



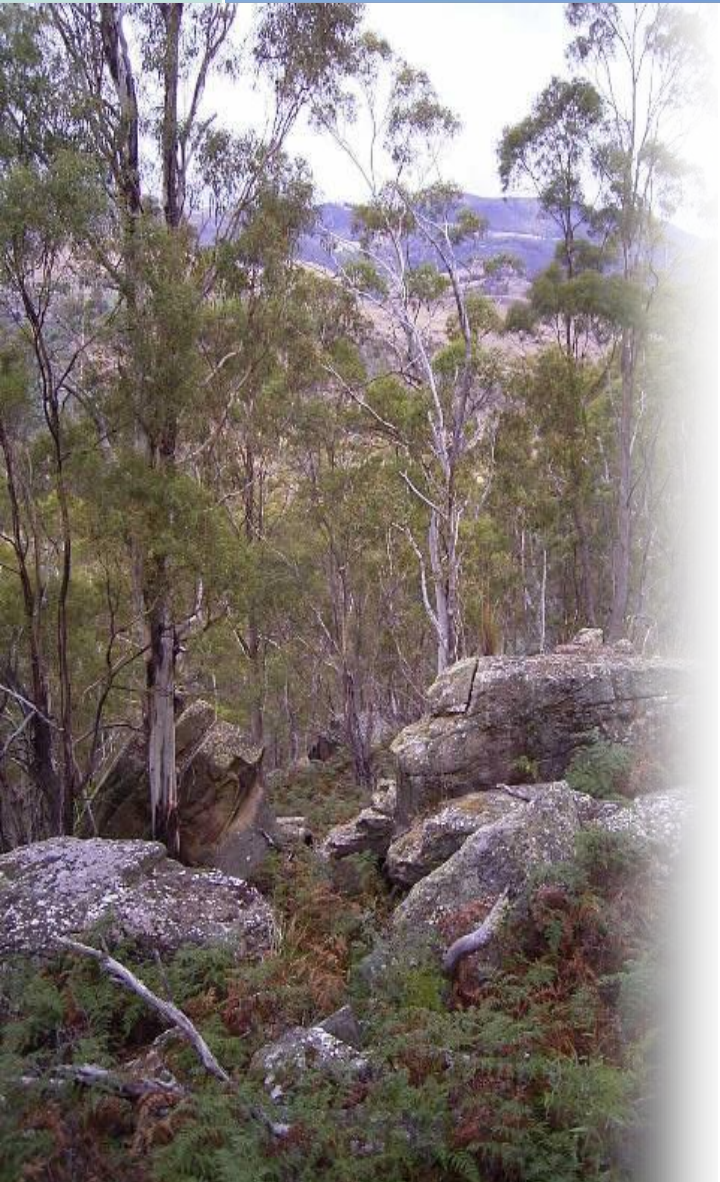
Forest Conservation Fund: Evaluation & Communication Study

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Department of the
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Executive Summary

- This report was prepared by the Ipsos-Eureka Social Research Institute (Ipsos-Eureka) for the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) to evaluate the Forest Conservation Fund (FCF) tender programme that was launched in 2007.
- Thirty landowners were interviewed, all of whom had expressed interest in the FCF programme to the extent that they had applied for, and completed, a site assessment with a conservation advisor. From this stage many landowners did not progress to submit a bid, some submitted bids that were unsuccessful and the remainder submitted successful bids and entered into a covenant agreement with DEWHA. Twenty landowners who did not submit a bid were interviewed, seven successful applicants and seven unsuccessful applicants (constitutes more than thirty landowners as some had mixed success on bids).
- There were two main drivers to participation in the FCF programme, firstly, an interest in and commitment to conservation and secondly, the opportunity to make money from the land; however, these were usually interlinked.
- Most landowners could not recall how they had first heard of the FCF programme, and struggled to recall details of the information pack and the process of finding out more about the scheme. Some participants found there was too much information in the information pack and that it was not accessible in terms of language.

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- Few had attended one of the information sessions delivered by the service provider, or were even aware that these were on offer. Those who attended generally felt that the information provided was too similar to that of the information pack, and delivered in an overly formal way. There was a sense that this would have been a good opportunity to provide additional information, and allow for more informal discussions after the main presentation. Those who did not attend felt that they may have missed important information as a result, and/or that the sessions were held too far away. Thus there should be more information sessions held for future programs, that are more widely promoted.
- The site assessment and the interaction with the conservation advisor was the most popular aspect of the programme, most landowners spoke of this experience enthusiastically. Participants reported selecting (or appreciating) conservation advisors that had similar approaches to conservation and local knowledge.
- A number of participants had sought advice about involvement in the FCF programme from third parties, usually in an informal way. This was usually found to be unsatisfactory as financial advisors were unsure about the exact implications of the covenant scheme themselves.
- One of the main barriers was that landowners did not like the competitive tender approach of the bids and, partly related, they were troubled by the concept of fairness within the covenant programme. Developing a dollar-value for the covenant area was the most challenging aspect for participants. Other barriers to participation included the constraints imposed by the covenant conditions, the long-term nature of the covenants and losing value on a property with a covenant.

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- Most participants spoke of how their knowledge of the flora and fauna on their properties had increased as well as familiarity with their own land. This is a positive outcome and will serve to raise the awareness of the conservation value of the forests of Tasmania.
- The popularity of the site assessment made this an important and valuable aspect of the programme; however, site assessments are a large financial and time investment. Improvements for future similar programmes would require making these assessments more 'efficient', that is, increasing the number of completed bids that are submitted as a result of an assessment; and increasing the quality of those submissions.
 - This may be partly achieved through requiring that landowners attend an information session in order to progress to the site assessment stage, which would in turn necessitate an increase in the number of information sessions. Landowners could also be asked to pay a fee for the assessment, that would in turn be reimbursed (ideally with interest, from a landowner perspective) upon successful receipt of a bid.
- Clear communications that are delivered in digestible quantities are key. Landowners need a large amount of information to undertake the decision of whether or not to participate in a covenant scheme but much of the information sought for the FCF programme was required or sought in the form of advice. A successful future programme would need high quality resources to be made available to those who are called on for advice such as financial advisors.
 - For future programmes, case-studies written and where possible presented by landowners themselves in information kits and sessions would be a useful tool to aid in addressing questions and communicating the beneficial outcomes of participation to landowners who are new to the whole concept of covenants.



