BushTender
- the landholder perspective:

A report on landholder responses to the BushTender trial
BushTender - the landholder perspective:

A report on landholder responses to the BushTender trial
Acknowledgments
Thank you to all of the landholders who participated in the BushTender trial and provided such detailed feedback on their experiences. Thank you also to those landholders who gave permission for the use of their photographs in this publication.
MINISTER’S FOREWORD

Victoria has one of the most cleared landscapes in Australia. Since European settlement of Victoria began in the 1830s, about 66% of our native vegetation has been cleared. About 92% of that clearing has been on private land. This loss of native vegetation cover has led to salinity, water quality and soil erosion problems, as well as threatening the diversity of our native flora and fauna. The Victorian Government is committed to reversing this decline.

To achieve this we have to better protect and manage native vegetation on private land, without reducing productivity. The cost of managing native vegetation has to be shared fairly, too, between landowners, communities and regions.

Research shows planning controls have slowed the clearing of native vegetation in Victoria, but many remnants on private land still need to be managed a lot better.

Many landholders have understood and responded to the challenge by voluntarily taking steps to protect native vegetation on their properties, but the Victorian Government understands more needs to be done to influence the behaviour of other landholders to protect remnants on their land.

That’s why five years ago the Victorian Government began a pilot project called “BushTender”. The project’s aim was simple – to provide financial motivations for landowners to better protect and manage native vegetation on their properties while ensuring efficient use of public funds for biodiversity and native vegetation benefits.

BushTender was trialled in two phases between 2001 and 2003 in northern Victoria and Gippsland. It was the first time in Australia that landholders could set their own price on the management services they were prepared to offer to protect and improve their native vegetation. This price was compared with bids from all other participating landholders. Successful bids were those that offered the best value for money.

BushTender – the landholder perspective presents the opinions of landholders who took part in the trial. The report shows the BushTender approach appeals to a broad landholder audience, including some with little or no previous involvement in other programs.

The success of the trials has led to BushTender being expanded to other parts of Victoria. Several BushTender-type projects have now been conducted across Victoria. A wide range of landholders across many different property types have found these projects to be appealing, while the approach has also ensured the targeted and efficient use of public funds.

Growing on the success of BushTender, the Victorian Government has provided $3.2 million to undertake targeted BushTender projects in north-east and central Victoria as part of the Moving Forward initiative. A further $2.7 million from the Our Environment, Our Future initiative will see BushTender spread across other parts of Victoria over the next three years.

Warm thanks go to all landholders who took part in BushTender trial for their efforts and invaluable feedback. I urge all Victorians to join us in tackling the major environmental challenges of our time so we can pass on to our children and grandchildren a State with a bright future.

JOHN THWAITES MP
Minister for Environment
Contents

MINISTER’S FOREWORD ................................................................................. i

Introduction .................................................................................................. 1

Background ..................................................................................................... 3

Objectives ....................................................................................................... 4

Method ........................................................................................................... 5
  Landholder quantitative and qualitative research ............................................... 5
  Landholder reporting ...................................................................................... 5
  Landholder site visits .................................................................................... 5
  Landholder interviews .................................................................................. 6

Results .......................................................................................................... 7
  Awareness of the trial ..................................................................................... 7
  Reasons for participation .............................................................................. 7
  Landholder ratings of the BushTender process ................................................. 7
  Landholder profiling ..................................................................................... 9
  Landholder commitments ............................................................................. 10
  Commitment to management agreements ...................................................... 10
  The annual reporting process ...................................................................... 11
  Monitoring and compliance ......................................................................... 13
  Capacity building ......................................................................................... 14
  Landholder learning, experience and innovation ............................................ 16
  Observations of on-ground outcomes ........................................................... 19
  Longer-term landholder commitments ......................................................... 20

Discussion ................................................................................................. 22

Conclusion .................................................................................................... 25

References .................................................................................................. 26

Appendices ................................................................................................. 26
  Appendix 1. Annual report template .............................................................. 27
  Appendix 2. Annual reporting instructions ................................................... 28
  Appendix 3. Landholder interview questions ............................................... 29
Tables
Table 1. Reasons for Gippsland landholders submitting a bid ......................................................... 7
Table 2. Participating landholder ratings of the process ...................................................................... 8
Table 3. Average property sizes in Gippsland project areas ................................................................ 9
Table 4. Management commitments made under the BushTender Management Agreements ............ 10
Table 5. Contract types for successful bids in the Gippsland project ............................................... 11

Figures
Figure 1. BushTender trial areas ........................................................................................................... 2
Figure 2. BushTender landholder compliance ..................................................................................... 14
Introduction

There is over a million hectares of native vegetation remaining on private land in Victoria. Much of it is of high conservation significance and is important for salinity control, water quality, land protection, greenhouse and landscape health. Conserving and enhancing this vegetation requires a permanent change in the way landholders use and manage the remnants on their land.

Traditional grant schemes aim to encourage and support permanent long-term attitudinal change in landholders together with on ground management activities. In many cases, these grants along with support and advice, have achieved permanent land use change. However, it is now recognised that additional tools are required in order to increase the level of participation, and to encourage active management of all significant remnants on private land.

Reviews of public investment in the management of native vegetation on private land (eg Stoneham et al. 2000) have raised a number of important issues with regards to landholder engagement in vegetation management. In particular:

• **Building partnerships with landholders.**

  Public investment in private land native vegetation will be more effective where a genuine partnership is formed with landholders. This requires approaches where information is shared and mutual trust can develop.

• **Better engagement with the diverse spectrum of private landholders.**

  Mechanisms need to be developed that encourage a wider range of landholders to participate in order to maximise the opportunities for investment.

Victoria’s Draft Native Vegetation Management Framework (NRE 2000) included a commitment to undertake a trial program in which formal contractual arrangements would be entered into between landholders and Government covering the management of the native vegetation on private land. The Victorian Government initiated the BushTender trial in two phases between 2001 and 2003 in northern Victoria and Gippsland (see Figure 1). The BushTender trial offered landholders the opportunity to gain financial support for entering an agreement to provide management services to maintain or improve the quality and/or extent of their native vegetation.

Following three years under BushTender management agreements in the northern project areas and two years in the Gippsland project areas, information from a variety of sources has been collected on the process and outcomes from the landholder perspective. This information has been interpreted to in part measure the success and effectiveness of BushTender as a mechanism for achieving changes in the use and management of native vegetation on private land.

