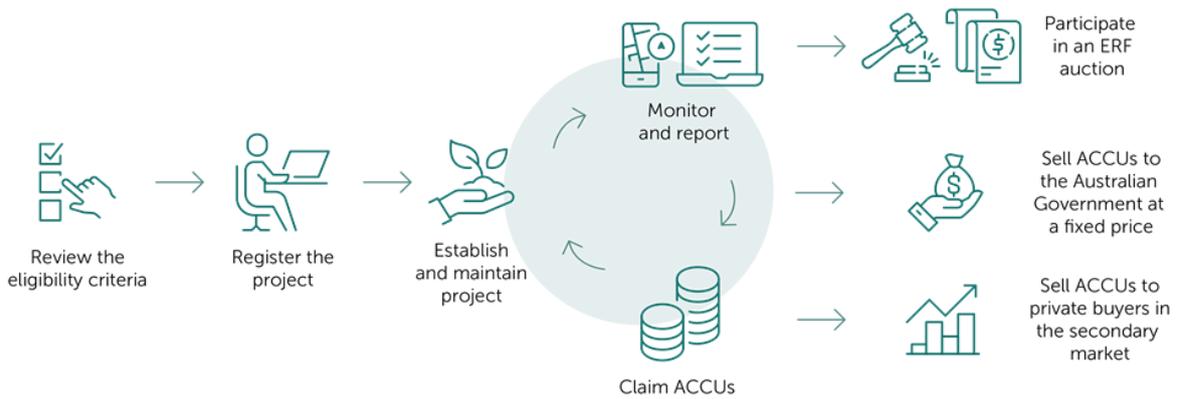


Figure 7. Lifecycle of an environmental plantings pilot carbon project. Source: Clean Energy Regulator.

### Permanence obligations

All carbon sequestration projects with the Clean Energy Regulator are subject to permanence obligations. A permanence obligation maintains carbon stores for which ACCUs have been issued for an agreed length of time.

To be eligible for this tender you are required to nominate a 100-year permanence period at the time of carbon project registration. The permanence period and permanence reporting requirements cover the carbon project area only.

While the environmental plantings pilot carbon project allows permanence period to be set to either 25 or 100 years this tender requires you to choose a permanence period obligation for 100 years. This is because successful applicants to this tender will have an in-perpetuity conservation agreement which will cover the carbon project area.

As a part of your permanence obligations, you are required to submit a permanence plan that explains the management actions to be undertaken to ensure carbon remains stored in the project area for the permanence period. This must be uploaded with your project registration application and updated twice throughout the project reporting period.

The NSW Biodiversity Conversation Trust is working with the Clean Energy Regulator to ensure management actions in your conservation agreement are compatible with and inform your permanence plan.

The **[Clean Energy Regulator's website](#)** provides more detail and guidance on the permanence obligations.

The **[permanence plan template can be found online](#)**.

### Contact the Clean Energy Regulator

Landholders can contact an officer of the Clean Energy Regulator to discuss their site, eligibility, and project requirements for this tender.

Phone **1300 553 542** or email **[land@cleanenergyregulator.gov.au](mailto:land@cleanenergyregulator.gov.au)**

In addition, **[an information pack can be found online](#)**.

## ATTACHMENT 2: REVEGETATION INFORMATION

This guide provides an outline of revegetation options and timelines of setting up a carbon or restoration project. Successful revegetation relies on good site management and this guide outlines the roles and responsibilities of the landholder, NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust and Murray Seed Services in developing and implementing a Carbon Project Implementation Plan.

The Restoring Murray Woodland Tender focuses on the conservation of three highly threatened ecological communities, Box Gum Woodlands, Inland Grey Box Woodland and Sandhill Pine Woodlands. Each of these communities once covered some of the most productive agricultural land in NSW including fertile floodplains, and as a result have been heavily cleared. Remnants still exist; however, they are often small and fragmented or in some landscapes only represented as scattered paddock trees or derived grasslands. Protecting existing 'good quality' remnants of these threatened woodland communities is not enough to ensure their long-term existence. To effectively conserve these communities (which includes the vegetation and the wildlife that relies on that community) it is essential that we increase the extent, quality, and connectivity of these woodlands through vegetation restoration and revegetation.