Introduction



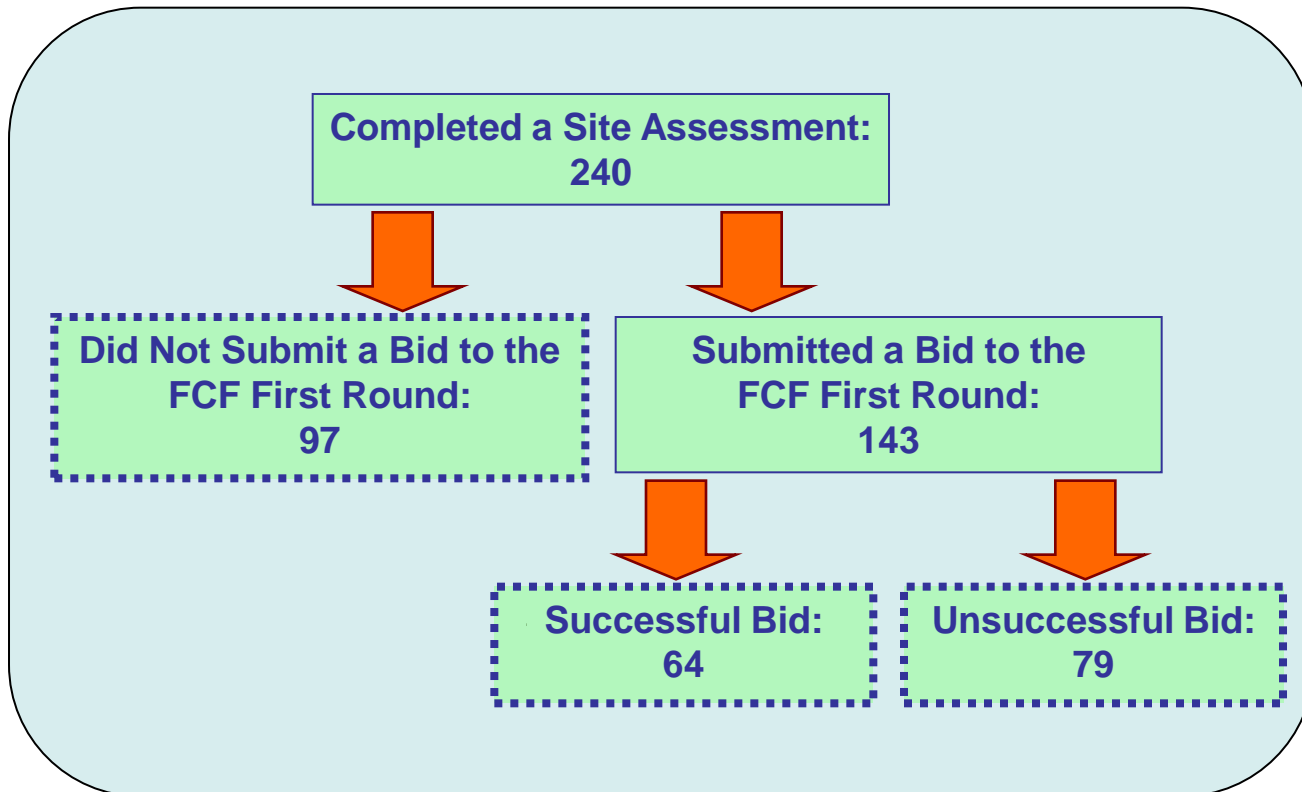
- The Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA), in conjunction with the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries and Water, developed the Tasmanian Forest Conservation Fund (FCF) in 2007. The objective of the FCF was to help protect the 45,600 hectares forest on private land in Tasmania, over half of which is old growth forest.

- The FCF programme was implemented through the process of landowners bidding for funding following a site assessment from a conservation advisor where the land proposed for the covenant was assigned a Conservation Value Index (CVI). The CVI and the amount proposed in the bid was then compared and offers made on the basis of this comparison. Specifically, the steps were as follows:
 - Landowners who showed an interest in the program were provided with an information pack outlining the objectives, operation and requirements of the FCF.
 - Those who wished to proceed applied to undergo a site assessment including mapping, carried out by a conservation adviser. This conservation adviser provided the landowner with a CVI for use in their bid, along with advice about suitable management practices.
 - Landowners then chose whether to submit a bid or not and if they did, it had to include the CVI, proposed management practices, covenant period (12 year, 24 year, 48 year or in perpetuity) and monetary value.
 - The bid was then assessed by an independent evaluation panel, focusing on the ability to meet objectives and value for money. This panel then put forward recommendations for funding to the FCF steering committee which assessed each bid and passed on final recommendations to the then Minister for the Environment and Water Resources for approval.
 - Offers were then made to the successful landowners, with the final acceptance made through a conservation covenant, nature conservation plan and financial agreement.
 - The agreements require regular reporting of management actions on the part of the landowner in order to monitor success.

- The submitted bids were then assessed by an independent panel on the basis of value for money by comparing the amount of money requested with three factors:
 - Significance, the conservation value of the area.
 - Service, the maintenance activities landowners identified that they would be willing to undertake.
 - Security, the length of time of the covenant period.
- Those landowners who were successful then entered into a conservation agreement with the Tasmanian State Government and received a series of payments.
- Although an Australian Federal and State Government programme, the FCF was administered by a service provider, KPMG. Handling landowner telephone inquiries, the coordination of conservation advisors and notification of submission outcomes were all managed by the service provider.
- **Previous research**
 - In 2007 DEWHA commissioned Ipsos to conduct a review of the FCF programme's communication strategy.
 - The study was conducted to investigate the success of engaging landowners who might consider a covenant on their property, engaging stakeholders to help promote the programme and increasing the awareness of the benefits of the FCF covenant programme to landowners.
 - At that stage there had been a high level of interest; over 200 site assessment requests had been lodged, seven of which had been completed.
 - The research guided the programme communications and marketing.

Background

- In total, 240 landowners pursued the application process to the stage of site assessment in the first round of the FCF programme. Of these completed site assessments, 143 landowners went on to submit a bid, 64 were successful in receiving funding and 79 were unsuccessful in their bid submission. The remaining 97 chose not to continue to the bid stage.



Schedule of Communications and Deadlines

- The table below outlines the timeframe of key dates and communication timings for the FCF programme.

Activity	Date
Programme launch	10 January 2007
Landowner information kit lodged on website	3 March 2007
Advertisements placed in newspapers	3 March 2007
Radio advertising	22 – 29 March 2007
Landowner information sessions held	Early April 2007
Close request for site assessments	7 May 2007
Tender close – submission of final documentation and pricing information	31 May 2007 (Amended to 16 July 2007)



Research Aims and Objectives



Research Aim & Objectives

- DEWHA engaged Ipsos-Eureka to conduct evaluation and communications study to guide future forest covenanting programme design, targeting and delivery.
- The primary aim of this research was to collate and record the learnings from Round One of the FCF covenanting programme. Identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the programme and its communications would enable refinement of future programmes of a similar nature. Furthermore, implementing the lessons from Round One will increase the efficiency of future competitive tender processes through understanding the drivers and barriers to participating and completing the application process.
- There were a number of specific questions identified by DEWHA that were generated as a result of initial feedback from the first round:
 - Given site assessments are an expensive exercise, how can targeting be improved?
 - What dissuaded non-participating landowners from placing a bid?
 - What information could have assisted bidding landowners to make the most effective bid possible?
 - What services could have been improved to support landowners through the process, and in what form should services be provided?
 - Were any stages of the process excessively onerous on the landowner?

- In order to conduct a more comprehensive evaluation and communications research study, these initial questions were developed in conjunction with DEWHA to be incorporated into the following objectives:
 - Identify the drivers of interest and participation in the first round of the FCF programme.
 - Identify the barriers to participation in the programme, that is, what prevented landowners from pursuing their application.
 - Identify the challenges landowners encountered in participating in the programme, for both those who successful and unsuccessful bids.
 - Identify what processes and resources would be most effective in assisting landowners through the FCF programme application process.
 - Determine the decision-making process used to come to the decision of whether or not to participate in the programme.
 - Evaluate the communication strategy of the first round.
 - Determine landowners preferences with regards to communication formats.
 - Identify opportunities for how the FCF programme might maximise the proportion of landowners who progress from the site assessment stage to submission of a bid.



Methodology



- In-depth telephone interviews were conducted with landowners who had expressed interest in the FCF programme to the stage of undergoing a site assessment. In total 30 interviews took place over the period of November 2008 to January 2009.
- The telephone was used to conduct interviews as it meant we were able to arrange times most convenient to speak with landowners who might have been engaged otherwise, for example, with farm activities. The festive season made it hard for some landowners to take time out for an interview.
- Although participants had had varying levels of interaction with the FCF programme, all thirty had received a visit from a conservation advisor for a site assessment. In-depth interviews enabled exploration of participants' experiences of the FCF programme in greater detail beyond the information that would have been captured via a questionnaire.
- Interviews were approximately half an hour in duration. Participants were offered a \$20 incentive in acknowledgement of the time taken to participate in the interviews.
- Participants were selected from a list provided by DEWHA. The list detailed information about whether landowners had submitted a bid or not, and if they had, the outcome of the submission.