This report documents the outcomes achieved in the BushTender trial, from the perspective of those landholders involved.
Figure 1. BushTender trial areas
Background

BushTender is a voluntary incentive scheme for private landholders wishing to protect and better manage native vegetation on their land. Landholders participate in a competitive tender process in exchange for the provision of biodiversity benefits.

Under BushTender a field officer assesses the condition and conservation significance of native vegetation on offered sites on private land and, in discussion with the field officer, landholders determine the management services they are prepared to offer to improve the condition and/or security of that native vegetation. Biodiversity benefits are scored based on the combination of weighted conservation significance and the predicted gains in vegetation quality through the agreed commitments (see DSE 2006 for a description of the gain scoring approach).

Landholders determine their own price for the agreed management. This price forms the basis for their bid, which is compared with the bids from all other participating landholders. Successful bids are those that offer the best value for money on the basis of:

- current conservation significance of the site;
- estimated improvement in vegetation quality and/or security offered; and
- cost.

Successful landholders receive periodic payments for their services under management agreements signed between the landholder and the Department of Sustainability and Environment.

As part of their BushTender management agreement, each landholder is required to report annually on their vegetation management activities and their progress towards the agreed objectives. The report provides opportunities for a landholder to:

- inform DSE of their progress and success in completing their actions;
- evaluate the year’s actions and outcomes and plan activities for the coming year;
- provide feedback on any new or ongoing issues with respect to the management of their native vegetation; and
- record through observations and photos, points of interest in their native vegetation.

DSE uses this information in part to gauge the level of compliance by landholders and to deal with any outstanding management issues landholders have raised. It is also a chance for DSE to assess management actions against outcomes and to provide an opportunity for the Department and landholders to exchange ideas on innovative solutions to management issues that may have arisen during that year.

Further information on the economic design of BushTender (eg Stoneham et. al. 2002) and a review of the outcomes of the BushTender trial are available on the DSE website (www.dse.vic.gov.au).
Objectives

Between 2001 and 2003 the BushTender trial was run in two phases in northern Victoria and Gippsland, across five project areas. The purpose of the trial was to:

- develop and apply a measure of biodiversity benefits to identify investment preferences among different areas of native vegetation;
- test the auction approach for the efficient investment of public funds; and
- test the effectiveness of management agreements with landholders as a mechanism for achieving changes in the use and management of native vegetation on private land.

The aim of this report is to help evaluate the success of the BushTender trial in achieving the third objective above through responses from landholders themselves. The report provides some insight into the landholder perspective on the BushTender process and management agreements in particular and highlights some common themes identified by landholders through the management agreement period. Specific quotes are presented in this report to illustrate these themes. Case studies are also used throughout to demonstrate the range of information contained within the annual reports.

Tackling blackberries in Damp Forest – Strzelecki Ranges, Gippsland.
Method

Landholder quantitative and qualitative research

During the trial, DSE engaged independent market research companies to investigate landholder feedback to the BushTender approach and to compare the profile of participants in the trial against non-participants in the same region. Quantitative research was undertaken following both phases of the trial. (Sweeney Research 2002; Quantum Market Research 2003).

Participating landholders and a random sample of non-participants from the same region were asked to respond to a structured questionnaire. This research was undertaken to gather information from landholders on a range of aspects, namely:

- awareness of the trial (as means of evaluating the communications strategy);
- reasons for participation/non-participation;
- landholder ratings of the approach/process; and
- profiles of participants/non-participants in the trial.

A qualitative research survey was conducted following the northern trial phase (Context Pty Ltd 2002). This survey sought to investigate landholder motivations and attitudes, learning, costs and views on various aspects of the BushTender process.

Information from these surveys including a personal profile of participants/non-participants, has been collated and is summarised in the Results section. The research reports are available on the DSE website (www.dse.vic.gov.au).

Landholder reporting

Under their BushTender management agreement, landholders were required to submit an annual report, reporting against the progress of management actions outlined in their BushTender management agreement (see Appendix 1 for the annual report template and Appendix 2 for the annual reporting instructions).

This reporting process allowed DSE to assess progress against the agreed landholder commitments and was the process by which landholders were authorised to invoice for their next payment. The annual reports provided an opportunity for landholders to make observations about their site as well as provide general comments on the BushTender approach.

During the period between 2002 to 2005, over 300 annual reports were received from landholders in the northern and Gippsland trial areas. These reports were analysed and the major themes identified in these reports are summarised in the Results section. Examples of landholder reports are provided as case studies to illustrate the type of information provided.

Landholder site visits

Annual reports submitted by landholders provided the primary means by which DSE assessed landholder performance. In addition to these reports, a number of landholders were visited each year by a DSE officer to monitor their progress against the agreed commitments in their BushTender management agreement. The visit also provided an opportunity to maintain contact with the landholder and to discuss and help resolve any issues that may have arisen through the management of their native vegetation.

The combination of landholder reporting and DSE site visits has provided a profile of landholder compliance during the reporting period 2002-2005 and these results are presented in the Results section.
Landholder interviews

During landholder site visits in 2004 (two years into northern and one year into Gippsland contracts), nine randomly selected landholders from each trial area were informally interviewed by a DSE officer. The landholders were asked a standard set of questions to provide further insight into some aspects of the BushTender process that had not been detailed in the annual reports (see Appendix 3 for a list of the landholder questions).

The participants were asked about the value of the information they had received, both during the site assessment process and during their BushTender management agreement period. Of particular interest was how the information had assisted them in the management of their native vegetation, whether they considered that they had been adequately informed of their responsibilities under the management agreement and if they had needed to access further assistance or advice in order to meet their obligations under the agreement. They were also asked to provide feedback on the value of the annual reporting process.

Landholder responses are discussed in the Results section.
Results

Awareness of the trial

In independent surveys following each phase of the BushTender trial (Sweeney Research 2002; Quantum Market Research 2003), landholders who had not registered interest were asked a range of questions regarding their awareness of the project.

- In the northern project 31% of non-participating landholders interviewed had heard of the scheme, with a further 7% unsure.
- In Gippsland, 54% of respondents had heard of the scheme.

In both trial areas the main source of awareness was from newspapers, Landcare networks and through word of mouth.

- Of those who were aware of the scheme but did not register interest, almost half (47% in each trial area) had considered participating.