### Revegetation options

Murray Seed Services are working with the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust to assist landowners to explore revegetation options. All revegetation will be done with the primary aim of enhancing the conservation of the target woodland ecological communities. The revegetation will attempt to include species thought to be appropriate for the existing or likely woodland community of that area. During site visits site-specific species list will be refined with input from the landowner, Murray Seed Services and NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust ecologists. There are two distinct revegetation types to consider which we have termed 'carbon plantings' and 'restoration plantings'.

### Carbon Plantings and the carbon project implementation plan

A requirement of this tender is for landowners to do a minimum of 5ha of an environmental plantings pilot carbon project to generate carbon credits. The primary aim of 'carbon plantings' is to enhance, connect and restore threatened woodlands (by increasing extent and connectivity) and to provide a supported opportunity to participate in the carbon market.

The environmental pilot plantings will have to meet the requirements of the Clean Energy Regulator (CER), which includes establishing and maintaining a minimum of 20% canopy cover of trees and shrubs with less than 5 metres gap between the forest canopy. These mixed species plantings will be quite dense (at least 200 stems/ha of trees and shrubs) and suitable for plantings to be established on "greenfield" sites (former pasture and grazing areas with highly modified ground layer) to create corridors, to increase woodland area or to create woody thickets within or adjoining existing woodland. This is not an option for natural grasslands, swamps, or existing wooded areas.

The Murray Seed Services will develop, with the landholder and NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust, a carbon project implementation plan that guides the establishment of appropriate carbon plantings to an agreed specification. Landholders are responsible for site preparation of the carbon project area as per Murray Seed Services requirements. Landholders can bid for fencing costs of the carbon area but not weed, pest management or site preparation. As part of the ownership of the carbon planting the landholder will monitor the survivorship of the plantings and be responsible for ensuring weed and pest management is undertaken.

The carbon project implementation plan will have some of the information needed to register the carbon project with the CER when required.

## Restoration Plantings in the Remnant Vegetation Area

Restoration plantings are encouraged where there is an opportunity to enhance, connect, and restore patches within existing degraded woodlands. Densities of plantings and species mix can vary to give the best ecological outcomes. This option may include reintroducing missing plant species (i.e., planting a shrub layer, reintroducing certain forbs or grasses), or by increasing the density of overstorey and bridging gaps between remnant areas. Restoration plantings will not earn carbon credits and will be entirely managed (either by a contractor or themselves) and costed by the landholder. Restoration planting actions will be written into the management plan. The landholder may include any associated restoration planting costs in their bid.

## Five revegetation projects to help conserve threatened woodland communities

Below are five examples of revegetation projects that have been shown to help restore and conserve our threatened woodland communities.

### *1. Reconnecting woodland patches*

The fragmentation and isolation of woodlands is a major issue for many woodland species. This limits wildlife movements across the landscape resulting in localised extinctions and inbreeding. Creating corridors of connecting vegetation has been shown to facilitate wildlife movement and improve the gene flow of all types of organisms. Creating corridors can enable species such as Squirrel Gliders and Brown Treecreepers to return to woodlands they once occupied. In general, the wider the corridor the better, for this program corridors need to be a minimum of 30m wide.

### *2. Increase the area of woodland patches*

Today, most woodland patches in the tender area are only a few hectares or less, making it unviable for many species to breed or even exist in these patches. Simply increasing the size of a woodland area can result in creating habitat for a larger range of plants and animals and improve woodland health in general. One study shows that the addition of an adjoining planting to a remnant woodland increases bird diversity and reduces the dominance of aggressive Noisy Miners.

