

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORTING

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Updated 24/08/20

1. Why do I need to show the amount of money spent against individual management actions?

This allows the Department to ensure that land managers are undertaking the work required under their stewardship funding agreements.

You are required to keep receipts for costs (expenses) incurred in undertaking agreed management actions and these should help with tracking and recording expenditure each year. You may be required to produce these should the Department audit your project.

Also, having a record of the actual amount spent against agreed management actions helps the Department with future program planning.

2. I do a lot of the management action work myself and it's difficult to put a monetary value on some of this (e.g. spraying)

You are required to keep receipts of any expenses incurred in undertaking your agreed management actions (e.g. cost of sprays).

In relation to labour costs, it might be useful to consider what it would cost if you had to engage a contractor to do the spraying and use this as the basis for costing this component.

3. Why do I need to complete and sign a Statutory Declaration?

The Department is committed to ensuring that public funds are being managed in an accountable and transparent manner. Signing a declaration avoids the expense of having a financial statement prepared by a qualified accountant for those participants in the program receiving smaller grants.

A statutory declaration is a written statement that allows a person to declare something to be true. When signing this declaration, you must understand:

- what a statutory declaration is
- that everything you state in the form must be true
- the consequences of making a false declaration.

An organisation cannot make a statutory declaration. However, someone from within the organisation, who has the relevant knowledge, can make the statutory declaration.

For example, a company director can make a statutory declaration on behalf of their company.

It is important not to make a false statement in a statutory declaration. This is a serious issue. You may be charged with a criminal offence which carries the possibility of a fine or even jail.

4. Who can witness my statutory declaration?

A Commonwealth statutory declaration must be signed in the presence of an authorised witness. An authorised witness can be someone such as a doctor, teacher, pharmacist, bank officer or a vet. A list of authorised witnesses is provided on the statutory declaration form.

If someone is authorised to witness declarations in the state or territory where you live, they can also witness Commonwealth statutory declarations made in the same place.

For example, a person who is authorised by the Victorian *Evidence Act 1958* to witness Victorian statutory declarations can witness a Commonwealth statutory declaration that is made in Victoria.

A person is allowed to witness statutory declarations for family members, if they are on the list of authorised witnesses.

5. What do I do if I can't attest to one of the items in the declaration?

You should put a line through it and initial it before the authorised witness. This should also be initialled by the authorised witness.

6. What do I need to do if I have been asked to witness the statutory declaration?

As a witness, you need to do the following:

- Check the identity of the person making the statutory declaration, by asking them if they are the person whose name is on the form.
- Check, as far as possible, that the person understands that they are making and signing a statutory declaration, and that they know they must tell the truth. Remind them that they are claiming that the statements in the statutory declaration, and any attachments, are true. Make sure they are aware that there are penalties for false statements.
- Check that the declaration does not include any blanks. All fields on the form need to be filled in.

7. Do I need to complete a Statutory Declaration and a Financial Report form?

No, you only need to provide one or the other depending on the total amount of funding that you receive under the Environmental Stewardship Program across all funding agreements in place.

If the total amount of funding you are receiving is less than \$750,000 GST exclusive, you need to complete the Statutory Declaration.

If the total amount of funding you are receiving is greater than \$750,000 GST exclusive, you need to download the Financial Report and have it prepared and certified by a qualified accountant.

8. Can I submit one combined annual report if I have more than one funding agreement under the Environmental Stewardship Program?

No, you will need to submit one annual progress report, including a Statutory Declaration or a Financial Report, for each funding agreement that you have with the program.

9. What do I include in the financial report?

Land managers need to record actual expenditure incurred in undertaking agreed management actions against the relevant management actions in the template titled 'Management Actions and Expenditure Report' (MAER). *Also refer to FAQ 1.*

Opportunity costs or income foregone from participating in the program is captured as part of the information provided in either the Statutory Declaration form, or the Financial Report prepared by an accountant form.

11. I can't download the forms from the website.

The Department will send the templates to you via post or alternatively by email.

12. How should I send the completed reports to the Department?

Completed reports should either be emailed to envirostewardship@awe.gov.au

or posted to:

The Director

[Your state - NSW, Queensland or WA/NT/SA State Team

Biodiversity Conservation Division

Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment

GPO Box 858

CANBERRA ACT 2601

If emailing reports and photos consider email size restrictions – the Department allows roughly five megabytes in an email. You may need to reduce the size (resolution) of photos to include all the documents and photos in the email.

13. I will be away and unable to return completed forms by the due date.

You will need to write to or email the Department at envirostewardship@awe.gov.au, providing reasons for your late submission and including an expected date for return of the completed report.

14. I intend to submit my completed reports by email but won't be able to sign the declaration and legal authorisation at Part 6 of the annual progress report form

This is fine however please state your full name in the body of the text of the email and include the date.

Note: If you are required to submit a signed Statutory Declaration form with your annual report and are unable to scan the form and email to envirostewardship@awe.gov.au, please return via post. Please note in your email that you are sending your completed and signed reports by post.

15. Can I complete and submit my annual report online?

The reports can be downloaded from the website, completed electronically and emailed to envirostewardship@awe.gov.au. Alternatively, you can download and save the templates to your computer or print them and fill in by hand for posting to the Department (*refer FAQ 12 for the Department's address details*).

17. [NSW and Queensland only] I have a Box Gum Grassy Woodland project—do I need to complete a separate Management Actions Expenditure Report for different zones if I am undertaking the same management actions in both?

Yes, you will need to complete a separate Management Action Expenditure Report for each zone identified in your management plan regardless of whether the management actions are identical or not. Note that field monitoring is required to be undertaken annually in each zone and results recorded in the field measurements column of the Management Action Expenditure Report.

If the same management actions are undertaken in the different zones, please record the same information (i.e. description) in each report; however if possible attempt to apportion costs between zones.

Exception: If you have more than one zone within a single paddock and the management actions are the same, you should still provide two Management Action Expenditure Report (as above), however please report the costs against one zone.

18. How soon after submitting my report can I expect my payment?

We endeavour to assess reports as soon as possible after they are received by the Department. Please be aware that the Department is responsible for a number of grant programs that submit their reporting at the same time that grantees under the Environmental Stewardship program submit their reports.