- The main target group of this research was landowners who expressed interest in the programme but did not submit a bid. Therefore, an interview schedule was developed to include a greater proportion of this group than those who did submit bids within a total of thirty interviews.
 - Six interviews were sought with those who submitted a successful bid.
 - Six interviews were sought with those who submitted an unsuccessful bid.
 - Eighteen interviews were sought with those who did not submit a bid.
- Landowners submitted (or considered submitting) land for covenants ranging from eight to over 3,000 hectares, therefore we sought representation of a range of covenant land area sizes within the in mix of participants.
- Ipsos-Eureka was supplied with a list of landowners by DEWHA. This list contained information regarding the amount of land landowners considered or submitted for covenant and the outcome of their initial expression of interest (submitted successfully, submitted unsuccessfully, did not submit). To ensure a mixture of landowners was surveyed, we divided the list so that we targeted quotas of different covenant areas and FCF application stage groups. Given that this list was limited, these quotas were intended to be flexible depending on how the recruitment developed. For example, there were 66 landowners who had expressed interest but had not submitted a bid, for whom we also knew what area of land they were considering for covenanting, from which we aimed to recruit 18 participants
- The list did not contain information regarding whether landowners were farmers, hobby farmers or lifestyle property owners. Given that we recruited for a mix of covenant areas and application stage from a limited list we did not set quotas for landowner type, but landowner type was noted in case differences were evident.

- The table below summarises the quotas set for the landowners' application stage and area of covenant. These were the desired quotas set at the beginning of the research.

Landowner FCF application stage	No. of interviews		No. of interviews for area considered for covenant		
	Quota	Actual*	Quota		Actual*
Expressed interest but <u>did not</u> submit a bid	18 (minimum 16)	20	<20 Ha	≈ 7	6
			20 - 100 Ha	≈ 7	10
			>100 Ha	≈ 4	4
Submitted a <u>successful</u> bid	6 (maximum 8)	7	<60 Ha	≈ 2	3
			60 – 140 Ha	≈ 2	2
			>140 Ha	≈ 2	2
Submitted an <u>unsuccessful</u> bid	6 (maximum 8)	7	<20 Ha	≈ 2	3
			20 - 100 Ha	≈ 2	2
			>100 Ha	≈ 2	2
TOTAL	30				

* NB *Actual* number of interviews adds up to more than 30 because some landowners fell into multiple categories (e.g. submitted one successful and one unsuccessful bid).



Research Findings





Communications



- Landowners interacted with the FCF covenant programme in a number of ways. This section of the report details the various communications available to or received by landowners and discusses success of the various formats. Not all landowners received or utilised the various communication channels with the programme administrators and the service provider
- The communications and interactions within the FCF programme take into account the following formats and activities:

Communication format	Relevant Landowners	Source
Information pack	All (30)	FCF (distributed by service provider)
Information sessions	Some (6)	Service provider
Site assessments and interaction with conservation advisers	All (30)	(coordinated through) Service provider
Telephone (1300 number) contact	Some	Service provider
Online: Emails & Website visits	Few	Service Provider
Notification of outcome of bid	Half (14)	Service provider

Most could not recall where they first heard about the FCF covenant programme

- Landowners were asked how they first became aware of the FCF programme. Unprompted, many struggled to recall how they initially became aware of the scheme. Participants were mostly unsure about the source of their knowledge because they had been aware of the programme since as early as the beginning of 2007, up to two years ago.
- The most common source of awareness mentioned by landowners within the farming community in particular was in the industry newspaper, *The Tas (The Tasmanian Country)*.
- When landowners could not remember where they had first heard about the FCF, they often commented that it was likely to be in newspapers. Once again, *The Tasmanian Country* received most mentions as the most probable source of awareness.
- The other sources of awareness were:
 - State or local newspapers including *The Examiner* and *The Mercury*.
 - Word-of-mouth, usually friends or farming community acquaintances.
 - Letter-box delivered information flier.
 - Other newsletter including *Land for Wildlife* organisation.
- None of the participants mentioned the radio adverts.



Information pack

- Most landowners who were interviewed reported that they were satisfied with the information pack. The majority commented that the pack contained the appropriate information as an introductory communication.
- Generally, participants could not remember when they had received the information pack or what it contained and several commented that the information packs must have contained sufficient information for the very reason that they could not remember it in any detail.
- Some participants felt that there was an overload of information contained within the information pack and therefore believed it to be overwhelming.

"It [the information kit] should have been laid out simpler. There was a great mountain of stuff – too much stuff, the amount of stuff it was monumental... There was too much gobbledygook."
Lifestyle property owner, did not submit

"I received a large brochure thingy. It was a while ago. Probably fairly typical of Government, it was gobbledygook and government speak. But it had the information I needed."
Farmer, did not submit

"I got one of those [information packs] at the meeting in Hobart, well it was quite informative, but it more or less said the same things that the guy at the meeting said."
Lifestyle property owner, did not submit

"They [information packs] all look wonderful, they're created to read in a highly accessible way."
Farmer, did not submit

Landowners had mixed opinions about the information sessions

- Only a handful of participants attended an information session (six of those interviewed). The remaining majority said that either there was not an information session in their area, or that they did not know that there were information sessions being held; and yet, these were listed in the cover letter of the information pack. Those who were not aware of the information sessions felt disappointed to have missed out, demonstrating their genuine interest.
- Some landowners chose not to attend an information session. One participant thought that he had sufficient information already and therefore there was no need to attend. Another said that he did not go because he preferred to speak to his assigned conservation advisor.
- Landowners who attended the information sessions gave quite mixed feedback. Most thought that the sessions were reasonably informative, but a farmer commented that the information presented was “a *bit vague*”. There was also a sense that the information provided did not add much to what was provided in the information pack.
- A couple of landowners remembered that those running the information sessions were not able to answer all of the questions that arose during the meeting, and found this frustrating. One of these participants attributed this to the session being run by a service provider who would not necessarily understand anything about conservation. The sessions were also described as being overly formal, without the opportunity to discuss the programme informally over a cuppa afterwards.

“Other landowners were contacted. I never knew there was one [an information session]... I thought that was a little bit strange; I own a lot of land, 7000 hectares ... if someone should be notified, it should be someone like me.”

Plantation owner, successful bid

“There didn’t seem to be a lot of people there, it might have been because it was not promoted enough... would have been beneficial for anyone considering the covenant. The more information the better.”

Lifestyle property owner, unsuccessful bid



Site assessments with conservation advisors were the most popular part of the FCF process

- With the exception of a couple of landowners, all who participated the research had accompanied the conservation advisor on the site assessment. Those who didn't either lived away from the property or in one case was representing a large company rather than a private holding.
- The feedback on the conservation advisors and site assessments was generally very enthusiastic. Often, the site assessment and subsequent reports provided landowners with new information about their property which they eagerly repeated in the interviews. A sense of pride in the property was commonly conveyed when participants spoke about the flora and fauna on their properties. Clearly, this pride existed before their involvement in the FCF process, but the site assessments enabled this sense of pride to be boosted, as certain landowners then knew the names and labels, sometimes quite technical or Latin terms, for describing their land's conservation values more explicitly.
- Landowners valued the opportunity to speak with someone directly and ask questions during the site assessment. Accompanying the conservation advisor on the site assessment provided a one-on-one session to ask questions and learn about the vegetation in particular.
- One landowner who had not submitted a bid noted that the site assessment effectively provided a free-of-charge survey of their property. This was not a motivator to take part in the process, but it was seen as a beneficial outcome.

"He did what he said he was going to do, he was communicative, made appointments and stuck to them, we just thought he did a very professional job right through, any questions we asked he either answered or got back to us on."