Lack of time and a perception that it was inappropriate were cited as the major reasons for non-participation by these landholders.

Reasons for participation

Landholders who submitted a bid were asked in the research surveys their reasons for participating. In the northern project, the primary reason for participation was recorded. Financial assistance was important (51%), as was sharing the same objectives as the Department (DSE) 40% and being interested in conservation, with 20% citing this as their primary consideration.

In Gippsland landholders were asked to cite the range of reasons for participation. Conservation and the preservation of native vegetation were the main reasons for submitting a bid. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Reasons for Gippsland landholders submitting a bid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey question</th>
<th>First mention</th>
<th>Total mentions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We are interested in conservation/environment/preserving native vegetation</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial help or assistance</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have the same objectives as the Department</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was a chance to revegetate our site</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Landholder ratings of the BushTender process

The process involved a landholder placing an Expression of Interest with the DSE Customer Service Centre. A DSE field officer contacted the landholder to arrange a site visit. This included an assessment of the vegetation on the offered site(s) and any other biodiversity values. A discussion between the field officer and the landholder on the biodiversity assets, threats and potential management within the site led to the development of the management plan. The biodiversity benefits were scored for each site and landholders then had the opportunity to submit a bid nominating the amount of payment being sought to undertake the agreed management actions over the agreed period.
Bids were assessed objectively and successful bids were those that offered the best value for money on the basis of:

- current conservation significance of the site;
- estimated improvement in vegetation quality and/or security offered; and
- cost.

Successful bidders were offered the opportunity to sign a BushTender Management Agreement, based on the previously agreed management plan. Periodic payments then occurred subject to successful completion of the specified actions and the provision of an annual report.

For further information regarding the BushTender process, refer to the DSE website (www.dse.vic.gov.au).

In independent surveys (Sweeney Research 2002; Quantum Market Research 2003; Context Pty Ltd 2002) undertaken following site assessments, participating landholders were asked to rate various aspects of the BushTender site assessment process.

Participating landholders who received a site assessment rated the site assessment process and guidance they received on the management of their native vegetation and the development of the management plan highly (see Table 2). Landholder sentiment on the quality of the information sheets received varied, with a high proportion of northern participants (82%) rating it ‘good’ or ‘very good’ while 55% of Gippsland participants rated them similarly (Table 2).

**Table 2. Participating landholder ratings of the process**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey question</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Good / Very Good</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site assessment process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>Gippsland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site assessment process</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance on native vegetation and development of the</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>management plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality and clarity of information sheets</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Of landholders who registered an interest, at least 80% in each trial area submitted a bid.
- Of those landholders who submitted a bid (including successful and unsuccessful bidders), over 90% in each trial area rated BushTender a good or very good idea.
- Of those landholders offered management agreements, 97% in each trial area signed an agreement with the Department of Sustainability and Environment.

Non-participants (those landholders who did not register an expression of interest in the trial) also rated BushTender favourably.

- Of non-participants, 78% (northern) & 69% (Gippsland) rated BushTender a ‘very good’ or ‘good’ idea.
- Of non-participants around half would consider participating in the future (46% northern, 54% Gippsland).
**Landholder profiling**

A survey undertaken by Sweeney Research (2002) found the northern trial phase participants to have the following characteristics compared to the corresponding regional samples.

- Older and more formal education;
- Larger properties;
- More native vegetation on property;
- Similar proportion of on-farm/off-farm income;
- More likely to be actively involved in native vegetation management;
- More likely to be a member of a Landcare group, however 18% were not members of any group;
- More likely to have participated in other environment programs, however 35% indicated no involvement in the previous three years.

Following the Gippsland project, a Quantum Market Research (2003) survey found the participants to have the following characteristics compared to the regional sample.

- Participants were more likely to be middle-aged. Of participants 70% were aged between 40 – 59 years, compared to 56% of non-participants. Non-participants represented higher proportions of both younger and older landholders surveyed.
- Farm type was consistent between those who participated in the trial and those who did not.
- Less likely to derive all of their income from the property (9% compared to 19%). However the majority of landholders surveyed derived less than 25% of their income from the property (85% of participants and 76% of non-participants).
- More likely to have completed tertiary studies.
- More likely to have had some formal education in agriculture (participants 43% compared to 21% for non-participants).
- Most participants were involved with a group for land protection / environment (mainly Landcare), however 23% were not members of any group.
- Almost half the participants (48%) in the trial had not participated in any other programs associated with land protection and the environment. Of those who had, 31% had not participated within the past three years.
- Average property size across participants and non-participants varied between the Gippsland project areas (Table 3).

### Table 3. **Average property sizes in Gippsland project areas**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gippsland Project Area</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Non-participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trafalgar</td>
<td>39 ha</td>
<td>66 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bairnsdale</td>
<td>284 ha</td>
<td>151 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buchan</td>
<td>159 ha</td>
<td>284 ha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results indicate that participants in the BushTender trial were likely to be better educated than non-participants. In terms of income and farm type, participating properties were representative of the region suggesting that the BushTender approach has the ability to operate across the typical spectrum of landholders and farm enterprises.
One interesting outcome was that while the majority of participants were members of an environment or Landcare group, 18% of northern and 23% of Gippsland participants were not members of any group. This suggests that BushTender has the ability to reach new landholder audiences, while also appealing to those landholders who are already involved in environmental management. This outcome was supported by the large percentage of participants who had had little to no previous involvement with other environmental programs, with over 30% having had no involvement in the previous three years in either trial area.

**Landholder commitments**

Common commitments made by landholders included the retention of standing trees and logs and the exclusion stock. These commitments contribute to the maintenance of the current vegetation quality. Landholders also typically agreed to a range of weed and pest animal management beyond current obligations, within their sites. Such commitments generally result in improved recruitment and an increase in native understorey diversity and cover, leading to an improvement in vegetation quality.

In sites where native understorey was diminished or absent as a result of past management, supplementary planting was an option. In Gippsland, some landholders committed to undertaking ecological burns to improve understorey recruitment and diversity.

The full range of commitments undertaken by landholders is listed in Table 4. Not all options were applicable to all sites, for example rabbit control was only relevant where there were rabbits at the site. Landholders decided the level of commitment that was acceptable to them.

