Biodiversity Conservation Trust

Agency Information Guide | February 2023

Version 3.1

Contents

1. Introduction

The *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (GIPA Act) provides members of the public with a right of access to government information.

Under the GIPA Act, each NSW Government department and agency is required to publish an Agency Information Guide.

This Agency Information Guide provides a general description of:

- Our agency's functions and structure

- How our functions affect members of the public

- How members of the public can participate in the formulation of the policies of the Biodiversity Conservation Trust (BCT) and provide feedback

- The types of information we hold

- The types of information we make available to the public, and how to access it

- How to access other information

2. About the BCT

2.1 About us

The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust (BCT) is a statutory not-for-profit body established under Part 10 of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*. From 1 January 2024, the BCT will sit within the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.

Our statutory object is to protect and enhance biodiversity by:

1. Encouraging landholders to enter into cooperative arrangements for the management and protection of the natural environment that is significant for the conservation of biodiversity;
2. Seeking strategic biodiversity offset outcomes to compensate for the loss of biodiversity due to development and other activities;
3. Providing mechanisms for achieving the conservation of biodiversity; and
4. Promoting public knowledge, appreciation and understanding of biodiversity and the importance of conserving biodiversity.

2.2 Our functions

The functions of the BCT are also set out in Part 10 of the Biodiversity Conservation Act. BCT programs are also guided by our four-year business plan, approved by the Minister for the Environment.

Our vision

The BCT's vision is for vibrant private land conservation areas protecting the unique and diverse plants and animals of NSW.

Our purpose

We partner with landholders to enhance and conserve biodiversity.

Our culture

People: We respect and collaborate with our colleagues, our landholders, and our stakeholders.

Purpose: We focus on our role to protect and enhance biodiversity.

Public value: We are effective and accountable.

More information on the BCT is available on our website.

3. Organisational structure

The affairs of the BCT are governed by its Board of Directors. The Board is appointed by the Minister for the Environment.

Led by the Chief Executive Officer, the BCT has four branches that deliver the BCT's goals and programs:

Partnerships and Investment branch

The Partnerships and Investment branch identifies and develops strategic partnerships with private sector and non-government entities to accelerate private land conservation in NSW.

Programs

The Programs branch underpins private land conservation in NSW, driving high value conservation outcomes guided by NSW Government legislation, policy and programs. Programs staff branch support the design of our conservation and education programs underpinned by scientific and ecological expertise.

Regional Delivery

Regional Delivery branch staff members work to support landholders and local partners across seven regions in NSW. They are local advocates for, and experts in conservation of habitats and species across the areas they work and live, understand local conditions and have the networks to support property owners protect, restore and manage native vegetation and biodiversity on their land.

Strategy and Finance

The Strategy and Finance branch delivers business enabling services to the whole business to assure forward-focussed continuity of service delivery. The services include finance, governance, planning and performance, risk & governance, personnel support, and communications.

More information about the BCT's Board, structure and operations is available on the BCT website www.bct.nsw.gov.au.

4. How we engage with the public and our stakeholders

The BCT's functions affect the public and its stakeholders directly and indirectly. The BCT is focused on maximising biodiversity conservation outcomes by supporting private land conservation, using public and private resources. The BCT plays a critical role in supporting the delivery of a healthy, productive and resilient environment across NSW.

4.1 Public participation

The BCT welcomes feedback and suggestions. You can make an enquiry or contact us by email, phone or post.

The BCT also uses a range of consultation and engagement initiatives to support public participation in its work, including surveys, workshops, newsletters, and through its website. The BCT maintains an active social media presence through its Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn and YouTube channels.

The BCT establishes custom communication channels with the public and its stakeholders on a project by project basis for specific program initiatives such as conservation tenders.

5. Information held by the BCT

The BCT holds a range of information in relation to its strategy and operations. The table below provides the main categories of information and the different types of information within each category.

Governance	Charters Guarantee of Service Instruments of delegation Board and Committee papers Annual reports Internal briefing and working papers
Strategy and Planning	Business plan Project plans Communications, education and engagement, and research strategies Internal briefing and working papers
Policy	Policies Guidelines Manuals Forms and templates
Programs	Program implementation plans BCT Assessment Metric BCT Ecological Monitoring Module Fact sheets Educational resources
Commercial	Program agreements Program monitoring reports Commercial records
Financial	Financial records Financial reports and forecasts
Registers	Public Register of Private Land Conservation Agreements Public Register of BCT Grants
Internal Operations	Internal personnel files Internal procedure documents
Correspondence	Correspondence with other government agencies, landholders, local government, conservation and land management groups and the business community

6. How to access information held by the BCT

6.1 Open access information

The BCT makes a wide range of information available on its underline website, free of charge.

In accordance with the requirements of the GIPA Act, mandatory open access information is information that the BCT must make publicly available unless it is not in the public interest to do so. The BCT makes the following mandatory open access information available free of charge:

- Agency Information Guide
- Governing Body Charters – Board of Directors, Audit and Risk Committee, Programs and Delivery Committee
- Charter of Customer Service
- Guarantee of Service
- BCT Business Plan
- BCT Annual Report
- Information about BCT Programs
- Ecological assessment and monitoring information
- Public Register of Private Land Conservation Agreements
- Public Register of BCT Conservation Partners Grants
- Policy Documents

Under the GIPA Act, the BCT is also required to ensure that it does not publish specific open access information if there is an overriding public interest against disclosure of that information. The BCT is required to make a record of any decision to not make open access information publicly available. Any such decision made by the BCT will be recorded in this Guide.

BCT decision to not make certain information publicly available

In October 2023, the BCT Executive decided after a comprehensive review to uphold its policy to not publish personal and related information in its Public Registers. These information types include the names of past and present agreement holders, certain geospatial references and other information about the agreement such as a copy of the agreement and related documents (where applicable).

Since BCT grants are awarded only to BCT agreement holders, this decision also applies to the publication of grant information at Service NSW under the Grants and Funding Finder.

6.2 Proactive release of information

The BCT is also required to proactively release information unless it is not in the public interest. The BCT Executive periodically reviews the BCT's proactive release activities. Members of the public can suggest that information not already available on the BCT's website can be proactively disclosed by forwarding any requests to info@bct.nsw.gov.au.

6.3 Informal access

You can request access to information that is not available on our website. Informal requests for information can be made to DCCEEW.

6.4 Formal access applications

If the information you are seeking is not available on the BCT website and is not otherwise routinely provided by DCCEEW on request, you have a right to formally apply for access to information. Formal requests for information can be made to DCCEEW.