Farmer, did not submit

"The lady who came up was fantastic, came up with a GPS and mapped out all the old growth... she did cover the property well, spent three days, I was pretty impressed with her."

Lifestyle property owner, did not submit

Landowners valued conservation advisors who had similar values, local knowledge and connections

- Many landowners had requested a particular conservation advisor, or selected a couple. Not all had been successful in their preference but were nonetheless pleased with the advisor assigned to them.
- The majority of those who requested particular conservation advisors did so because they were of the opinion that it would be more advantageous to have a locally-based person, as they would have a good understanding of the local area.
- A number of participants chose conservation advisors who they expected to have similar values in terms of conservation or forestry. For those who identified this reason, it was of significant importance.
- None of the landowners reported knowing their conservation advisor personally, but several said that they had asked friends' opinions of advisors with whom they were familiar or else had acquaintances in common.
- Some landowners noted that there was only one suitable conservation advisor for them since their location made it viable for only the conservation advisor in their area to visit them.
- Other landowners selected advisors on the basis of their skills and / or knowledge.

"I chose her because she is local and young – more up to date with my values, similar to my own age."

Lifestyle property owner, unsuccessful bid

"She wasn't one of the people I listed, but that didn't trouble me at all [she] was great, [I was looking for] what their forest conservation experience in areas near here was."

Farmer, did not submit

"He didn't live far away and seemed like someone who would understand the area so that was an added incentive...he's a local person."

Lifestyle property owner, did not submit

"I chose him because it said he had a background in the commercial forestry industry, so I thought it could be an advantage to have someone like that instead of someone who was just totally conservation-minded if you know what I mean."

Farmer, mixed success bids

Most could not recall using the website or calling the helpline

- Participants were asked whether they had utilised the 1300# helpline or website. The majority had not used either channel of communication during their involvement in the process.
- Several landowners recalled using the helpline to make enquiries. Queries directed through the helpline were usually dealt with satisfactorily, but landowners struggled to recall the specifics of the conversations.
- Most participants did not think that they had used the website; some commented that they may have done but, had they done so, the experience did not stick in their memory.
- No landowners reported using the email address to make enquiries but some recalled receiving email updates.
- Three of the landowners interviewed mentioned the service provider by name (KPMG), unprompted. In two cases KPMG was mentioned as having run the information workshop and in the third the landowner was aware that their 1300 telephone query was answered by the service provider.
- Those who seemed to be aware of the service provider were a little sceptical either about the suitability of the company for the job, or the division of responsibility between the service provider and the Government.

“That [information session] was ok, it was passed on by the FCF or whoever to KPMG to do the work. They were handsomely paid I imagine. I would think they had no expertise whatsoever; they’re accountants.”

Farmer, did not submit

“A couple of times I did leave a message, I didn’t always get an answering machine. It was fairly poor, when I spoke [to them] it was always a bit ambiguous about who was running the programme, it wasn’t KPMG. I ended up quizzing my conservation advisor a lot more. I had the impression fair bit of stuff was going on that people weren’t party to.”

Farmer, successful bid

Seeking other advice

- The majority of participants had discussed their involvement in the FCF process with a family member, usually a spouse. Older landowners were likely to have discussed whether or not to proceed with their application with their children, usually because the property was likely to be handed down to the next generation.
- Landowners who had approached a third party for advice were generally dissatisfied since those who were approached for advice had rarely come across tender programmes of that nature before.
- Some landowners expressed a reluctance to pay for financial advice, and those who had sought financial advice did not seem to find it particularly helpful.
 - A farmer who had submitted a successful bid commented that she had asked her bank manager for advice on valuing their land, but that the bank manager had been unable to help.
- Where landowners sought advice, it was usually of an informal nature; sources included:
 - Real estate agents
 - Bank manager (valuation)
 - Local landowners who had been involved in similar schemes
 - Council (rates)
 - Landcare group
 - Accountant (GST and general valuation queries)
 - Tax Office
 - DPI

"I did a phone-around and spoke to gentlemen who had done a similar scheme earlier – they were non-committal ...Used numbers on a fact sheet supplied by FCF – tax office, Department of Environment, DPI. Basically just phoning up one person and being told to phone another."

Lifestyle property owner, unsuccessful bid

"To get that [financial] information it would cost you money, and if you didn't like what you found out you'd have lost money, that created a bit of defensiveness. I just want to emphasise we really respected the person who did all the [site assessment] work - he was very good."

Farmer, did not submit

"If the property was passed on to one of our kids it would be giving them the opportunity for them to have the decision. The oldest is 32, youngest 23, [they thought] that maybe we should leave it for a while."

Farmer, did not submit

- Some participants commented that there was too much paperwork in the information pack but others believed extensive, comprehensive information was required to make a decision of such importance.
- Not all landowners experienced delays in the process, but delays were fairly commonly encountered. Most of the landowners we interviewed were not particularly concerned by small delays and in one case a delay was welcomed as thinking time. A couple of participants commented that they almost expected delays because the process was administered by government and that they were happily surprised that the delays were fairly minimal.
- Delays in communication (as distinct from delays in the process itself) were a source of frustration for some, especially when there was conflicting messages about those delays. Some participants mentioned they wanted better updates about delays as sometimes communications about delays were already out-of-date when received.

“They just go on and on, and they had delays, and they had extensions and that, they extended it once and then second time ‘cause they hadn’t got their act together.”
Farmer, mixed success of submissions

“It became too complicated, I’ve got an inch thick of stuff here, it’s just too bloody hard.”
Hobby farmer, did not submit

“They gave us mountains of paperwork – it was overwhelming. I am intelligent and can process information rapidly but it was too much for me.”
Lifestyle property owner, did not submit

“Some communications were not great in terms of explaining why we hadn’t heard. My understanding is that they were overwhelmed with people wanting to apply. They did eventually get to us. More communication with that would have been nice...Sent a letter saying ‘we are in the process of doing ‘rah, rah, rah’, but there were times we weren’t sure ... and I had to call.”

Hobby farmer, successful bid

“I did ask several months ago [when next payment would be received] and they just say they’re working on it and they did send a letter, but it pretty well said nothing really, it just said we understand people haven’t been paid yet - they must’ve sent it to everyone - but it still didn’t have a concrete timeframe on it, and I think the timeframe they suggested is over anyway!”

Farmer, mixed bid success

Communication issues cont.

- Some participants thought that the language used in communications was not appropriate, either too technical or too bureaucratic. One or two commented that this made communications effectively meaningless.
- Not being able to ask conservation advisors about the challenge of the bid valuation made a few landowners feel that the process was cloaked in secrecy and made them quite suspicious. This helped compound the issue of perceived fairness discussed in the *Barriers* section.

“The paperwork was overwhelming...some of the paperwork seemed to be rather dissociated - we got letters that didn't mean anything.”

Lifestyle property owner, did not submit

“They won't commit to anything, they won't give you an answer, they tell you verbally on the phone, they won't put it in writing- they won't commit.”

Timber producer, mixed success of bids

“The letters were almost intimidating...we got the feeling they thought we were wasting their time... We deserved more respect. I do know other people who pulled out because they were sick of being mucked around all the time.”

Lifestyle property owner, did not submit

“[On the phone, they] tried to give me guidance but misled me a bit, gave me incorrect knowledge.”

Lifestyle property owner, unsuccessful bid

“You were told that the second stage of the process would be done in two weeks and about six weeks later you're told it's been delayed... and they [the letters] were written in bureau-speak. The final letter was something like “Dear...letter to advise you we have no interest in you presenting the proposal to stage two”. There's no gratitude for the time you've taken in the process. It's impersonal, insincere and bureaucratic.”