**Table 4. Management commitments made under the BushTender Management Agreements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land use commitments</th>
<th>Management actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retain large trees</td>
<td>Establish stock-proof fencing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retain all other trees</td>
<td>Rabbit and/or hare control to reduce numbers to negligible levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retain logs</td>
<td>Control of high threat weeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retain fallen branches and organic litter</td>
<td>Control of other weeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclude stock</td>
<td>Supplementary planting of native understorey and/or overstorey species</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Revegetation of cleared areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Establish exclusion plots for macropods and/or rabbits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ecological burning to maintain and improve understorey condition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Commitment to management agreements**

In the northern project landholders were offered 3-year management agreements, with periodic payments dependent upon successful completion of their management commitments and submission of the annual report. The qualitative survey undertaken following the northern project indicated that landholders were interested in entering longer-term contracts with 61% surveyed suggesting they would be prepared to sign 5-year agreements and 50% being prepared to sign for 10 years. This was tested in the Gippsland trial phase with landholders being offered the opportunity to choose from a range of longer-term management agreements.
Participants in Gippsland were offered either 3 or 6-year management agreements, with the further option of 10 year or permanent protection (on-title) covenants following the active management period. The protection options constituted a commitment by landholders to forego entitled land uses such as grazing and removal of standing trees and fallen timber for personal use, for the agreed period. The options chosen by successful bidders are summarised in Table 5.

Table 5. Contract types for successful bids in the Gippsland project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contract type</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three years</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three years plus 10 years protection</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three years plus permanent protection</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six years</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six years plus ten years protection</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six years plus permanent protection*</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Included existing covenants

The annual reporting process

Landholders were required to submit an annual report on progress against their agreed management commitments (see Appendix 1). Many landholders took this as an opportunity to provide feedback on aspects of their native vegetation management and some of the observed outcomes. In total approximately 65% of reports included further information beyond the minimum requirements.

Landholders recounted observations on their site and commented on the various issues they were dealing with. Photographs were frequently included, along with other supporting evidence such as receipts for completed works. Many landholders commented on positive changes in the vegetation since commencing their management, suggesting that they were keen to provide feedback and demonstrate the success of their improved management.

During interviews landholders were asked whether they thought submitting an annual report to be a useful exercise for taking stock of the past year’s activities. The responses were almost universally positive.

“Submitting an annual report is very good. I keep a diary of actions... the report got me out and taking photos.”
Landholder – Meerlieu, Gippsland.

“It’s a good process to check what you’re doing and to set goals for the next 12 months.”
Landholder – Thorpdale, Gippsland.

During the reporting process many landholders were also keen to provide details of their observations on flora and fauna to demonstrate progress against objectives. Many of these improvements were observed despite the prolonged drought conditions, particularly in northern Victoria, during the management agreement period.
CASE STUDY 1

Landholder - Dunolly, North Central Victoria

Land use commitments
- Retain all standing trees (dead or alive)
- Retain all fallen timber
- Exclude stock from the site at all times

Management commitments
- Rabbit burrow fumigation and hand-collapse
- Hand removal of horehound

2002/2003 Report
We ripped the rabbit burrows earlier this year and there has been no sight of (the rabbits) yet. As a result the undercover is increasing with sticks, leaves, twigs and branches. We (have) butterflies and can also hear birds and frogs.

2003/2004 Report
More and more wildflowers are present after the removal of rabbit burrows. There are increasing numbers of birds, bees and lizards.

2004/2005 Report
We haven’t noticed any rabbits this year after ripping continuously for two years. The numbers of wildflowers continue to grow and multiply even during the drought. We are able to notice the tree regrowth on the lower branches after the removal of rabbits. We continue to see the improvement in the Eucalyptus’ growth despite having no rain for two years, it is just wonderful.

Each year the annual reports included more detail. DSE provided better advice following the first year of reports (see Appendix 2: Annual reporting instructions) and landholders were encouraged to provide further information, which may have contributed to the improved outcome. However, it is also likely to be due in part to changing landholder attitudes towards their BushTender site. As landholders observed changes in their native vegetation, their enthusiasm for the area increased.
**CASE STUDY 2**

**Landholder – Springhurst, North East Victoria**

**Land use commitments**
- Retain all standing trees (dead or alive)
- Retain all fallen timber
- Exclude stock from the site at all times

**Management commitments**
- Repair/upgrade fence to a stock-proof standard
- Rabbit burrow fumigation and hand-collapse
- Spot-spray St John's Wort, Spear thistle, Slender thistle, Paterson's Curse and Twiggy mullein
- Cut and paint Olive

**2002/2003 Report**
Put in extra posts and retied fence. (Fumigation) very successful, only a few burrows opened up. We have continually followed up and have noticed that there are very few rabbit scratchings. A lot of heath appeared and was growing well until affected by the very dry conditions. A lot of small orchids grew in (one site).

**2003/2004 Report**
We have continually checked for burrows and when found (very few), we have treated and closed them. We spot-sprayed weeds. [Chemical amounts and timing detailed.] This Spring we observed a huge increase in wildflowers. At one stage there was a carpet of white early Nancy's, there were many more buttercups. We saw lots of yellow scaly buttons for the first time in many years. On the wet patch the ground was mauve with Fairy's Aprons and after these, yellow star-like flowers.

Due to the drought and previous dry seasons we have observed the loss of a lot of mature trees, mainly stringybark, but to counter this there have been a lot of seedlings emerge this year.

**2004/2005 Report**
Burrows fumigated. We have noted that there is only the occasional rabbit scratching. Walked area and pulled, chipped and spot-sprayed Paterson's curse. There was a lot less this year than last year. Due to the seasonal conditions, we found that the weeds were later this year. [Chemical amounts and timing detailed.]

We are very pleased with the results of BushTender. The amount of wildflowers and small shrubs have increased by a huge amount. We feel the main reason for this is the nearly total eradication of rabbits.

**Monitoring and compliance**

The results of the landholder annual reporting and site visits indicated a very high compliance rate amongst participating landholders with between 84% and 94% of landholders satisfactorily completing their management commitments in each year, in both the northern and Gippsland trial areas. Notably compliance increased each year in each trial area. (See Figure 2.)

“If all programs did monitoring, we’d probably all be better off.”

Landholder - Wilby, north east Victoria.
Figure 2. BushTender landholder compliance

Actions to be completed - landholders required to complete further actions in accordance with the management agreement to qualify for the next payment.

Non-compliance - breach of contract unable to be resolved through conciliation. Mutual agreement to terminate contract. Payments are withheld.

