



## Fact Sheet 04

## Woodland

### Management and vegetation information

Participants in *Woodland BushBids* will be provided with a management plan and a report on the condition of the native vegetation at their sites. The vegetation condition report and management plan will help landholders understand their native vegetation and how it can be managed to protect and improve it.

Management plans and vegetation condition reports will be provided to all eligible participants who receive a site visit, regardless of whether they are successful in bidding for funds to undertake management.

### Management information

#### What information will I receive to help me manage my native vegetation?

*Woodland BushBids* site management plans are written for each eligible site and are based on information collected at the site and in discussion with the landholder. The management plan contains six main sections:

#### 1. Site history and protection

The site history and protection section documents any past or current management plans or agreements relevant to the site, and any relevant legal requirements or responsibilities of the landholder relating to the site. Existing or proposed applications for a Heritage Agreement or other type of conservation covenant are recorded here.

Information on any known threatened species, threatened communities or threatened species habitat at the site is also recorded. This information will come from site assessments, previous survey data or management plans, and/or from relevant State government databases.

#### 2. Targets for management of the site

To help landholders and *Woodland BushBids* to achieve conservation outcomes from investment in native vegetation management, a set of targets or objectives for management will be described for each site.

Targets will include some broadly described objectives about improving the condition of native vegetation at the site as well as some specific objectives. Specific objectives will include a target level for control of specified weeds.

#### 3. Management actions

Landholder management actions or exclusions are agreed by the landholder and documented in the management plan. The types of management actions and commitments are listed on the *Woodland BushBids* 'Management Services' information sheet. Detailed management actions and the timing for undertaking the actions are listed for each year of the management agreement.

#### 4. Conditions on management actions and commitments

Conditions on management to ensure the management plan success will be documented. This will include requirements for fencing, fire management and annual reporting.

#### 5. Guidelines and minimum standards for management

Minimum standards for management actions are listed in the management plan, consistent with those listed on the *Woodland BushBids* 'Management services' information sheet.

Minimum standards and methods for control of high threat weed species are specified for each weed occurring at the site. Best practice bushcare weed management principles are outlined to help landholders to achieve the best results from weed management. Plant species appropriate for supplementary and buffer planting are also listed where appropriate.

#### 6. Plant species lists

Lists of the native and introduced (weed) plant species present at the assessment site will be provided<sup>1</sup>.

### Vegetation information

Apart from the vegetation information listed above (threatened species, native plant and introduced plant species lists), landholders will receive a *Bushland Condition Score* for each site assessed.

<sup>1</sup> The species list contains the species recorded in the *Woodlands BushBids* assessment quadrat and may not include all species which may occur within the site or property.





## What is a Bushland Condition Score?

A Bushland Condition Score is derived from assessments undertaken at your site using the bushland condition monitoring method developed by the Nature Conservation Society of South Australia<sup>2</sup>. This method examines a number of aspects of the bush as a living system, including the key environmental indicators presented below. Condition indicators are rated on a five point scale from very good, through good, moderate and poor, to very poor<sup>3</sup>.

**Plant Species Diversity:** As a general rule, the greater the number of species found at a site the better the condition. Variety in plants provides habitat for a variety of animals.

**Weed Abundance and Threat:** Weed invasion is one of the greatest and most common threats to bushland health and ecological integrity. Weeds displace native plants and therefore reduce the amount of good habitat for animals and other native plants. A 'very good' score for weed abundance and threat indicates a site with few or no weeds.

**Structural Diversity A- Ground Cover:** In most healthy plant communities in South Australia the ground is protected by a layer or crust of mosses, lichens and leaf litter and there is very little bare ground or exposed soil. The living crust and litter help keep a living soil, prevents soil erosion, provides a seed germination bed and helps recycle nutrients. Bare ground will decrease as plant cover, mosses and lichens and leaf litter increase.

**Structural Diversity B- Plant Life Forms:** In healthy plant communities there will be a wide variety of native plant life forms present. In degraded communities weed species tend to dominate the cover of one or more layers. Weeds also reduce the diversity of other life forms in the layers below, leading to a reduction in overall score.

**Regeneration of Native Trees:** A 'poor' or 'very poor' score for tree regeneration indicates that very few individuals of the tree species present are either germinating or surviving through to seedling establishment. A low regeneration score would be expected in bushland that has previously had long-term, high levels of disturbance but may also occur when the plant community requires relatively uncommon episodic events for vegetation recruitment.

**Tree Health- Dieback:** In most ecosystems, some level of stress and/or insect attack on trees is a normal component of healthy ecosystems. Dead trees still have high habitat value and play a role in the nutrient cycle. However, high incidence of tree dieback may be a sign of native vegetation condition decline.

**Tree Health- Lerp Damage:** Lerp s are small insects that suck sap from leaves. They are a natural part of plant communities and normally their numbers will fluctuate both throughout the year and between years. Healthy trees will recover well from lerp damage, however prolonged heavy damage is a symptom of general stress in the ecosystem.

**Tree Health- Mistletoe:** Mistletoe is a native plant that attaches to trees or shrubs, using them as a source of water and nutrients, rather than rooting in the soil. Mistletoes are a vital link in the life cycle and survival of many native animal species such as butterflies and birds. A healthy tree can support, outlive, and shed the occasional mistletoe during its lifetime with no adverse effects, however, trees with many mistletoes may become stressed if their ability to supply the mistletoes with water and nutrients is overstretched. This may contribute to a decline in tree health with a significant loss of foliage and vigour.

**Tree Habitat:** In a healthy community, most adult trees should have a nearly complete canopy. Ideally, a scattering of trees should be old enough to contain hollows. There should be a range of tree sizes including some large individuals as well as seedlings and saplings. All these factors contribute to the availability of tree habitat for fauna.

**Fallen Logs and Trees:** Because the number of fallen logs or trees will vary between tree species, age of trees, and climate factors, it is not possible to say how many fallen trees or logs is "natural" for your plant community. However, in general, the more fallen logs or trees the higher the habitat value of your bushland because animals such as echidnas, small reptiles and insects use fallen timber for food and shelter.

**Total Grazing Pressure:** Unnaturally high grazing levels in bushland may be the result of domestic stock grazing, feral animals and/or if they are present in unnaturally high densities, native herbivores. Heavy or inappropriate grazing may damage or remove individual plants and change the understorey composition, leading to the removal or partial removal of plants that form the natural shrub and ground layers.

## Call 1300 847 450

for more information or to register  
an Expression of Interest.

<sup>2</sup> Croft SJ, Pedler JA, and Milne TI (2005) *Bushland Condition Monitoring Manual: Murray Darling Basin*. Nature Conservation Society of South Australia.

<sup>3</sup> Some condition indicators will not be relevant for some types of native vegetation.