Lifestyle property owner, did not submit

Communication preferences

"I suppose the preferred thing is face-to-face discussions, it saves a lot of back and forth business."
Hobby farmer, successful bid

"It's more official when letters say 'don't worry about the deadlines' when it was their hold up, but emails for updates like 'done the site assessment, let's meet next week'."
Farmer, did not submit

"[I prefer communication] by mail and telephone, sometimes you get emails, sometimes you don't; mail is easier for filing, we just prefer it by mail."
Farmer, successful bid

"Personal interaction is absolutely vital, it's off-putting being addressed only by formal bureaucratic letters and even more off-putting just being responded to by pro forma emails."
Lifestyle property owner, did not submit

"Mail's the best... you've got certainty there, something in writing. My experience of government departments is that every phone call's different, but if you get something in writing it's a permanent reference and you know where you stand."
Lifestyle property owner, did not submit

- Face-to-face interaction was a preferred method of communication for most landowners; this was reflected in the popularity of the conservation advisor role and the site assessment process. However, participants desired different forms of communication for different types of messages.
- Hard copies of communication in the form of letters was preferred, especially for the important communications such as notifying landowners of delays in the process. Letters were acknowledged to be:
 - a concrete record of communication;
 - good being able to 'hold in your hand' to read; and
 - useful for filing.
- A number of participants mentioned they would like emails for the more simple messages, as a method of keeping up-to-date.

"You can only read a certain amount, but if you've got someone to talk to, you can ask questions, and get other people's views, you can make a better decision. If you get a lot of [written] information you might only get the one side of it really."
Lifestyle property owner, did not submit



Drivers



- Landowners expressed their reasons for considering a covenant on their property in a variety of ways; yet there were two main drivers to participation in the process:
 - a desire to commit land to conservation; and
 - a desire to recoup financial benefit.
- These two motivators were by no means exclusive and more often than not connected to each other in complex ways.
- The main objective of the FCF programme was to conserve areas of Tasmanian forest of ecological significance. In particular, old growth forest was targeted through the covenant scheme. Consequently it is unsurprising that the most commonly cited motivation to consider committing land to an FCF covenant was conservation.
- Several landowners referred to logging in Tasmania as a contributing factor in their desire to partake in the covenant scheme, that is, in order to help protect Tasmanian forest from commercial logging.
- Protecting the environment for future generations was an important theme that was usually related to conservation. Landowners who mentioned conservation unprompted were likely to refer to their children, and future generations in general, when talking about protecting land and forest habitats.

“We thought we’d like to... retain as much of natural bush around the property and to support the wildlife, flora and fauna.”

Farmer, did not submit

“We bought the property to make it sustainable ... we had always been interested in the conservation principle... one of the aims of [our] management plan was to be sustainable and pass on to future generations the land, improving what you were working on.”

Farmer, mixed success submissions

“Mainly because there’s lots of logging here and dissention in the community about it ... and thinking about wildlife corridors and not wanting to have this logged as well, we think we’re the caretakers ... we just wanted to lock this up forever and hopefully that is what this will do for our kids if they want to take this over after us... Because there is ... locked up land around us, it seemed like a worthwhile thing to do, it wasn’t just an isolated piece on its own.”

Hobby farmer, successful bid

Drivers cont'd

- The financial benefit of the covenant scheme was occasionally the first response when landowners were asked why they considered taking part in the FCF covenant. However, this incentive was never the sole motivator.
- The payments offered to landowners in exchange for committing to a covenant period were valued for two main reasons:
 - Firstly, in the case where landowners who undertook commercial activities on their properties identified particular areas of land that were of little commercial value, monetary payments were regarded as a bonus for what was essentially profitless land.
 - The other main reason for identifying the financial benefits of the covenant scheme was where the money was a key factor in enabling the landowner to engage in conservation activities on their property. In these instances, landowners reported that they would not be able to contemplate conservation activities at such a scale without financial support.
- This second financial driver listed above demonstrates how the conservation and financial motivators are interconnected.

“The reason I’m doing this is monetary reasons, but it’s a good balance ... some forests of high conservation value are not always high timber value so that makes it quite an effective thing to participate in.”
Farmer, mixed success bids

“I wished we hadn’t [participated in a private forest reserve scheme]. I know people who are getting considerably more money now for covenants... it’s made me very wary of being involved in these kinds of schemes now. We could have made some considerable money from it if we’d just waited a few years.”
Farmer, did not submit

