



Information Sheet 01

River Bend

Questions and Answers

What is the *River Bend BushBids* Project?

River Bend BushBids is a project of the South Australian Murray-Darling Basin Natural Resources Management Board. *River Bend BushBids* complements investment in biodiversity conservation through projects such as *Woodland BushBids*, landscape scale feral animal control programs, wetland management, NatureLinks, Regent Parrot and other threatened species recovery projects.

Is *River Bend BushBids* only interested in management of existing native vegetation?

River Bend BushBids is focused on protecting and managing existing native vegetation and natural wetlands. Supplementary planting in patches of degraded native vegetation, and planting of buffer or linking areas for remnant vegetation or natural wetlands may be considered as a management service, where it is likely to provide a significant conservation benefit.

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 and/or natural wetland by a *River Bend BushBids* field officer. Unless otherwise agreed by the program, a maximum of 300 ha of any one broad vegetation type per landholder will be eligible. Broad vegetation types include mallee, Mallee Box woodland, Black Box woodland, Red Gum woodland, wetland and chenopod shrubland. A landholder may enter more than 300 ha in the program if the area contains more than one broad vegetation type and no more than 300 ha of one broad vegetation type.

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. 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 *River Bend BushBids* officer will visit your property to discuss management options and undertake a site assessment. The *River Bend BushBids* officer will provide advice on current threats to native vegetation and natural wetlands 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?

River Bend BushBids aims to pay for management services that maintain or improve the quality of native vegetation and natural wetlands 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 *River Bend BushBids* officer on Tel: **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 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. *River Bend 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 *River Bend BushBids*. Crown land will be eligible providing the conditions described above for lessees and leases are met.

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: M. Humphrey



Photo: M. Humphrey



Photo: C. Nicolai

What will be in the management agreement?

The agreement will be a simple document of around five pages in 'plain English'. It will contain a date of commencement and termination, obligations of the landholder and *River Bend 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 *River Bend 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 *River Bend BushBids* for public accountability purposes. *River Bend BushBids* may also make general statistics available, in compliance with relevant information privacy legislation.

How will the agreements be monitored?

Landholders will be required to submit an annual report to *River Bend BushBids* detailing the actions undertaken during the preceding 12 months. *River Bend 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. *River Bend 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 *River Bend 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. *River Bend BushBids* should be notified of any changes and may offer the new

landholder 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?

At the end of the agreement period landholders' management obligations under the agreement cease. Landholders will then be able to manage the vegetation according to their own wishes and in accordance with other responsibilities applying at that time. Landholders will be free to enter into new arrangements for conservation management.

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. *River Bend 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 system, subject to submitting a report verifying the actions undertaken in the preceding 12 months.

Taxation implications

If you are considering participating in *River Bend BushBids* you should consult your financial adviser or the Australian Taxation Office about the income and tax implications of receiving *River Bend 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 *River Bend BushBids*, will not be eligible for the program. Successful bidders who sign *River Bend 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