

Information Sheet 01

South Eastern

Questions and Answers

What is the *South Eastern BushBids* Project?

South Eastern BushBids is a project of the South Australian Murray-Darling Basin and South East Natural Resources Management Boards. *South Eastern BushBids* complements investment in biodiversity conservation through projects such as Southern Mallee BushBids, NatureLinks, threatened species recovery projects and projects of the Coorong and Tatiara Local Action Plan.

Is *South Eastern BushBids* only interested in management of existing native vegetation?

South Eastern BushBids is focused on protecting and managing existing native vegetation. Supplementary planting in patches of degraded native vegetation, and planting of buffer or linking areas for remnant vegetation will also be considered as a management service, where it is likely to provide a significant conservation benefit and contribute to new areas of native vegetation.

How much native vegetation do I have to manage to be eligible?

An eligible site must be at least 5 ha in area and be assessed as native vegetation by a *South Eastern BushBids* field officer or be at least 0.5 ha of a priority threatened ecological community. Priority threatened ecological communities are: Grey Box Grassy Woodlands, Buloke Woodlands, Iron-grass Natural Temperate Grasslands and Seasonal Herbaceous Wetlands (Freshwater).

I've got more than one area of native vegetation on my property; how is this dealt with?

You can submit separate bids for each area of native vegetation, or you can combine a number of sites on your property into one bid. However, revegetation sites and native vegetation sites cannot be combined in the same bid. Each separate successful bid will require an individual management plan to be included under the management agreement.

How will I know what management actions to undertake?

A *South Eastern BushBids* officer will visit your property to discuss management options and undertake a site assessment. The *South Eastern BushBids* officer will provide advice on current threats to native vegetation on your site and identify potential management actions (including timing and duration) to address these threats. You will also be able to discuss your own ideas for management during this process.

I've got a Heritage Agreement; is this considered as a management service?

South Eastern BushBids aims to pay for management services that maintain or improve the quality of native vegetation on private land. An existing Heritage Agreement provides permanent protection and will be considered as a management service for the purpose of assessing bids.

Can I change the management actions in the draft management plan?

If there are any changes that you would like to make, or if you have any questions, please contact a *South Eastern BushBids* officer on **1300 847 450** as soon as possible and no later than 14 business days after the draft management plan is posted to you. If changes to the management plan are required, the management services will be reassessed and the management plan redrafted. You will have 24 business days to return your bid from the first date the draft management plan is posted to you.

I am leasing the property; can I sign a management agreement?

Lessees will be eligible to sign a management agreement as long as they have the written authority of the owner of the site and the proposed management actions are not already the responsibility of the lessee under the existing lease arrangement. *South Eastern BushBids* officers may request a copy of the lease.

Is public land eligible?

Where the Minister responsible for environment and conservation is the registered proprietor and the land is a dedicated reserve, the land will not be eligible for *South Eastern BushBids*. Crown land will be eligible providing the conditions described above for lessees and leases are met. Land under the care and control of local government will be eligible if it contains a priority site or one or more of the threatened ecological communities: Grey Box Grassy Woodlands, Buloke Woodlands, Iron-grass Natural Temperate Grasslands or Seasonal Herbaceous Wetlands (Freshwater).

How long are the management agreements for?

Management agreements will be for a 5-year period.

Will the management agreements be 'common law' or another type of agreement?

Yes, the management agreements will be contracts under common law.



Photo: P. G. Tucker



Photo: C. Dixon



Photo: S. Bourne

What will be in the management agreement?

The agreement will be a simple document in 'plain English'. It will contain a date of commencement and termination, obligations of the landholder and *South Eastern BushBids* and interpretation clauses. The agreement will also contain a number of schedules including the payment schedule, an agreed management plan and a site map.

Who will know the contents of my bid and management agreement?

Bids will remain confidential between the landholder and *South Eastern BushBids*, as will cost, payment and management service score details. Information on the geographic location of sites under agreement and the associated management plan will be available through *South Eastern BushBids* for public accountability purposes. *South Eastern BushBids* may also make general statistics available, in compliance with relevant information privacy legislation. Data collected through *South Eastern BushBids* may be used for research purposes.

How will the agreements be monitored?

Landholders will be required to submit an annual report to *South Eastern BushBids* detailing the actions undertaken during the preceding 12 months. *South Eastern BushBids* will seek to revisit a number of sites annually. These visits will include an assessment of progress in implementing the management plan and may provide additional technical support to landholders. Follow-up assessments of the condition of the native vegetation will also be undertaken on some sites. Any breach of the signed agreement may result in the cessation of payments.

Can I change the proposed management actions once I have signed the agreement?

Management agreements can be varied with the written consent of both parties. *South Eastern BushBids* will only consider changes that lead to an equal or improved biodiversity outcome. Re-negotiation of payment will not be possible.

Can I withdraw from the process?

You can withdraw from the process without penalty at any time up to signing the final management agreement. If you wish to withdraw from the agreement after this time you should contact *South Eastern BushBids* to discuss the options.

Can I buy or sell the property or transfer the lease before the end of the agreement?

The agreements are not registered on title. Sale of the site/s or transfer of the lease would terminate the agreement. Landholders are required to notify *South Eastern BushBids* of any changes in ownership and the new landholder may be given the opportunity to sign a new

agreement for completion of the actions specified in the original agreement. To be eligible for the program, a landholder must be the legal owner or lessee of the property at the time of registering an Expression of Interest.

What happens at the end of the agreement period?

On-ground works through *South Eastern BushBids* are designed to achieve a long-term conservation benefit. At the end of the agreement period landholders' agreed active management obligations cease and are replaced by the standard responsibilities under the *Native Vegetation Act 1991* and other legislation. Landholders will then be able to manage the remnant and reestablished native vegetation according to their own wishes and in accordance with legislation applying at that time.

How much money can I apply for?

There is no fixed limit on the amount of money a landholder can bid for; however, bidding will be competitive. *South Eastern BushBids* will determine the benefits and costs of each management plan and bid and will allocate funds based on value for money.

How will I be paid?

You will receive an up-front payment for the first year of the agreement followed by payments by cheque, or other mutually agreed payment method, subject to submitting a report verifying the actions undertaken in the preceding 12 months.

Taxation implications

If you are considering participating in *South Eastern BushBids* you should consult your financial adviser or the Australian Taxation Office about the income and tax implications of receiving *South Eastern BushBids* funds.

Will I be eligible if I receive public funds from other sources?

Landholders who have an existing contract or agreement extending beyond 30 June 2013 to deliver the same or similar management services as those required by *South Eastern BushBids*, will not be eligible for the program. Successful bidders who sign *South Eastern BushBids* management agreements will not be eligible to receive further funding through any other publicly-funded assistance program for the management actions identified in the management agreement, at the particular site, for the period of the agreement.

Call 1300 847 450
for more information or to register
an Expression of Interest