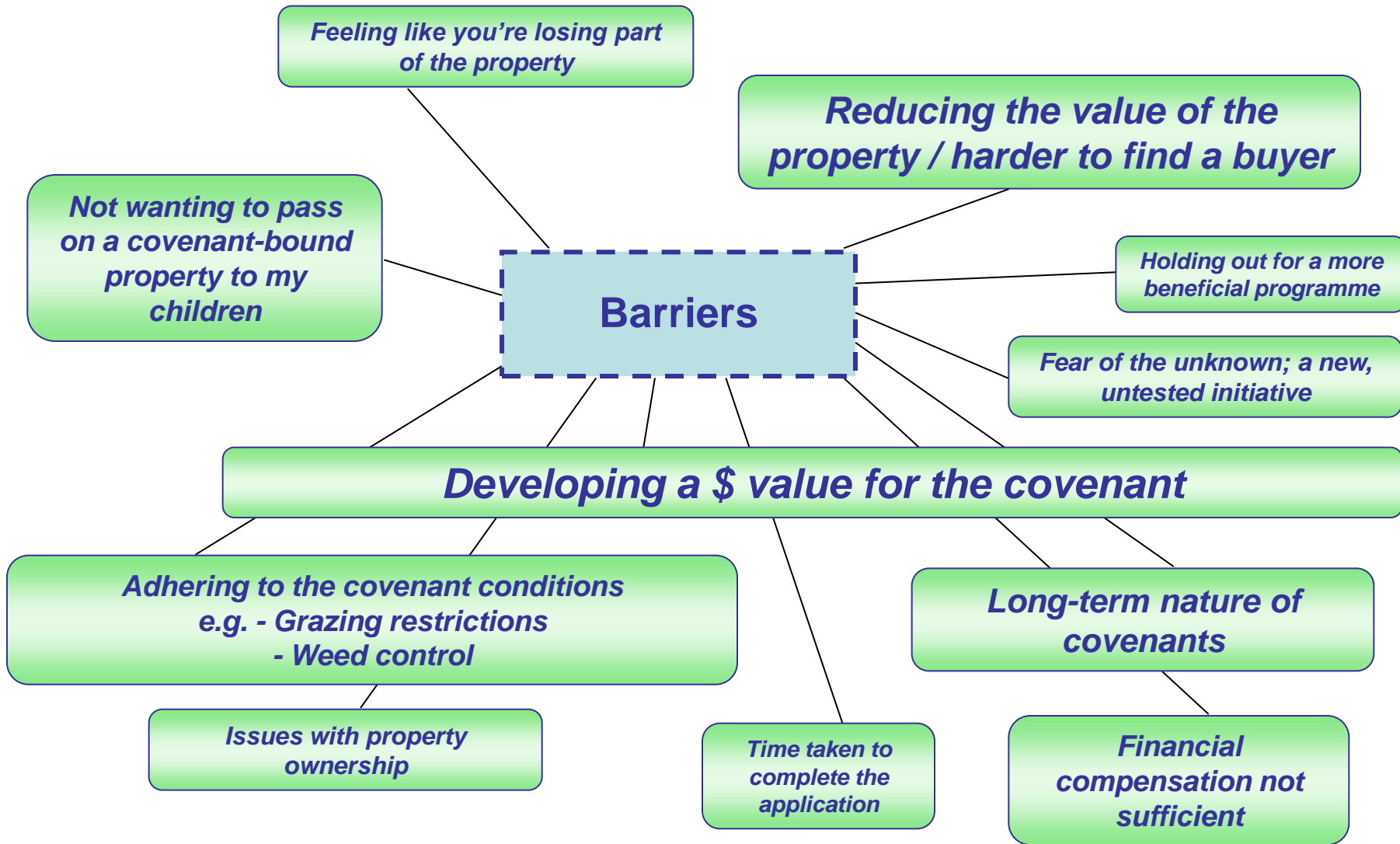


Barriers



- Landowners listed a wide array of barriers to participating in the FCF tender process. Most of those barriers were mentioned by at least one other landowner, many were frequently mentioned.
- The barriers cited by landowners fall into two main categories:
 - barriers to completing the application process; and
 - problems associated with the covenant programme itself.
- It is important to note that the barriers documented in this research include both barriers that were experienced as well as barriers that were anticipated by landowners.
- Some of the barriers were discrete obstacles that were largely unpredicted by potential applicants such as family illness. One farmer described how they were overstretched in dealing with drought issues on the property and simply ran out of time to submit.
- An overarching barrier is that the programme concept is a relatively new one that has inherent unknowns attached to it, especially the in-perpetuity option. This is something that should be addressed in future programmes through using case studies and presentations from landowners who can share their experiences with others, including beneficial outcomes and any pitfalls to avoid.
- Several of the landowners we interviewed reported that their decision to not submit a bid was made very close to the application deadline. For most of these research participants, pulling out of the process at the last minute reflected their wavering around the decision. There was no one barrier that contributed to a last-minute decision not to go through with a bid. Instead, this demonstrates the number of drivers and barriers that affected all landowners.
- The diagram on the following page summarises the barriers elicited in the research. Although not to scale, the larger the text, the more participants mentioned that barrier.

Barriers cont'd



Developing a value was the most arduous part of the process for landowners

“To get that [financial] information it would cost you money, and if you didn’t like what you found out you’d have lost money - that created a bit of defensiveness.”

Farmer, did not submit

“I... had contacts and knew someone who could give me information [about value], difficult to put a figure together that would be considered... it needed to be a more transparent process, too hard to complete satisfactorily, difficult to get help.”

Farmer, mixed success of bids

“The [CA] was not allowed to help us at all with the costing... they didn’t give us much help on how much the Government was willing to spend. That was the most difficult part of the process... We could seek help from individuals, but everyone had a totally different idea... everyone just varied so much – we just found it so difficult.”

Hobby farmer, successful bid

Developing a dollar value for the submission

- Developing a dollar value for the bid was by far the most common mention when asked about barriers to participating in and challenges experienced in the FCF programme. In addition to being the most commonly mentioned challenge, most described this as the hardest part of the process too.
- Furthermore, the issue of making the bid a *competitive* one; to make a proposal a potentially successful application, was a challenge. Even those who placed successful bids found developing a price to be very challenging.
- Most landowners said they were aware that conservation advisors were unable to give guidance on this aspect, but some still asked and were disappointed not to be given some form of help or better direction in that respect.
- As mentioned earlier, those who sought advice from other sources were mostly unsatisfied.

“We [were] totally in the dark about how much money [it was worth].”

Hobby farmer, successful bid

“We were frightened that if we had to sell it we wouldn't be able to get any money...if you sold your property and people can't get anything for it, part of it locked up they'd own it but it'd be worthless to them ”
Retired farmer, did not submit

“If you sold it to the right person it would have been fine but I think the majority of people aren't conservation minded. Even here we've got conservation people pushing their own agenda.”
Lifestyle property owner, did not submit

“The sale of the property in future years maybe be compromised with covenant on it – that was after a discussion with real estate agent, potential buyers are wary of restrictions on land use.”
Farmer, did not submit

Compromising the commercial value of property

- A number of participants mentioned concerns about selling their property (if it they were to commit to a covenant) in the future as something that had discouraged them from submitting a bid. These landowners may not necessarily have had any intention of selling the property in the short or medium term, if at all, but it was still a concern. Often these fears were advanced by real estate agents.
- Some of these concerns were centred on the difficulty of finding a potential buyer, that is, that buyers would be put off by the presence of covenant. A couple of landowners thought that a covenant might be very attractive to some potential buyers, but thought that this was likely to be a small pool of potential buyers and that this niche market would be hard to tap into.
- Other concerns were directly related to the monetary value of the property being compromised. This was often a concern for older landowners where the property was an important asset. Financial fears were also pertinent for those landowners who spoke of handing on the property to their children and subsequent generations. Over time, a body of case studies should be developed to aid understanding of the impact of covenants on property sales.

The long-term commitment was often mentioned as a deterrent to establishing a covenant

Long-term nature of covenant options

- Many landowners who did not submit a bid, and several of those who did, referred to concerns regarding the long-term nature of covenants. These concerns were mostly driven by recognition that the future was unpredictable and a situation that might be conducive to establishing a covenant now would not necessarily persist in the future.
- Some landowners were reluctant to commit to a longer-term covenant or covenant in perpetuity despite acknowledging that for conservation purposes it would be better to establish long-term agreements.
- Although most of the participants who identified the long-term aspect as a deterrent to establishing a covenant on their property were fairly vague with what the exact drawbacks were, some were able to articulate particular things that they considered might happen. These included:
 - The covenant land would become effectively publicly owned, therefore the public might be able to access my land.
 - Changes in government policy or the Government being able to change its mind.
- Notably, the potential effects of climate change and natural disasters like fire and drought, were not specific top of mind concerns raised by those interviewed. This would be worthwhile addressing in communications and programme specifics for future programmes.

“One drawback is the long term nature, fifteen or twenty years down the track, looking after it, it is or can be a burden on the landowner.”

Timber producer, successful bid

“The long-term commitment spooked me... unknown future changes to the covenant and/or things that might happen down the track.”

Farmer, did not submit

“I guess that wasn’t a huge issue, I guess in perpetuity, I couldn’t see the point for just doing it for a year or two.”

Farmer, did not submit

“We decided 15 years [for time period of covenant] mainly because of our age and our eldest son would be left that bit of farm and didn’t want to do that in case it wasn’t his choice.”

Retired farmer, unsuccessful submission

“In another twenty odd years I wouldn’t be about so I didn’t want to tie anyone else up with it.”

Retired farmer, did not submit

“I’ll be 60 in a couple of weeks and I’ve got children and I didn’t want to saddle them with it if they wanted to do something else with the block.”

Lifestyle property owner, did not submit

Covenant as a burden to property legatees

- Farming families, where the property had been in the family for several generations were more likely to mention concerns about passing on a burdensome covenant to the next generation/s. Clearly this reason was related to the long-term nature of covenants and as a result prompted some to apply for a shorter covenant period.
- Some had spoken to their family about this, but others had not consulted their children, which was surprising given that they cited their children’s interests as a reason to be hesitant in committing.

'Losing' part of the property

- A couple of farmers made reference to feeling as if they might be losing part of their property if they were to have signed a covenant agreement. When mentioned, the concept of losing part of the property was never the main reason for not participating in the FCF programme. One landowner thought that fear of relinquishing control of property was a barrier to other landowners (not for themselves).
- It is worth noting that for several of the landowners interviewed, the property had been in the family for ~150 years. There was no explicit correlation between the length of time a property had been in the family and the feeling that part of the family property was being given up in a covenant, but the generational connection with some properties is substantial.

"This may seem illogical but... I know we weren't technically selling the land, but it felt like we were and we didn't want to, it might be a farmer thing."
Farmer, did not submit

"I sort of analysed in my mind and I thought really this agency would in essence be taking control of my land taking it out of my sphere of influence ... too many sticky bits."
Hobby farmer, did not submit

Waiting for a more beneficial programme

- A few participants who did not submit spoke of deciding to wait for a better, more suitable or more profitable covenant scheme in the future.
- Two landowners referred to carbon credits or carbon trading in relation to a potential future covenant scheme. Given that carbon trading is in a nascent form in Australia at the moment, these landowners conjectured that forest conservation programmes based on carbon may be important in the future.
- Conversely, one farmer told us that he had pulled out of another programme in order to take part in the FCF Round One because the FCF programme was probably more generous and better overall.