### *3. Reintroducing the shrub layer*

Over years of continuous grazing and farming the shrub layer has often been lost from many woodland patches. This has resulted in the loss or reduction of many species of plants and animals. Seeding or planting shrubs into woodland has often resulted in the establishment of self-replacing populations of these shrub species. Whether these are planted in thickets or dispersed along seeder or rip lines, they have been shown to increase the number of small woodland birds and reduce the impact of aggressive Noisy Miners.

### *4. Restoring the tree layer*

Generally, over centuries of continuous grazing and farming there has been very few trees naturally regenerate across the remnant woodland areas. As a result, most remnant trees are very old and are not replaced when they die. In many areas the woodlands have thinned out into a landscape of scattered paddock trees. Planting or seeding additional overstorey tree species in these cases are a good idea as a natural regeneration event could be a long-time

coming and limited to areas close to existing trees. This activity can often be incorporated when reintroducing shrubs. Restoring the tree cover can increase species diversity and assist species such as gliders and possums to safely move around the woodland.

**5. Reintroducing missing forbs and grasses**

Even in reasonably intact woodland there will often be many missing grazing sensitive forb and grass species. For many species it is unlikely they will ever naturally return, no matter how well the woodland is managed. Reintroducing such species has been shown to be effective with careful planning. Spreading seed loaded Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*) hay, scalping soil then seeding forbs and grasses or planting pockets of forbs and lillies have all been successfully attempted resulting self-sustaining populations.

**Roles, responsibilities, and timeline**

During site visits the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust and Murray Seed Services will work with landholders to determine the most appropriate revegetation options and plan for the carbon project area and draft the management plan for the conservation area.

Once a conservation agreement is on title, the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust’s main role is to provide landholder support and ensure conservation management, revegetation, and restoration actions are completed appropriately.

In the carbon planting areas, the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust will co-ordinate with the landholder and arrange for Murray Seed Services to prepare a carbon project implementation plan once the agreement is registered on title. The Trust will fund Murray Seed Services directly to prepare the plan and implement the plantings section of the plan. The landholder is responsible for completing site preparation as per the recommendations from Murray Seed Services.

Murray Seed Services is responsible for sourcing and preparing seed and tube stock, planting out the carbon planting areas and doing ‘top-up’ plantings in year 5 (see Figure 8).

