



MIA EnviroWise BioTender a success

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Retaining remnant native vegetation in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area (MIA) is of great importance. It is estimated that only 6.2% of the MIA's original native vegetation exists. Some vegetation communities are under particular pressure due to significant clearing since settlement of the area. These include the Boree and Bimble Box-Cypress Pine vegetation communities, which are classified as Regionally Endangered in the MIA.

Recognising the need to protect native vegetation, Murrumbidgee Irrigation's MIA EnviroWise launched the landmark BioTender project on 12 May 2008. The project has been established to encourage landholders and groups across the MIA to retain and enhance remnant native vegetation by offering annual stewardship payments for site establishment and maintenance works such as fencing and weed control. The goal of the first tender round of the program is to protect in excess of 1000 hectares.



Figure 1. Grey mistletoe (*Amyema quandang* var. *quandang*) is not a common plant and is found almost exclusively on *Acacia* species, including boree (*Acacia pendula*). This specimen was found near Griffith.


Remnant native vegetation is locally native woody vegetation as well as remnant wetland areas that have been identified to have been retained from past removal or regeneration, or are areas that have not previously been cleared.

The first tender period ran from 12 May to 6 June 2008 with many landholders and groups making enquiries and discussing the program with the MIA EnviroWise team. Information packs were made available and aerial photo maps were supplied by MIA EnviroWise for applicants to use as part of their tender application.

Murrumbidgee Irrigation was delighted with the number of tenders submitted and is confident of reaching its goal of 1000 hectares of remnant native vegetation protected in the MIA.

The tenders received were assessed in June and July. This included MIA EnviroWise staff conducting vegetation assessments of all tendered sites to survey aspects such as vegetation community type, flora species represented, vegetation condition and the presence of ground cover, and mid- and upper-storey vegetation. Tenders were competitively assessed and ranked based on establishment cost and annual payment applied for and the ecological value of the site which is of paramount importance to the project. Announcement of the successful tenders awarded will take place in September with an awards ceremony.

Murrumbidgee Irrigation will be running another tender period for the BioTender in 2009 and encourages landholders and community groups with sites of remnant native vegetation to contact MIA EnviroWise with any enquiries. Information about BioTender will also be advertised in local media.

Landholders and community groups that do not have remnant native vegetation sites but who are interested in new plantings are also encouraged to contact MIA EnviroWise for information on incentives available for new plantings. Incentives available to landholders include planning and species selection and cover the cost of plant purchase, planting and contribute to fencing costs. Discretionary funding grants of up to \$2000 are available to schools and community groups for projects that meet MIA EnviroWise principles including better water management, new plantings and protection and enhancement of our natural resources. 

Further information on the BioTender or planting incentives

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