



15 Frequently asked questions and answers

What if I am not sure if I have box gum grassy woodland on my property?

Chapter 4 will help you to decide if you have box gum grassy woodland on your property. If you are still unsure please submit a Request for Site Assessment form and a field officer will contact you to discuss.

What if I am not sure whether I want to be involved in the Box Gum Grassy Woodland Project?

Involvement in the Project is voluntary and submitting a Request for Site Assessment form is not binding. There are no penalties for deciding not to go ahead. At any time prior to deciding to sign a contract you can decide not to continue.

Are there any rules relating to applications on leasehold land?

Lessees are entitled to participate in the Project provided the following conditions are met:

- the conditions of the lease do not prevent any of the proposed activities or actions to conserve an area of box gum grassy woodland on the land.
- you have been given the authority to enter into a contract with the Australian Government.

What will I need to do if, after signing a contract, my circumstances change and I wish to sell my land?

The contract does not prevent you from selling your land. But the contract requires that you inform the Australian Government about any changes in land ownership that may occur within the contract period. This allows the Australian Government the opportunity to discuss the option of the potential buyers taking over the contract.

Can I submit a bid to manage a site under this Project if I already receive assistance to manage a site?

If you are currently receiving funding support from any source for conserving box gum grassy woodland on your nominated patch then you cannot bid through this Project for the same patch. If you have a covenant on a box gum grassy woodland site that requires you to undertake certain management activities for which you receive no remuneration, you are able to participate in the Project, provided other eligibility criteria are met.



When should I start consulting financial advisers and others about my bid?

If you think that you are likely to proceed with a bid you should start seeking advice early. This could help you with costing the management activities you want to carry out for inclusion in your bid price. Fencing contractors and suppliers of herbicides may be able to assist with costing some of the physical activities you might undertake. If, in order to manage an area of woodland, you will incur some loss of income due to altering or stopping a current land use, you may include this cost in your bid price. For assistance in assessing these costs you may wish to talk to your accountant/financial adviser.

You should also check with your financial adviser or the Australian Tax Office (ATO) regarding the possible taxation implications of your proposed bid and may wish to contact Centrelink about any impacts on your Centrelink entitlements.

Please see chapter 13 on Taxation, and chapter 14 on Stewardship payments and Centrelink. You may also wish to consult a legal adviser regarding your obligations under the contract you will need to sign with the Australian Government.

Can I submit more than one bid?

You can submit one bid for each property you own, so land owners who have more than one property can submit one bid for each, if eligible.

What happens if a natural event affects the woodland I am contracted to manage?

The Australian Government recognises that from time to time significant natural events, such as floods, droughts, bushfires and storms, severely impact on natural resources. For this Project, these impacts are seen as beyond the land manager's control.

What happens if I cannot meet my obligations in the contract in the agreed time frames?

If you cannot meet your obligations within agreed timeframes, you need to let us know as soon as possible. The Australian Government will then consider the circumstances and discuss an appropriate way forward. These may include revising management actions, an extension of timelines or termination of the contract.

Will I be audited?

A random sample of Project contracts will be audited each year. If you are subject to audit you will be contacted well in advance and appropriate arrangements will be made to ensure any visits happen at a mutually convenient time for you and the auditor.

Is the income received through the Project subject to income tax?

Yes. Payments received under the Project are subject to income tax. See chapter 13 for further information.



Will this income affect my eligibility for drought assistance or any other Government assistance?

Possibly. If you have any concerns about these matters, we suggest you talk to your financial adviser or to Centrelink. See Chapter 14 for a broad understanding of these matters.

How long do I need to sign up? Can I change my mind about the length of the contract?

Whilst contracts will be for a minimum of 10 years, and no longer than 15 years, the Australian Government has a clear preference for long term contracts. The length of the contract that you offer is reflected in the score for your site and hence should not be changed after you have confirmed a draft management plan that will be sent to you following your site assessment.

What will be my reporting requirements?

You will be required to submit an annual report on your progress implementing the agreed actions, as outlined in the contract. The reporting requirements will be simple, and should be considered in your bid. Please see Chapter 11 for further information.

Will the Australian Government or researchers at various times require access to my property?

The Australian Government and service providers employed by the government will need access to your property from time to time for the length of your contract. Before entering your property, the Australian Government, or an authorised representative, will:

- contact you and arrange a suitable time
- not enter your land without you or your representative present
- respect and comply with your reasonable safety and security procedures.

It is anticipated that there will be periodic monitoring for a sample of sites, but all access visits to your property will always need to occur with your permission.

If endangered species or noxious weeds are found on my property will that affect how I am allowed to farm my property?

Noxious weeds are your responsibility under existing state and federal laws. The cost of managing other weeds which may compromise the value of the box gum grassy woodland can be included in your bid as can the management of weeds listed as Weeds of National Significance (see Chapter 6).



▲ Spotted Tail Quoll (Photo: DEWHA)

If endangered species are present, the Australian Government is more likely to provide incentives to protect the woodland. Any discussions about management options will be only for the area nominated by the land manager, and may affect how this area is farmed. No inspection will be made of other areas of the property. You will be provided with a handbook that will provide up to date information on how to implement the management actions required to reduce external threats to your woodland.

Has the Australian Government run this sort of project before?

Yes. The Australian Government has run previous rounds of the Environmental Stewardship Box Gum Grassy Woodland Project in the Lachlan, Murrumbidgee, Central West, Namoi and Border Rivers Gwydir Catchment Management Authority regions in New South Wales and in the Condamine, Border Rivers-Maranoa-Balonne and South East NRM regions in Queensland. The Australian Government has also run similar projects such as 'BushBids' in South Australia and the 'Forest Conservation Fund' in Tasmania. These projects were also market based initiatives. Some State governments have also run stewardship projects.

More information on the Australian Government's market based projects can be found at:

➔ www.marketbasedinstruments.gov.au

What happens after the contract ends? Can I sign-up again?

Contracts under the Box Gum Grassy Woodland Project can be for up to 15 years. At this stage, it is not possible to say what the Australian Government may offer beyond the end of individual contracts.

What are the implications for participation in future carbon credit schemes?

If you sign an agreement under the Box Gum Grassy Woodland Project you will, subject to the criteria surrounding carbon credits, be able to use the site to participate in any future carbon credit scheme.

If I miss out this time can I apply another time?

Yes, **if** another tender round is offered. But, **if you are interested in participating then you are encouraged to do so through this current round.**