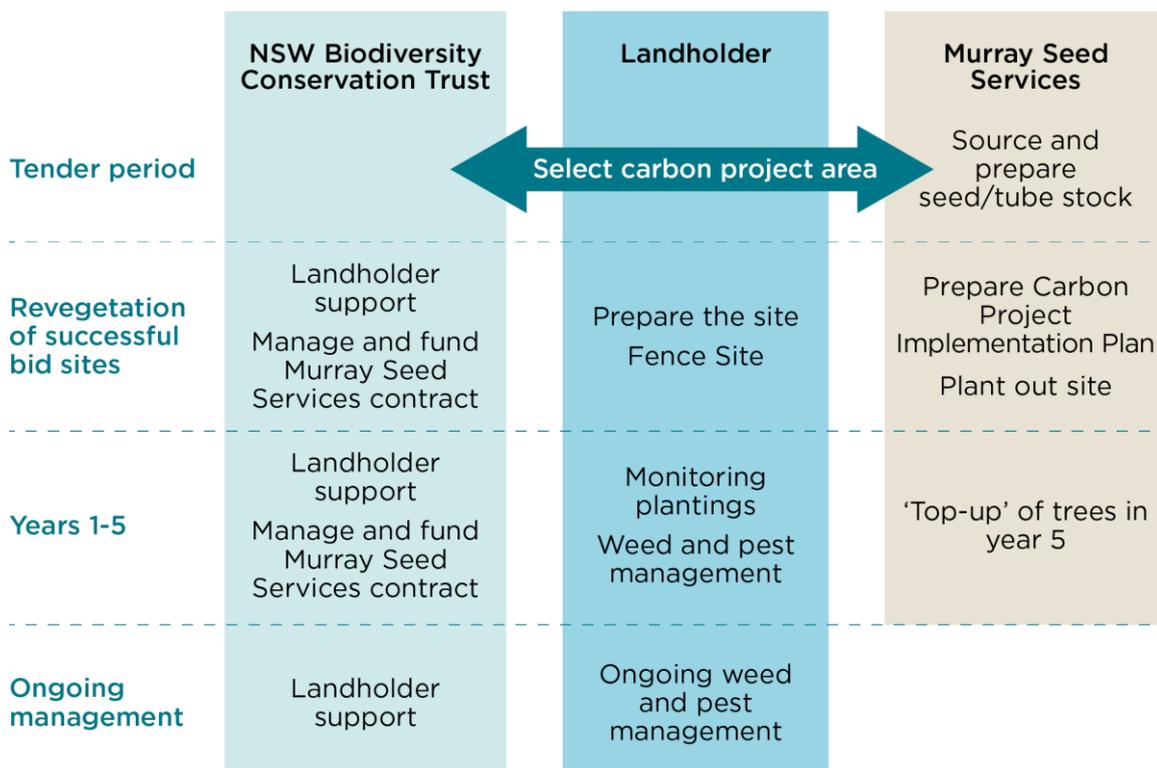


Figure 8. Roles and timelines for carbon planting area(s)

For restoration planting areas, the landholder is responsible for completing the restoration actions in the management plan: that is, site preparation, sourcing seed/tube stock and planting out the site, either using a contractor or themselves. The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust is available to provide support and advise (see Figure 9).