Withdrawn - landholders have requested to be withdrawn from the management agreement due to changed business or personal circumstances.

A total of two landholders (< 3% of contracts) were recorded as non-compliant in the northern phase. In each case agreement was reached between DSE and the landholder that the contract be terminated. No payments were made for these sites.

A small number of landholders withdrew from BushTender management agreements, four from the northern and three from the Gippsland trial areas. Reasons given were changed business circumstances, family matters or ill health.

Capacity building

An important facet of the BushTender approach is to provide landholders with the necessary information and support to enable them to better manage their native vegetation. Improving the capacity of landholders so that they are better able to make informed management decisions leading to improved native vegetation outcomes is a key to this. Ultimately building landholder capacity will contribute to long term gains in native vegetation protection and enhancement.

BushTender management agreements are intended to be clear and easy to understand, with the actions and timing set out sequentially. This allows landholders to keep account of their activities and ultimately to relate these to management outcomes. The management agreements were well received by landholders and proved to be a useful tool for landholders to monitor their progress against agreed actions through the agreement period.
“Having the management plan set out the way you’d set out the years, we’re continually referring back to that and ticking off what we’ve done.”
Landholder – Fernbank, Gippsland.

During the site assessment, landholders were provided with a range of information relating to the native vegetation on their property. This included:

- Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs), their conservation status and current quality;
- Advice on the threats affecting the condition of the vegetation and options for managing these threats;
- The potential of the site as habitat for threatened species;
- The shape and connectivity of the site and its contribution in maintaining or improving habitat in the region for a range of important mobile fauna species;
- Supplementary planting techniques and appropriate species selection; and
- Details on Trust for Nature Covenants and advice on covenanting through BushTender (Gippsland only).

Participants were also provided with details on where to access further information locally, such as through DSE, Department of Primary Industries (DPI), Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs) and non-government organisations. The qualitative survey undertaken by Context (2002) following the northern phase of the trial, found 93% of landholders considered the information provided to be adequate.

During landholder interviews after two years in the northern project and one year in the Gippsland project, two of the nine landholders had used their local networks to access further information during their management agreement period. The remaining landholders had found the initial information provided through the BushTender assessment to be adequate for their purposes.

“(The field officer) spent a couple of days wandering around with us and provided us with an enormous amount of information. The information we received was very adequate.”
Landholder – Dunolly, north central Victoria.

Management agreements were designed to accommodate the individual needs and abilities of landholders and to target the specific management issues within their sites. The initial site assessment involved discussions between the field officer and the landholder about time management and capacity, to ensure that landholders did not over-commit themselves. The management plans and actions were intended to be achievable and responses from the landholder interviews indicated this was achieved.
The advice and flexibility was valued by landholders and ultimately contributed to improved on-ground outcomes. On the whole, landholders were able to effectively carry out the actions in their BushTender management agreements, which is reflected in the high rate of compliance and in responses received in the annual reports.

“\textit{The first year’s commitments were not too onerous. It was really realistic in that we had 6 years and we just had to make sure we attended to them in the 12 months. If you knock (the weeds) down in the first 12-18 months, once you’ve got it started it’s just a matter of a bit more work, then maintaining it really.}”

Landholder - Thorpdale, Gippsland.

\textbf{Landholder learning, experience and innovation}

There was great variety in the experiences and skill levels of landholders participating in BushTender. Many participants were farmers with a long history of threat management (e.g. weeds, pest animals) on their property, with 77% being members of Landcare or other land management or environment organisations. The trial also attracted participation from landholders who had never been involved in these organisations or land management programs.

The BushTender approach is designed to facilitate better management of native vegetation on private land across a broad spectrum of landholders. In some cases, this involved sharing innovative ideas with experienced landholders about preferred management strategies. For example, a number of landholders in Gippsland were interested in undertaking ecological burning within their native vegetation, aimed at improving the diversity and condition of the understorey. Risk was shared between the Department and these landholders through the final payment being dependent upon a successful outcome.

In other cases, the field officer needed to provide simple and targeted management advice to less experienced landholders.

The annual reports gave landholders the opportunity to describe some of the new experiences they had in managing their native vegetation.

Landholders also displayed increasing self-motivation and understanding of the link between management actions and positive outcomes as they progressed through their management plans.

“\textit{We now have knowledge in what we’re cutting down and getting rid of. We recognise a few things that we didn’t know were there.}”

Landholder - Thorpdale, Gippsland.

“\textit{Stock exclusion continues to see the benefit to native grasses, grass trees and other wildflowers.}”

Landholder - Everton, north east Victoria.

While the BushTender management agreement identifies specific actions, landholders also have the capacity with the approval of the Department, to develop and implement innovative management approaches throughout the agreement period, to achieve the desired outcome and to meet their obligations under the agreement.

Some actions were easily substituted, while others actions were more novel. One landholder from northern Victoria trialed three different techniques before finding the most effective approach for eradicating wheel cactus on their property.
CASE STUDY 3
Landholder - Beechworth, North East Victoria

Land use commitments
- Retain all standing trees (dead or alive) in all 3 sites
- Retain all fallen timber (2 sites)
- Allow collection of fallen timber (1 site)
- Exclude stock from all 3 sites at all times

Management commitments (all sites)
- Rabbit burrow fumigation and hand-collapse
- Spot-spray St John’s Wort
- Hand-pull/dig out Bridal creeper, Paterson’s Curse, Prickly pear and Twiggy mullein

2002/2003 Report
St John’s Wort spraying not completed. Under drought conditions, plants not sufficiently developed to allow response to spray. Awaiting adequate rains in 2003 to do this activity. Dug up Bridal creeper, Prickly pear, sparse Paterson’s curse and Twiggy mullein. Awaiting rains to identify any regrowth for follow up.

Burrows collapsed by hand. Ripping planned in 2003 when tractor is available.

2003/2004 Report
Located 2 burrows and (fumigated). Hand collapsed immediately. Burrows among rocks not accessible to tractor.

Reviewed Bridal Creeper site and completed clearing. Thistles have thrived where Bridal creeper was dug up. Sprayed thistles. Large area of St John’s Wort - clearing from outer boundaries inward in November and December. Hand-pulled Paterson’s curse. Spray not used because of good (native) grass growth. More Prickly pear found and dug up. Not much Twiggy mullein to be found, despite the rain. There is a sense of getting on top of the weeds.