"I have a son who does carbon footprints and he thought it might be better to leave it and see what transpires in the next few years with carbon trading because it's hard to put a value on that."
Farmer, did not submit

"I was quite dismayed with the conditions of locking the area up, it was as if you could be shot at dawn, there were pages and pages of it ... If they were to come up with a more flexible proposition we'd be happy to look into locking it up."

Retired farmer, unsuccessful submission

"I haven't signed off on my round 1 proposal, we have a disagreement about the word 'reasonable' at the moment, it means the Minister can ask me to do anything he wants ...I could be obliged to put nesting boxes on every tree, ... I've got no problem with locking up forest, but it's the unknown."

Farmer, successful submission

"We were haemorrhaging money at the time... we're struggling as it is, keeping the weeds out and the eradication of thistles and ragwort, if we were here full time and 10 years younger might be more manageable, but reality was it was a much bigger commitment than we were able to give."

Farmer, did not submit

Conditions of the conservation agreement

- A number of landowners expressed concern regarding the conditions of the covenant and the implications of signing a legal document that would hold a person accountable for a vast array of potentially demanding conservation tasks. Concerns centred around the following:
 - Weed control
 - Feral animal control
 - Fencing
 - Constraints on livestock
- These concerns were threefold. Firstly, the time and effort involved in upkeep of land to covenant standards; secondly, the cost involved in this maintenance; and thirdly, the possibility of these conditions changing in the future.
- The conditions on the covenanted land are potentially compounded by the isolation of the area. One retired farmer mentioned that he thought that fencing the area he was considering for submission (but did not apply for) would be too hard to access in order to fence it.

"I feel very vulnerable now I have so many reserves on my farm, when you read the management manual I could be liable for lots of management, So I'd like to reserve these areas and do the right thing ...but I don't want that hanging over me in the future."

Farmer, did not submit

Problems with the Conservation Value Index

- Although most participants thought they had a general understanding of the CVI or at least understood the aim, many found the index very complicated.
- In some cases, the CVI was felt to be too limiting a measure of the 'value' of the land. This was mostly due to the focus on trees and the apparent overlooking of the faunal species and overall biodiversity. A number had discussed this with their conservation advisor and felt very strongly that the CVI had major flaws as a rating scale.

Time taken to complete the application process

- The time required to complete the process was criticised by a few landowners as being too demanding.
- However, most commented that the application took an appropriate amount of time. This was possibly also seen as being commensurate with the seriousness of the decision.

"The whole thing was flawed, just trying to preserve one type of forest and not preserving biodiversity ... The assessors couldn't say anything but they all thought the programme was flawed. They all disagreed when they saw properties with biodiversity and all the wildlife and everything that goes with it (that didn't get an offer)."

Lifestyle property owner, unsuccessful

"Then I was given the CVI index, which was all a bit mind-boggling."

Lifestyle property owner, unsuccessful bid

"[The CA] was concerned because she thought the sort of forest we had should have been listed and wasn't, she was quite upset by that because she thought there wasn't a big parameter for her to judge."

Retired farmer, unsuccessful submission

"Probably about 6 or 7 days of my time in total. Not many people have that sort of time or could be bothered, that's a fair amount of time if you look into the whole thing."

Lifestyle property owner, unsuccessful

"We put a bit of time into it, it would have been a few hrs, some 10 minutes here, half hour there, I still think it's a great thing to do, but [it was a time] resource problem for us."

Farmer, did not submit

"We would have put in probably four solid working days, I don't begrudge putting that time in, even to have it refused, provided that the work that was done [is] ... available for other people in the future."

Lifestyle property owner, did not submit

Reluctance to become involved in a conservation scheme when already 'conserving'

- Some participants felt that they were already effectively conserving their land (whether actively or passively). Therefore, they considered that it made less sense to enter into a covenant with the associated restrictions when they could keep the status quo without any of the official management rules.

Ownership issues

- One landowner reported that family disagreements on the covenant details prevented the family from pursuing the application. This landowner believed that the multiple ownership of the land was a hindrance to their desire to actively conserve forested land.
- In one instance, a bid was left uncompleted because of the named landowner and person wanting to submit the bid was different; although both family members were in support of the bid the technical detail of ownership hindered the application.

"The money didn't really interest me, never had thought about it in monetary terms. [Thought it] would be nice to conserve this area and then I realised I was conserving it anyway by doing nothing to it, but I thought it was a nice idea to make sure it was protected."

Hobby farmer, did not submit

"I couldn't get everyone to agree that perpetuity was a good idea... other people in the family think that's what's called 'locking it away' and I think it's adding value by conserving it... no one was able to commit for longer [than twelve years]."

Farmer, did not submit

Landowners were greatly concerned by the perceived fairness of the FCF conservation agreements

“We weren’t in it for the money, but...”

- A number of landowners we interviewed expressed worries about the fairness of the FCF covenanting programme. This was centered around the fact that the tender approach pitted landowners in competition to each other. Many did not like the idea of being in competition with their peers.
- Some identified financial remuneration as their key concern, in that other applicants may have received more money for very similar land in terms of size and conservation value.
- One landowner considered they had heard what other landowners had been offered and as a result believed they had not been offered sufficient funding for his proposed covenant. Another, when describing a different covenant tender process, recounted how they had found out after having their offer accepted that another farmer had been offered far more for similar land. This experience informed their opinion of tender programmes and contributed to their decision not to submit a bid to the FCF programme.
- Others spoke about wanting to ensure the best outcome for their land, that is, that they did not want to under-value it in the process or ‘sell themselves short’.
- In most cases where landowners had these fairness concerns, they were anxious to reiterate in the interview that they were not driven by financial gain to participate in the covenanting process.

“We weren’t in it for the money, we just wanted enough to cover our costs ... We weren’t out to make any money on it, we just wanted it to be fair... saying that we did recognise that we needed some compensation.”

Hobby farmer, successful bid



Conclusions and Recommendations



- The FCF programme, although similar to tender programmes that have been established before, was an experimental project for DEWHA and, as a consequence, there were many important learnings that the Department expected and did indeed gain.
- Despite the various challenges and problems encountered by landowners as part of the programme, there have been direct and indirect benefits to the environment and communities of Tasmania.
 - The excitement and new knowledge about local flora and fauna species found on their properties expressed in the landowner interviews is testament to these benefits.
 - Several participants, self-described botanists, took delight in being able to speak with their conversation advisor and learn more from them.
 - Many property owners got to find out about local endangered species that they had not known about previously. This process helps to increase the sense of value and pride that landowners have in their property.

Communications

- The communications used in the FCF programme were of mixed success. Some of the communications about delays, and actual delayed communications, were a source of frustration for landowners.
- Landowners seemed to have little awareness of the role of the service provider. Most were of the opinion that all communications came from DEWHA. This has implications for branding and whether the Government wants to appear to be the manager of the programme or not.

Drivers and barriers

- The decision of whether or not to participate in the FCF programme was an important undertaking for landowners and one that was not undertaken lightly. A considerable amount of time was spent both by those who submitted an application and those who did not continue through to the submission stage. The fact that many participants who did not proceed to submission made the decision quite close to the deadline demonstrates the importance of this process for landowners.
- The drivers to participation in the tender process were reasonably simple and fell broadly into the categories of conservation and financial. However, the barriers were complex and numerous. Therefore, the ways to address these barriers and increase the proportion of viable bids are accordingly varied.
- The valuation of the land for tender was by far the most challenging part of the process, for both those who did and did not submit a bid.
- The conservation advisors and site assessment were found to be the most enjoyable and beneficial part of the FCF programme. Participants liked the opportunity to speak directly with conservation advisors and communicate face-to-face. They also took pleasure in finding out more about their property through the site assessment.
- One of the main objectives of DEWHA in commissioning this research was to look for ways to increase the efficiency of future covenant tender programmes.
- Site assessments were provided at a great deal of expense to the Department. However, the site assessments were highly valued amongst participants and a critical part of the programme process to retain, although this could certainly be scaled back to some degree.

