

EcoTender Demonstration 2007/08

Permanent protection

Information Sheet No. 7

What is permanent protection?

Permanent protection of native vegetation relates to the on-going management of a site for native vegetation conservation beyond the five year EcoTender management agreement period.

Permanent Protection involves a voluntary agreement registered on the property title and binds all future owners to protect the natural values of the site, in perpetuity.

When landholders choose to permanently protect the native vegetation on their site, they will be required to continue commitments to maintain the quality of the native vegetation as stated in their EcoTender Management Agreement in perpetuity. These commitments may include:

- Grazing management (in most cases complete stock exclusion);
- Ensure no further spread of weeds beyond current levels; and
- Retention of standing and/or fallen native trees on-site.

Other actions may also be agreed to under the Management Agreement.

Why would I want a permanent agreement?

There are a lot of landholders who are acutely aware of the value of the native vegetation on their properties – not only for their own benefit, but for future generations and the broader community. By placing a permanent agreement on their native vegetation sites, landholders can mitigate against the risk of their current actions being ‘undone’ by future landholders.

Permanent protection also enables a landholder to achieve a high level of environmental protection for an area with significant conservation values. The primary reason to undertake permanent protection is to protect and enhance Victoria’s valuable natural biodiversity.

How will my site be permanently protected?

Permanent protection is registered either as an Agreement under Section 69 of the *Conservation, Forests and Land Act 1987* or as a Conservation Covenant through Trust for Nature under the *Victorian Conservation Trust Act 1972*. Both types of agreement are registered on the property title and bind all future owners to the terms and conditions of the document.

Under a Section 69 Agreement with the *Conservation, Forest and Lands Act 1987*, landholders enter into an on-title Agreement with the Secretary of the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) to manage the site for conservation purposes in perpetuity.

A Conservation Covenant is an agreement between a landowner and Trust for Nature, which permanently protects and enhances the natural, cultural and/or scientific values of the land. Conservation covenants derive from the *Victorian Conservation Trust Act 1972* and are legally binding.

How does permanent protection enhance my EcoTender bid?

Landholders participating in EcoTender have the option to choose a regular five year management Agreement or a five-year Management Agreement plus permanent protection when they are submitting their bid.

The permanent protection option offers security to the ongoing management of native vegetation on the site beyond the five year EcoTender active management period. This commitment is recognised in the bid evaluation process and will increase the Environmental Benefits Score of the site as the permanent protection offers better conservation outcomes for the site in the longer term and longer-lasting off-site impacts.

Permanent protection

Who is responsible for managing land under permanent protection?

The landholder continues to own their property and manage the native vegetation on their EcoTender site. For the duration of the five-year EcoTender active management period, the landholder is required to undertake the management actions as agreed in their EcoTender Management Agreement.

Once the Management Agreement period is over, the landholder is expected to continue commitments agreed to under EcoTender to maintain the quality of the site achieved at the end of the five year period. DSE or Trust for Nature will conduct periodic visits to monitor the overall condition of the protected sites, and can continue to provide advice on many aspects of land management including flora and fauna management and weed and pest control.

Is there a cost involved?

There is no cost attached with registering a Section 69 agreement under the Conservation, Forests and Land Act on title. Trust for Nature covenants may incur some fees and landholders should contact the Trust to seek clarification.

Further information

For further information on permanent protection through Conservation Covenants please contact Trust for Nature on (03) 9670 9933 or visit the Trust for Nature website: www.tfn.org.au

For future information on EcoTender please visit DSE website www.dse.vic.gov.au or CMA website www.ccma.vic.gov.au and search under "EcoTender".



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