2004/2005 Report
Several burrows located, fumigated and collapsed. Ongoing with regular follow up.


BushTender has been most helpful in developing our focus on the weeds and I am starting to feel I know how to tackle them – before it felt all too big.

“Over the life of the contract we have secured and expanded populations of plants and animals not seen for many years. We are continuing to build up numbers of isolated and locally rare species... through propagation and planting.”

Landholder - Baringhup, north central Victoria.

BushTender - The landholder perspective: A report on landholder responses to the BushTender trial
“We began moving logs (providing rabbit harbour) but found the action too destructive to the surrounding bush. We reverted to baiting and will try again next year when we can gain (better) access.”
Landholder – Meerlieu, Gippsland.

“My husband obtained a gun licence and purchased a rifle for rabbit control... borrowed books from a DPI weed control person to identify grasses. Also attended seed collection course with the local Landcare group.”
Landholder – Baringup, north central Victoria.

For many landholders BushTender provided a catalyst for further activities not in their management agreement. Some participants planted understorey species to improve the quality of their native vegetation, many tackled emerging weed problems that were not listed in their agreement and a number of landholders buffered or extended the area of management beyond the area under contract.

Supplementary planting into native vegetation.
Observations of on-ground outcomes

BushTender supports activities aimed at maintaining and improving the condition and security of native vegetation that are above landholder obligations under legislation. Many landholders have reported on the changes they have observed within their sites.

“The babblers visit regularly. I have recently seen an antechinus and I have found a phascogale sleeping in a nesting box. I also have quite a few Sugar Gliders. I can see the value of providing more suitable habitat.”

Landholder – Muckleford, north central Victoria.

“We believe that the site has improved significantly since last year, with the observation of plants and birds not previously seen here.”

Landholder – Rutherglen, north east Victoria.

“(There is a) good cover of native grasses, the best in decades and a substantial increase in ferns.”

Landholder – Springhurst, north east Victoria.

During the landholder interviews, one landholder commented:

“We’ve seen improvements - the carpet of orchids, the correas. The fact is we are spending the time in there and seeing those things. That’s attributable to BushTender, it’s really kindled an interest.”

Landholder – Fernbank, Gippsland.

One landholder from Gippsland attached a newspaper article to their annual report detailing the discovery of two rare invertebrates within their BushTender site. These species of millipede require rotting logs in which to survive, a rare habitat in private native bush in West Gippsland.

The landholder commented:

“I believe the discovery of the millipedes is further proof of the value of schemes like BushTender in helping to preserve and enhance remaining stands of natural vegetation.” Landholder – Yarragon, Gippsland.

Observations were also made about the reduction in threats through management. One landholder in referring to the near eradication of rabbits after one year of repeated and aggressive control wrote in their report:

“There has been a lot of regrowth in the peas and wattles. There are also many birds and waterbirds present. We have not seen any rabbits and believe this is the reason why there is so much regrowth.” Landholder – Walmer, north central Victoria.

These observations are likely to be a combination of the improved outcomes resulting from the management actions being undertaken, as well as landholders spending more time in their bush and the resulting increase in interest.

**Longer-term landholder commitments**

BushTender management agreements involved an active management period and, in the case of some contracts in Gippsland, further protection from continued foregone entitled uses. In the first phase of the trial in northern Victoria, landholders were only offered three-year management agreements. However, the majority of landholders indicated that they would voluntarily continue to apply the management actions or at least continue to forego existing land uses such as grazing by stock, beyond their contract period. A number of landholders also noted that if the opportunity were available they would like to participate in BushTender again.

Some landholders also investigated other options for the long-term management of their native vegetation.

“The benefits we have seen from the BushTender area have led to other complimentary activities being pursued this year. An application to cover the BushTender site with a Trust for Nature covenant has been made.”

Landholder – Rutherglen, north east Victoria.
**CASE STUDY 4**

**Landholder - Springhurst, North East Victoria**

**Land use commitments**
- Retain all standing trees (dead or alive)
- Retain all fallen timber
- Exclude stock from the site at all times

**Management commitments**
- Fence maintenance
- Rabbit burrow fumigation and hand-collapse
- Establish a kangaroo exclusion fence to prevent overgrazing of understorey
- Spot-spray/hand-pull St John’s Wort and Paterson’s Curse
- Supplementary planting (years 2 & 3)
- Control weeds in planting areas

**2002/2003 Report**

The drought made me abandon the exclusion fences for this year. This year I will establish the macropod exclusion zone and plant out a variety of species in it. Rabbits (burrows) were ripped and fumigated – good results. Increase of some understorey but the drought makes it hard for it to establish.

The drought is having a disastrous effect on the land. Most stringybark have died. Other eucalypts seem to be holding on. The dry weather has hampered weed growth. The good news is that we have two live-in koalas.

All in all I believe that progress is being made, despite the appalling conditions and when rain comes, we will continue to make our BushTender a success.

**2003/2004 Report**

We have established a macropod exclusion zone. The Patto (Patterson’s Curse) and St John’s Wort have been prolific, but with regular spraying and hand-pulling it is under control. Rabbits, thanks to fumigation and Calicivirus are almost non-existent. Because of this, the natural increase of all species of trees and shrubs is phenomenal. Supplementary planted approx. 200 plants. All are growing well.

The increase in bird life is most rewarding. We have noted 60 plus varieties of birds and they are nesting here.

**2004/2005 Report**

Regrowth on all areas is phenomenal. I put it down to all the smoke from the bushfires. That has triggered the seeds to set forth – but not only the good seeds get the message. So a lot of spraying with good success. We are getting on top and will continue to do so whether in BushTender or not.

Rabbits are almost off our diet for their destruction has been most effective.

All in all, the 3 years of BushTender have been very enjoyable and I’m sure has achieved the end to which it was aimed. Be sure that we will continue to carry on the good works, for it has shown us what can be achieved.
Discussion

Following three years under BushTender management agreements in the northern trial areas and two years in the Gippsland trial areas, information from a variety of sources has been collected on the landholder perspective on the process and outcomes of BushTender. This information has been interpreted to in part measure the success and effectiveness of BushTender as a mechanism for achieving changes in the use and management of native vegetation on private land.

The outcomes of the trial indicate that the BushTender approach has appealed to a range of private landholders. Independent surveys demonstrated that a high proportion of landholders (at least 69% of non-participants and 90% of participants) thought BushTender to be a good or very good idea. BushTender provided the opportunity for a partnership to develop between landholders and DSE. Participating landholders were prepared to “go the distance” with at least 80% in each trial area submitting bids and 97% acceptance of offered contracts.