- Our recommendations therefore centre around increasing the number of viable applications. To maximise the acquisition of covenant land for the FCF and similar programmes in the future, site assessments need to firstly increase the number of landowners submitting a bid as the result of an assessment, and more importantly, increase the number of landowners submitting a bid of sufficient quality as to be competitive and therefore more likely to result in a successful bid.
- Further recommendations concern communications, promotion and follow-up subsequent to a landowner's involvement in the process.

Initial promotion

- Advertising in local newspapers was the most efficient and far-reaching method of promoting the FCF scheme.
 - This was demonstrated by the fact that *The Tasmanian Country* was the most frequently mentioned actual and probable source of awareness.
- Although newspapers were an important source of awareness, multiple channels of promotion are necessary as demonstrated by the importance of word-of-mouth in spreading awareness.

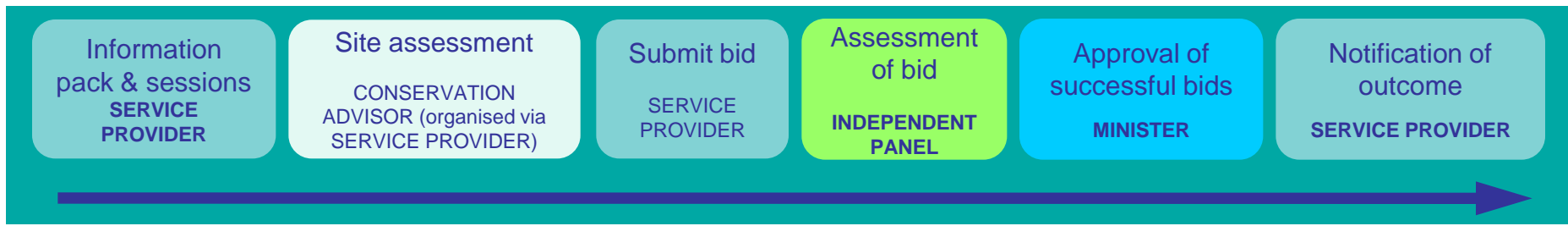
Helping landowners to find out more

- Landowners we interviewed who were not aware of the information sessions felt disappointed to have missed out and several said the sessions were too far away to attend. The information sessions have the potential to disseminate a greater amount of information before landowners become involved in the site assessment stage.

- Therefore, the information sessions need to be better advertised and located so as to be accessible to as many as possible.
- Of the six participants we interviewed who had attended a workshop, four went on to submit a bid. Obviously this is not a statistically significant sample size but may point to a correlation between attendance at the session and commitment to submit a bid.
- It may be worth considering making this component a compulsory part of the process prior to site assessment which may make people seriously consider their involvement before taking part in expensive site assessments.
- Some of the landowners who attended the workshops found them to be quite official. Given the importance of landowners speaking to others and getting lots of information about the programme, we would recommend following these sessions with an informal meet-and-greet afterwards where people could have an informal chat or ask further questions over a cup of tea.
- If possible it would be ideal to match previous round / similar programme applicants with prospective bidders, this would enable:
 - peer advice about advantages / disadvantages of participating; and
 - someone else with whom to talk through concerns and be a sounding board.
- The Round One information pack contained case studies, but they were written in the third person. We recommend re-writing these in first person (by the landowner), and including a wide variety of landowner types, to make them seem real.

Recommendations

- When using a service provider it would be useful to make it clear exactly why a third party is involved and exactly which stages of the process each party is responsible for. For example:



“It’d be nice to have someone to tell [people] what they could possibly achieve, perhaps a list of outcomes others had achieved in previous programmes to give people ideas.”
Farmer, did not submit

Minimising ‘wasted’ site assessments

- The information pack is the first main point of reference, therefore, it is critical to communicate key messages in the pack. The financial and legal implications of a covenant make the information resources in the kit of great importance. However, given that a number of participants found the information overwhelming and a bit confusing we recommend that a clearer outline of the role of the financial payments be given.
- To help bidders in determining the value of their submission, it would be useful to clearly state that the covenant programme is not intended for financial gain insofar as it will not provide ‘income’.

- Fact Sheet 3 of the information pack stated that *“The financial consideration is not a fee for service but a financial consideration for you agreeing to protect and maintain or improve the nominated forest.”*. The legal implications of gifting land in this way are indeed complicated, but a clearer explanation would be helpful to landowners. This understanding may in turn help limit frustrations about the financial aspect of the tender.
- Although the phrase “lock up the land” was used spontaneously by many landowners and not necessarily in a negative sense, there was quite a bit of negative connotation with reference to locking up land. Therefore, it may be advantageous to explicitly remark in the information pack that the aim of the covenanting programme is not to lock away land. A useful message in the information pack might be: *‘Read on to find out why this is not about locking up your land...’*. This could be followed by information about how the covenant would not limit your access to land, but would guide your conservation management instead.
- It is crucial that the importance of seeking advice before a site assessment is highlighted so that potential participants are armed with as much information as possible before applying for a site assessment. It may also be prudent to make attendance of an information session a prerequisite of the site assessment. Either way, another way to maximise submissions would be to charge a fee for these assessments, that is reimbursed (ideally with interest) upon successful receipt of a landowner’s tender.
- A larger list of suggested types of advisors would be beneficial to landowners. However, for future similar programmes it would be important to consider providing advice for the advisors to use in response to common questions (e.g. about the tender value, the programme overall), since many landowners found that independent advisors were unsure about covenant schemes.
 - This is especially important for financial advisors with regards to the tax implications of a covenant scheme.

- The tender approach was disliked by the majority of landowners regardless of what stage they reached in the process. Although the tender process was explained, if it was more explicitly described this might reduce the objections to its use.
- Describing the tender process in detail in numerous ways (information pack, information sessions) would go some way to addressing the perceived fairness issue.
- The Round One information pack included a checklist for landowners to refer to before submitting the *Request for Site Assessment* form. We recommend the use of an extended checklist:
 - Include all the key criteria, especially the minimum covenant area, which was not sufficiently flagged in the information kit.
 - Make it a compulsory task to check off the items on the list and ask landowners to sign the list.
- Over time, it would also be particularly prudent to build up a database of case-studies, preferably written and where possible *presented* by landowners themselves, to help answer questions, ease concerns about the whole concept of covenants, and promote the benefits and outcomes of participation.

“It would be good to have someone representing the farmer- I think the TFGA [Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association] have a role there.”
Farmer, did not submit

Follow-up

- Many participants, both successful and otherwise, asked us questions about the scheme. They were keen to know more about the outcomes of the programme.
- Whether successful or not, those who had expressed interest should be updated. A simple newsletter or e-newsletter would be appropriate, and if on-going communications are not expected, then it could be presented as a 'Major Highlights' programme summary.
- Those with unsuccessful bids could be provided with more specific feedback especially if they may apply to subsequent rounds or to similar programmes. For example, how many landowners applied, how many were successful and what were the main reasons, how much land was protected under the programme, etc.

"How many people were successful? I know there were a lot of applications. When you get a letter saying you haven't been successful, it just ends. I rang up but couldn't get any information from the people in Canberra... We didn't get any feedback about how many people were successful, or what happened. ... We've tried to conserve but we just couldn't deal with the government here, dealing with all the red tape."

Lifestyle property owner, unsuccessful bid



Appendix: In-Depth Interview Guide

