

Central Brigalow environmental offsets tender - Phase II

Information Sheet and FAQs

Environmental offsets in the Brigalow Belt

What is an environmental offset?

An environmental offset compensates for unavoidable impacts on significant environmental values (for example, endangered ecosystems, threatened species habitat and watercourses) at one site, by protecting these values at another site.

It also involves the management of the site to ensure the long-term survival of the values.

Am I able to continue to use the offset area for grazing?

Yes, provided it is compatible with achieving a conservation outcome, the offset area can be used for other purposes including grazing. In some cases, grazing can be used as a method to control invasive pasture grass and help deliver offset benefits, including the recruitment of native grass species. A suitable grazing strategy can be discussed with the Fitzroy Basin Association and incorporated into an approved Offset Delivery Plan, along with a range of other suitable management actions such as those outlined below.

What management actions will I be required to undertake?

Typically, offset management actions include controlling weeds, feral animals, fire and erosion to promote regeneration and reduce risks to the environment. This is generally achieved through undertaking grazing and fire management programs that benefit the targeted environmental values as well as maintaining native vegetation cover. Fencing and strategic location of offsite watering points is also useful to help reduce erosion along waterways and wetland areas.

What benefit can I expect from having an environmental offset on my land?

Environmental offsets provide landholders with an opportunity to diversify income streams while improving

land condition and protecting biodiversity values. Offset payments are a guaranteed source of income provided the required management actions are conducted in accordance with the approved Offset Delivery Plan. This includes during years of drought, even if land condition declines as a result of the dry conditions.

Participating in the Tender Process

The Queensland Government is asking landholders in central Queensland to help restore what has been lost by registering their interest to participate in Phase 2 of the Brigalow Financial Offsets Tender.

Through this process landholders can nominate sections of their land to be used as an offset site and if found suitable, will have the opportunity to receive ongoing payments to help improve the land for environmental purposes.

1. What is an offset agreement?

In return for receiving regular offset payments, landholders are required to enter into an Environmental Offset Agreement (20 year contract) to undertake offset management actions in accordance with an approved offset delivery plan. In addition, the offset area will need to be legally secured which binds successive landholders on title to retain and manage the offset. In most cases this will be in perpetuity.

The environmental offset agreement and legal security only include the eligible offset values over the area you identify for offset delivery. [insert link to current Draft s26 Environmental Offset Agreement].

2. What is a legally secured offset?

Legal security ensures the biodiversity values of an offset area are protected into the future. Declaration of an offset area requires an environmental offset agreement and offset delivery plan, and the signed consent of each person with an interest in the land stated in the application.

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Why your property?

Most of the impacts we are seeking to offset have occurred within or adjacent to the Fitzroy River Basin area of the Brigalow Belt in central Queensland.

Vegetation Management Act 1999 (VMA) listed endangered and of concern (threatened) poplar box woodlands (an ecosystem containing a particular species of eucalypt trees) have featured prominently as offset matters. For this reason, properties containing this ecosystem are of particular interest in the second phase of the tender. However, other threatened ecosystems, watercourse vegetation, and/or habitat for *Nature Conservation Act 1992* listed species, particularly squatter pigeon (*Geophaps scripta scripta*), will also be considered.

Both regulated and unregulated vegetation are eligible to be used in an offset site, although unregulated vegetation will provide a greater benefit and therefore a more competitive tender bid.

My property is located outside the central Brigalow, am I still eligible to participate?

Yes, while the central Brigalow remains a key focus area, any properties that have the necessary offset values in the right condition in other locations throughout the broader Brigalow Belt Bioregion are eligible to participate in the tender as well. For further details please contact FBA.

What is the role of the Fitzroy Basin Association (FBA)?

The Queensland Government has partnered with FBA, a natural resource management body in Central Queensland, for Phase Two of the Central Brigalow Financial Offsets Tender. FBA will be available as a local contact to assist landholders during the process.

Completing an Expression of Interest

In order to take part in the tender process landholders must first complete a no-obligation [Expression of Interest](#) (EOI), by completing the EOI form on FBA's website by 27 September 2021.

Assessment process

Once your EOI has been received, a FBA officer will then contact you to organise a site visit to determine if your property is suitable to deliver an environmental offset.

If eligible, FBA will also help develop your tender application, as well as an offset agreement and delivery plan for your property if you are successful in the tender process. This service is free of charge.

How much you bid however will be up to you, but guidance will be provided on how to make your bid competitive. All bids and information provided in the tender will also remain confidential.

What steps are involved in the tender process?

There are four stages in the tender process:

1. Submit an Expression of Interest. The FBA will contact you to organise a free on-ground condition assessment of your property. Information collected from this condition assessment will be used to shortlist properties for stage two.
2. If eligible, FBA staff will contact you to arrange a free, no obligation site visit to assess the potential of your land for inclusion in the offsets program.
3. If suitable, FBA staff will assist you in developing a formal tender bid application, including providing advice of suitable management actions. The bid price should include the cost of the proposed management actions to improve the condition of the offset site over the 20-year period. Tender bids will be assessed by an independent panel to consider the cost effectiveness of the bid, feasibility and expected benefit from the offset sites.
4. If your bid is successful, FBA will also provide further support in developing an official offset agreement and associated offset delivery plan.

More information

For more information on environmental offsets in the Brigalow Belt go to:

<https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/pollution/management/offsets/offsets-brigalow-belt>

To talk with FBA about this opportunity, or attend a local information session, please telephone (07) 4999 2800 or send an email to admin@fba.org.au.