

for landowners



BioBanking is a biodiversity banking and offsets scheme that improves biodiversity and provides funds for landowners to manage their land for conservation. BioBanking is a voluntary scheme that supports landowners to take care of their bushland forever ... and pays them to do it.

Department of Environment & Climate Change NSW



What is BioBanking?

BioBanking is a market-based scheme that brings together:

- landowners who create biodiversity credits by establishing a biobank site
- purchasers who buy the credits created.

Purchasers may be developers wanting to 'offset' biodiversity loss from a new development site, or conservation groups, philanthropists and government departments interested in conserving biodiversity in perpetuity.

There are two types of biodiversity credits – species credits and ecosystem credits.

Landowners who enter into a biobanking agreement and sell their credits can receive an annual payment in return for actively managing their land's biodiversity.

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A biobanking agreement doesn't have to cover all of your land – you can set aside a portion as a biobank site and continue other activities on the remainder. You can even undertake some activities on a biobank site – such as strategic grazing or an ecotourism venture – provided the activity doesn't have negative impacts on the biodiversity values of the land.

When it comes to managing your biobank site, you can choose to undertake the biodiversity management activities yourself or use contracted bush regenerators. Either way, annual payments should cover your costs.

BioBanking helps you to diversify the income generated from your land.



Further information

Website www.environment.nsw.gov.au/biobanking
Phone 131 555
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Published by:

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ISBN 978 1 741232 295 7

DECC 2009/383

July 2009

Cover photo: J. Little

Printed on environmentally sustainable paper.

How does BioBanking work?

How do I get started?

It is recommended that you first lodge an expression of interest on the public register on the BioBanking website. Prospective purchasers can use this register to approach landowners who have the vegetation types and threatened species they require.

Alternatively you can look at the 'list of wanted credits' to see if any purchasers need the vegetation types or species on your land. You may need an ecological consultant to help you identify your vegetation types.

The assessment process

If you decide to establish a biobank site, you need to undertake an assessment of your land. This must be undertaken by an accredited BioBanking Assessor (a list of assessors is available on the BioBanking

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website). The assessor will produce a credit report for you to submit with your application for a biobanking agreement. The credits created by each biobank site will vary as each site has different vegetation types, conditions and threatened species. Prospective credit purchasers may be willing to fund the assessment of your property.

Management actions

A biobanking agreement includes agreed management actions, such as fencing and control of weeds and feral animals. Your BioBanking Assessor or another consultant may be able to help you determine the management actions for your site. You also need to provide costings for these actions. Managing a biobank site will probably involve higher costs in the first few years than later on. Money from selling credits has to be deposited into the BioBanking Trust Fund and you will be paid from this for undertaking ongoing management of your land.

Entering into a biobanking agreement

When the assessment and management plan have been completed, an application for a biobanking agreement is made to the Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC). If your application is approved, DECC registers a biobanking agreement for your site that specifies the number of biodiversity credits created, the agreed management actions and the amount that must be deposited into the BioBanking Trust Fund when the credits are sold. You should seek legal advice as a biobanking agreement is a legal document linked to the land title in perpetuity.

Selling credits

To start receiving payments for managing the biodiversity on your land, you need to sell your credits. Credits can be sold to anyone. Purchasers can choose to retire the credits or keep them for possible resale at a later date. If a developer buys credits to offset the effects of a development site, they must retire them so they cannot be traded again.

How much is a credit worth?

Many variables influence how much a credit is worth, such as the underlying value of the land, the condition of the vegetation and the demand for particular credit types.

The condition of the vegetation on a biobank site will affect the cost of the management actions required, which in turn will affect the credit price required to ensure these actions can be completed.

As BioBanking is a market-based scheme, demand from purchasers and the supply of credits will also affect their price. Landowners can also build a profit margin into the cost of managing the site, so the profit margin desired will affect the credit price.

The biobanking public register lists expressions of interest, credits available for sale and all past credit transactions, which may help determine the price of your credits.

Ensuring perpetuity

A biobanking agreement is registered on your land title to ensure biodiversity is protected and managed forever. When land that includes a biobank site is sold, the new owner takes over the obligations of the biobanking agreement and in return receives the annual payments from the BioBanking Trust Fund.

Other benefits and obligations

Land tax is not payable on a biobank site. Where a biobanking agreement covers only part of a lot, land tax is not payable on the portion covered by the agreement.

Biobank sites attract rates but these, and other costs such as insurance, should be included in the cost of site management which may be recovered through annual payments.

Biobanking agreements and annual payments may also have other taxation implications. You should speak to your accountant about these.

Other conservation options for private land

Where BioBanking is not suitable for your land, other conservation options are available including:

- conservation agreements and the Wildlife Refuge Program under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*
- property vegetation plans under the *Native Vegetation Act 2003*
- conservation covenants under the Nature Conservation Trust of NSW or Part 4A of the *Crown Lands Act 1989*.