Landholders particularly appreciated the site assessment process, with more than 80% in each area rating it ‘good’ or ‘very good’. The quality of the information sheets received by landholders was rated highly in the northern project. Just over half in Gippsland rated it ‘good’ or ‘very good’. During interviews, just 2 out of the 9 landholders had sought further advice or information on the management of their native vegetation. The remaining landholders found the original advice to be adequate for achieving their commitments.

The site assessment involved one-on-one extension. The information provided to landholders by the field officer included advice on the relative conservation value of the site from a regional perspective and management advice relating specifically to each site. Landholders were given the flexibility to decide the level at which they wanted to participate. That is, would they commit to the full range of management possibilities or participate at a lower level? Field officers endeavoured to ensure landholders did not over-commit themselves based on landholder capacity, capabilities and resources.

Through BushTender, a new audience not generally reached through other programs was engaged. Of the participating landholders, 18% in the northern project and 23% in Gippsland were not members of any land management or environmental organisation, including Landcare.

While participants in each trial area were more likely than non-participants to be involved in land management programs, 31% of landholders in the northern trial phase had not participated in the previous 3 years. In Gippsland, 48% had never participated in land management programs and a further 16% had not participated in the previous 3 years. This supports the notion that BushTender can attract both ‘traditional’ and ‘new’ audiences.
BushTender offers new opportunities for independent decision-making and farm planning, as well as support for existing programs through increased knowledge and capacity building. It builds on people's willingness to undertake environmental works and with the financial assistance, facilitates an increase the level of activity that can be undertaken.

BushTender appealed to a broad spectrum of private landholders. Farm enterprises were representative of the region in each trial area. Northern participants tended to be older, while Gippsland participants were more likely to be middle-aged. Dependence upon the property for income was generally representative, with a slightly higher proportion of non-participating landholders in Gippsland relying solely on their property for their income. BushTender participants were more likely to have received a tertiary education compared to the regional samples.

Property sizes varied as far as representativeness across trial areas. Northern participants tended to operate slightly larger properties than non-participants. Within Gippsland, property sizes varied between the three project areas, compared to the regional sample.

Landholders in Gippsland were offered the choice of longer-term management agreements. All but one (97%) of the 32 successful landholders opted for minimum 6-year agreements. 26% committed to a further 10 years protection and 21% either had an existing covenant, or chose to place a conservation covenant over their native vegetation though BushTender. This demonstrates that landholders were interested in longer-term management options that more closely align with farm planning, seasonal variation and commitments to biodiversity conservation. It also illustrates that a mix of fixed-term contracts and longer-term and permanent agreements should be offered, as one size does not necessarily fit all.

The very high level of compliance suggests that landholders did not find their responsibilities under BushTender to be too onerous. Landholders were closely involved in the development of the management plan and therefore in deciding the level of commitment acceptable to them. The process allows individuals to make decisions that are appropriate for them and their property. They also determined the price they were prepared to receive to undertake the management and periodic payments were dependent upon the successful completion of those commitments. Importantly compliance increased annually as landholders became more aware of their responsibilities and more enthusiastic about the outcomes being achieved. Essentially the ‘right’ commitments for the ‘right’ price leads to high levels of acceptance and compliance.

“Our involvement in BushTender has increased our awareness of the need to cause minimal disturbance to the bush under our care and we have come to appreciate more fully this unique piece of remnant vegetation.”

Landholder – Fernbank, Gippsland.
At the end of year three of the BushTender program, our enthusiasm for the area has become even stronger. We have gained a lot of pleasure and knowledge from being part of it. Although the final report brings the program to a close, we will continue with the management tasks, motivated not by the payments, but by the desire to have it as close to pristine as possible.”

Landholder – Rutherglen, north east Victoria.

Annual reporting, while an obligation under the agreement, also provided a chance to discuss any issues that had arisen over the year regarding the management of their native vegetation. Landholders also took the opportunity to report any observations or anecdotes from within their vegetation and many provided photos and other items of interest. The structured contracts proved to be a useful tool for landholders to keep track of activities and to plan for the coming year. Annual reports showed landholder learning improved through time as they better established the link between actions and outcomes.

Landholders appreciated the annual reporting process as it encouraged them to spend more time in their native vegetation and to provide feedback on the outcomes of their management. As the management agreement progressed, landholders developed a stronger sense of ownership of their site, through observing the improved condition of the vegetation and habitat following their actions.

BushTender encouraged further volunteerism as it led to a number of landholders undertaking complimentary activities within or adjacent to their sites to improve the quality and extent of the native vegetation. When offered a ‘fair deal’, landholders demonstrated that they were prepared to go even further to manage their native vegetation, resulting in further public/private cost-sharing. At the end of the northern management agreements, many participants commented that they intended to continue managing their native vegetation as they had under BushTender, as through their efforts they had seen what could be achieved.

Thank you for allowing us to participate in BushTender and be sure that we will continue to carry on the good works for it has shown us what can be achieved.”

Landholder – Springhurst, north east Victoria.
Conclusion

A number of evaluation reports have been produced that report on the design and implementation of the BushTender trial and assess the outcomes of the approach against the biodiversity, economic and social objectives of the trial. This ‘landholder perspective’ report is one of the evaluation reports produced following completion of the trial. Other evaluation reports are available on the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) website at: www.dse.vic.gov.au.

Since the commencement of the trial, there have been a number of similar tender-based projects implemented across Victoria that have targeted a range of biodiversity and other natural resource management outcomes. Refer to the DSE website and search under “BushTender” for links to the various related projects.

The approach has thus far proven to be robust, with the ability to deliver ‘value for money’ outcomes across a range of habitats (eg. forests, woodlands, grasslands, riparian vegetation), activities (eg. remnant vegetation management, revegetation, natural regeneration) and outcomes (eg. biodiversity, water quality, saline land, carbon). These BushTender-type projects have also demonstrated their appeal to a diversity of landholders across a range of different landholdings. It is reasonably expected that with the appropriate design principles in place, the BushTender approach will continue to be equally robust when applied to any future specific natural resource management issues.

Each stand-alone project effectively represents a single iteration of the BushTender model and as such evaluation of the outcomes arising from each project is purpose built into the project design and implementation to maximise learning. The further refinement of future related projects and programs will continue to be informed by an evaluation of previous BushTender-type projects.