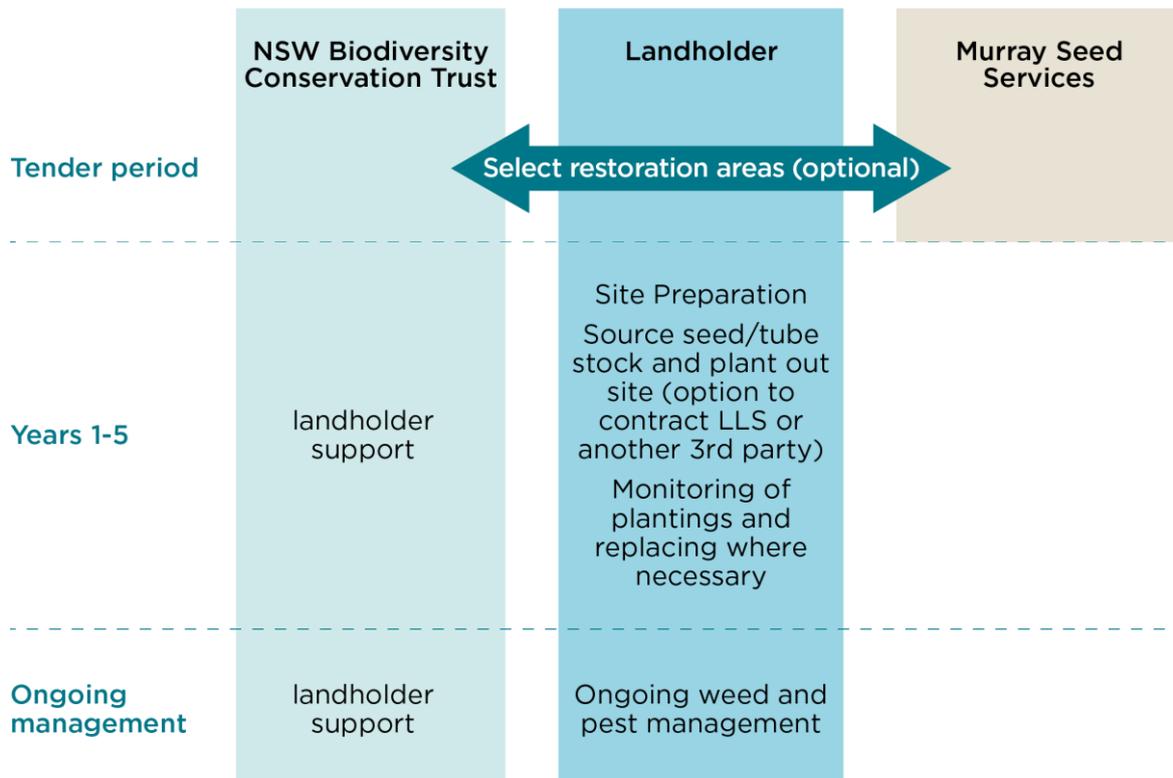


Figure 9. Roles and timelines for restoration area(s)

### Example species planting list for a Grassy Box Woodland community

The table below offers example plantings for a grassy box woodland community

Common Name	Scientific Name	Ratio/density and detail
<b>Trees</b> (to be planted as tube stock @ 180 stems/ha)		
White Box	<i>Eucalyptus albens</i>	5
Yellow Box	<i>Eucalyptus melliodora</i>	1
Blakely's Red Gum	<i>Eucalyptus blakelyi</i>	2
Kurrajong	<i>Brachychiton populneus</i>	1
<b>Shrubs</b> (Acacia species to be direct seeded, other species as tube stock @ 50 stems/ha)		
Gold-dust wattle	<i>Acacia acinacea</i>	10
Silver Wattle	<i>Acacia dealbata</i>	10
Hickory Wattle	<i>Acacia implexa</i>	10
Hakea Wattle	<i>Acacia hakeoides</i>	3
Australian Indigo	<i>Indigofera australis</i>	2
Common fringe-myrtle	<i>Calytrix tetragona</i>	1
Bush-peas	e.g., <i>Pultenaea</i> spp., <i>Daviesia</i> spp., <i>Dillwynia</i> spp.	1

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Cryptandra	<i>Cryptandra amara</i>	1
Climbing saltbush	<i>Einadia nutens</i>	5
<b>Forbs</b>		
Native flax	<i>Linum marginale</i>	Tube stock for Re-introduction node
Yam daisy/murrnong	<i>Microseris lanceolata</i>	Tube stock for Re-introduction node
Clustered Everlasting	<i>Chrysocephalum semipapposum</i>	Tube stock for Re-introduction node
Chocolate/Vanilla/Yellow bulbine Lilly	<i>Arthropodium spp</i>	Forb/grass mulch and tube stock for Re-introduction node
New Holland Daisy	<i>Vittadinia cuneata</i>	Forb/grass mulch
<b>Grass/Grass like</b>		
Kangaroo Grass	<i>Themeda triandra</i>	Tube stock for Re-introduction node
Snow Tussock Grass	<i>Poa sieberiana</i>	Tube stock for Re-introduction node
Barbed-wire grass	<i>Cymbopogon refractus</i>	Tube stock for Re-introduction node
Wild sorghum	<i>Sorghum leiocladum</i>	Forb/grass mulch
Red-leg Grass	<i>Bothriochloa macra</i>	Forb/grass mulch
Weeping Grass	<i>Microleana stipoides</i>	Forb/grass mulch
Common Wheat Grass	<i>Anthosachne scabra</i>	Forb/grass mulch
Wattle-matt-rush	<i>Lomandra filiformis</i>	Tube stock

### Additional information

There are many great resources out there to help assist you with your revegetation works. Many of them are included in the landowner pack, so please take the time to look through them. Planning and good site preparation are always the key to a successful revegetation project, along with the information provided in the landowner pack, the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust and Murray Seed Services will be there to assist you with revegetation project.

- Sustainable Farms Tools and Resources: [www.sustainablefarms.org.au/resources/](http://www.sustainablefarms.org.au/resources/)
- Local Land Service, **Planting your patch: A guide to revegetation on your property**
- **Biodiversity Conservation Trust Restoring Native Vegetation: Guidelines for assisted regeneration and revegetation**

## ATTACHMENT 3: PREPARING A BID

This guide is to assist landholders to prepare a bid to participate in the Restoring Murray Woodlands Biodiversity and Carbon Conservation Tender pilot under the Biodiversity Conservation Trust's Conservation Management Program.

### Receiving a management plan

The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust 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 NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust field staff and includes agreed management actions. Distinct remnant vegetation areas and carbon plantings areas will be mapped for which different bidding rules apply. For the carbon plantings areas the plan will include establishment of any necessary fencing in year 1 of the agreement to secure the environmental plantings project area and maintenance of the area beyond the carbon crediting period.

You should phone NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust 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 NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust prior to 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 the management plan (and associated management actions) are final and will be 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 NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust 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 (within the remnant area of your conservation area 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).
- fencing costs to secure the environmental plantings project area in year 1 of the agreement
- maintenance of the biodiversity values in the carbon planting area beyond the carbon crediting period

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
- income from the sale of ACCUs generated by the environmental plantings project areas
- 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 NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust 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 in-perpetuity conservation management payments.

To prepare your bid, you must complete a bid template which will be provided to you with your final Management Plan. The bid template requires you to nominate the conservation management payments you wish to receive. This will be split across the two components of the proposed conservation area:

**Remnant Vegetation area:** Nominate payments for years 1-15, and an in-perpetuity payment.

**Carbon planting project area:** If fencing is required to secure the area, you can nominate a payment to establish the fencing in year 1 of the agreement. All sites must nominate a maintenance payment for the environmental plantings project area which will begin from the end of the carbon crediting period. This will involve the maintenance of the environmental plantings above those specified in the environmental plantings pilot permanence plan. The earliest the maintenance payment will begin is in year 26 of the agreement.

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 NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust 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 NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust, and possibly renegotiated, every five years. In limited circumstances, the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust 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, the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust 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 NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust 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.

The table below shows how the bid is structured across the remnant vegetation and carbon planting project areas.

<b>Payment timing</b>	<b>Conservation Agreement</b>	
<b>Year</b>	<b>Remnant vegetation area</b>	<b>Carbon planting project area</b>
After the agreement date	Landholder bid	Landholder bid (essential conservation fencing only) BCT funds carbon plantings
After the end of each reporting period (years 1 to 15)	Landholder bid (can bid different amounts for years 1-15)	Landholder funds maintenance
Year 16	Landholder bid (fixed, ongoing annual payment for site management) for year 16 and subsequent years	Landholder funds maintenance
Year 26 or when carbon crediting period complete		Landholder bid (fixed, ongoing annual payment) to manage biodiversity values of area

### How do I submit a bid?

Bids must be received by the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust by midnight on the closing date.

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

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**.

Facsimiled submissions will not be accepted.

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

### What advice should I seek?

The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust'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 in the offer.

The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust will work to keep the length of time between bidding and notification of success to a minimum.

The CER is not involved in the bid assessment or selection process.

### 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 three components:

- conservation values on site, and proposed management actions
- the duration or term of the agreement. The BVS gives greatest weight to in-perpetuity agreements, in this offer only in-perpetuity bids are eligible to participate.
- 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>22</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 NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust 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.

You will be accountable for the completing management actions identified in the resulting agreement if a bid is successful. This includes the maintenance of the environmental plantings project area, above requirements specified in the environmental plantings pilot permanence plan, from the end of the carbon crediting period.

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 NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust 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 NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust can provide you with information about other

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<sup>22</sup> Sites with eligible existing in-perpetuity agreements will be subject to a reduced Risk score.

programs and future opportunities. The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust commits to not publicly disclosing data for unsuccessful bidders/applicants.

If your bid is successful, you will be asked to register your carbon project with the Clean Energy Regulator. You will then 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 NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust website.

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

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

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

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