Following on from the success of the BushTender trial, the Victorian Government has announced the expansion of BushTender to a broader state program under the Provincial Victoria – Moving Forward and Our Environment, Our Future statements. To access these documents on the internet refer to:


- **Our Environment, Our Future Sustainability Action Statement 2006**: Department of Sustainability and Environment website at: http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/ourenvironment-ourfuture/ and click on the following path “Maintaining and restoring our natural assets > healthy and productive land”.

---

BushTender - The landholder perspective: A report on landholder responses to the BushTender trial 25
References


Appendices
## Appendix 1. Annual report template

### BushTender Annual Report Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landholder Name:</th>
<th>Contract Number:</th>
<th>Site Identifier:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Management Zone (refer to site plan)</th>
<th>Management actions to be completed (as per management agreement)</th>
<th>Timing (as per management agreement)</th>
<th>Completed (Yes/No)</th>
<th>Description of action</th>
<th>Comments/observations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eg. 2A</td>
<td>Fumigate and hand-collapse rabbit burrows as per minimum standards</td>
<td>Autumn</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>April – Located 3 burrows within zone. Fumigated and hand-collapsed burrows. Repeated on one burrow that had reopened in June. (Receipts for purchase of chemicals enclosed)</td>
<td>We observed many more wildflowers in this area in Spring. (see enclosed photos)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I hereby declare that the supplied information is accurate and complies with reporting requirements under Clause B4 under the Third Schedule of the BushTender Management Agreement.

Signed _________________________________  Signed _________________________________
Date _________________________________  Date _________________________________
Appendix 2. Annual reporting instructions

BushTender Annual Reporting - How to Complete Your Annual Report

1. Fill in your name, contract number and site number at the top of the page. One sheet should be used for each Site. Eg NE-089/1 will be on the first sheet and NE-089/2 on a separate sheet.

2. Refer to the site plan in your BushTender Management Agreement to determine the Management Zone identifier. Write this in the 2nd column from the left of your Annual Report Form, one Management Zone to each row.

3. In the column titled “Management actions to be completed”, fill in the management actions that are detailed for each Management Zone as they appear in your BushTender Management Agreement (as shown in the example). Also fill in the “Timing” as it appears in your BushTender Management.

   **Note:** Each management action that is detailed in the Management Agreement must be filled in and reported on. Failure to complete any part of the annual reporting requirement will result in a request for more information.

4. Is the action completed? Write ‘Yes’ if the action is completed in full, or ‘No’ if partially complete or not attempted.

5. In the column titled “Description of action”, detail the work undertaken and any specialised equipment used (if relevant). Attach to the report any photocopies of receipts for purchase of equipment (eg fence posts, chloropicrin for rabbit fumigation), as evidence of works undertaken.

   If management actions other than those described in the Management Agreement were undertaken, describe the altered management.

   **Note:** In general, if management actions are to be significantly altered from the actions detailed in the BushTender Management Agreement, DSE must first be contacted and a Letter of Variation must be completed by both parties, prior to the work being carried out.

   If management actions are partially complete, detail the extent of the work undertaken and when the work is intended to be completed. For any actions that are incomplete, describe the reasons for not completing the action. Eg. following inspection of the Management Zone, no rabbit burrows were found so fumigation and collapsing of burrows was not required.

   **Note:** Each action must be described in the report. Failure to complete any part of the annual reporting requirement will result in a request for more information.

6. Complete the column titled “Comments/observations” by describing any observations of interest or unexpected outcomes. Also use this column to provide feedback on specific difficulties with achieving your agreed management commitments or suggestions for improving on management recommendations.

7. Attach any photos of management activities on your site to your annual report form. This could include photos taken from a set photopoint, used to monitor vegetation change and improvement through time. This involves taking a photo from the same place and facing the same direction, periodically throughout the year (about every 3 months). For information regarding photopoint monitoring, refer to Land for Wildlife Note No. 43, March 2002, available from regional DSE/DPI offices.

   Photos can also be taken to demonstrate work undertaken. For example the construction of a fence to exclude stock, collapsed rabbit burrows, sprayed weeds etc.
Appendix 3. Landholder interview questions

Preamble

I am interviewing a number of BushTender landholders to get feedback on their BushTender management commitments and the annual reporting process and to look at ways in which these may be improved in the future.

The landholder responses may also form part of a DSE report on the BushTender trial and might also be included in future publicity material on the BushTender approach. These would be anonymous responses and would not be linked to any individual landholder. Would you be prepared for your responses to be used in this way?

Please note that the answers you provide are not part of the formal DSE monitoring process and will in no way affect your progress payment schedule.

1. You will recall that you were provided with vegetation management information prior to signing your BushTender Management Agreement. This included information provided during the site assessment process and as part of the draft management plan package, which formed the basis of your bid.
   In thinking about the information that was provided at that time, do you consider that this helped you adequately decide upon the appropriate management commitments for you and your site(s)?

2. Do you feel that if more or different information had been available that you would have been better able to choose more appropriate management commitments? If so, what type of information and what impact would this have had on your decision-making?

3. At the time you were submitting your bid, did you feel that you fully understood the magnitude of the management actions you were committing to? If not, what information would you have found useful in making this clearer and how should it have been provided?

4. Knowing what you do now, would you have changed the original management commitments you made? Would you have increased or decreased the range of commitments?

5. Do you think that you have been able to effectively complete your management commitments to date?

6. Have you had to access further information in addition to the BushTender Management Agreement, regarding the management of your site(s)? If so, what was this and where did you go to find it? Were you able to find what you required?

7. Have you been involved in other conservation or land management organisations or programs? If so, have you found BushTender to be complimentary or in conflict with their ideals and messages?

8. Do you feel that you will require on-going support to manage your bush effectively? If so, in what form?

9. What improvements in your bush have you noticed that you attribute to actions carried out as part of your BushTender Management Agreement? Have you noticed any negative results?

10. In what ways do you now have a better understanding of the management requirements of your bush?

11. Do you have any suggestions for altered management to improve outcomes, ie to improve either the vegetation condition or make your job more efficient while achieving the same results?

12. Do you feel that submitting an annual report is a useful exercise for taking stock of the past year’s work and keeping track of the progress of specific actions?

13. How could the reporting process be improved?

Thank you for your time.