

Biodiversity Offsets Scheme Update No. 8

13 September 2022

Welcome to Issue No. 8 of the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme Update.

The Biodiversity Offsets Scheme enables the impacts of development on biodiversity to be avoided, minimised and offset. The scheme provides a consistent, transparent, and scientifically credible way for development to proceed while still protecting our environment. The NSW Government remains committed to improving and refining the scheme. You can keep up to date with the latest improvements and news [via our website](#).

This monthly newsletter is one of the ways we communicate and support the scheme's implementation. We welcome your feedback. Please submit your suggestions [here](#). You can also find past newsletters [here](#). The Biodiversity Conservation Trust's (BCT) twice-yearly newsletter is another source of information. You can find it on the BCT's [Publication website](#).

For other enquiries on the scheme, contact the dedicated scheme Help Desk team:
Hotline 1800 931 717, staffed Tuesday to Thursday from 9:30 am to 4:00 pm
Help Desk mailbox, BOS.helpdesk@environment.nsw.gov.au, monitored Monday to Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

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Audit Office report on the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme

The Audit Office has released a [report on the effectiveness of the scheme](#), which made 11 recommendations to the Department of Planning and Environment and the BCT, focusing on:

- a long-term strategic plan for the scheme
- improvements to the operation and transparency of the market and credit supply
- frameworks to ensure the financial and ecological sustainability of biodiversity stewardship sites
- enhanced public reporting and data management
- resolving issues in conflicting governance and oversight.

The department and the BCT responded to the report recommendations, which can be found in [Appendix 1](#) of the [Audit Office report](#). All 11 recommendations were agreed upon or agreed upon in principle.

The NSW Government is committed to continuously improving the scheme through our Integrated Improvement and Assurance Program (IIAP), independently overseen by Mr Mike Mrdak AO. In his most recent progress report to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Mr Mrdak noted that 'strong and well-structured progress' is being made to deliver key improvements and 'the scheme is now in the strongest position it has been in since commencement'. The audit recommendations will significantly contribute to informing our evolving IIAP.

We recently updated our website to include a breakdown of some of the most significant improvements to the scheme. Find out more about these improvements [here](#).

Making it easier for landholders to set up a Biodiversity Stewardship Agreement (BSA)

Two changes have been announced to encourage more landholders to consider establishing biodiversity stewardship sites:

1. The \$2600 BSA application fee will be waived between 10 August 2022 and 30 June 2023.
2. Biodiversity assessments by an accredited assessor will be provided at no upfront cost for landholders with the potential to generate [in-demand credits](#). This opportunity will be offered through an optional credits supply contract (assessment cost is repaid when credits are sold to the Credit Supply Fund or on the market). Read more about this [here](#).

The Credits Supply Taskforce ([the Taskforce](#)) is also working on other changes to improve the process for existing applicants.

In-demand credits list for landholders

The [Taskforce's in-demand credits list](#) is now published and will be updated monthly. The Taskforce will use this in-demand credits list to identify landholders for targeted support and is one of the sources landholders can use to see if their land could have in-demand credits.

If you are a landholder interested in establishing a BSA, you can submit a [Stewardship expression of interest](#), and the Taskforce will help check if you have in-demand credits.

The in-demand credits list reflects interest by proponents (public and private) seeking support from the Taskforce in finding biodiversity credits through a [Credit Demand expression of interest](#).

You can view the current in-demand credits list [here](#).

Credit Supply Taskforce seeking accredited assessors

[The Taskforce](#) is seeking to contract accredited assessors for a defined number of hours per week through to 30 June 2023. Accredited assessors will be undertaking biodiversity assessments allocated by the Taskforce for landholders to establish BSAs. Accredited assessors are invited to [tender](#) for the supply of services to the Credits Supply Taskforce.

A webinar briefing and Q&A session will also be held on **Wednesday 14 September**, from **2:30 – 3:30 pm**. To join, please register [here](#).

Tenders are due at **10:00 am on Monday 26 October 2022**.

Accredited assessor training

The department has advertised a new position for a trainer to present the accredited assessor training course.

It is anticipated that dates for the course will be announced by the end of September. Everyone who has placed their name on the Expression of Interest list for initial assessor training will be contacted when the dates are released.

Annual update to regent honeyeater important habitat map

The annual update to the regent honeyeater important habitat map has been completed and is available via [Biodiversity Offset Assessment Management System \(BOAMS\)](#). It will also be included in the 26 September update of the Biodiversity Values map. Only minor changes have been made to the layer, incorporating the updated NSW State Vegetation Type Map (version C1.1.M1).

NSW Natural Capital Programs factsheet

The NSW Government has prepared the attached factsheet on NSW Natural Capital Programs for Primary Industries to explain the suite of voluntary programs available to assist the primary industries sector in undertaking sustainable actions. The factsheet is designed to help landholders identify which program would best support their business goals and deliver environmental benefits.

Release of the Aligning Biodiversity Assessments factsheet

The NSW and Australian Governments finalised amendments to the NSW Assessment Bilateral Agreement in 2020 after changes to NSW legislation. The Australian Government has also formally endorsed the scheme through the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act Condition-Setting Policy*.

The Aligning Biodiversity Assessments factsheet outlines the implications for biodiversity assessments following the Australian Government endorsement of the scheme. You can find out more [here](#).

Updated High Threat Weeds list

The High Threat Weeds (HTW) list has recently been revised, updated and added to the BioNet Species Names database. The updated list identifies certain manageable HTW that, if managed on a stewardship site, can generate additional gain.

There are 4 ways to access the list of HTW:

1. The [BAM-C landing page](#), download the list from the attachments on the right-hand side of the page.
2. Via the BioNet Species Names database – log into BioNet > click on Species names tab > Search for a species > click Review.
3. Download from the [NSW BioNet resources](#) webpage by clicking the circled link below under BioNet Species Name > Power queries > High threat weeds data.
4. Finally, the list can also be accessed via the [assessor resources](#) webpage under Data, information, tools and forms.

Sell credits to the BCT – Tender closes 28 September

The [September 2022 State-wide Credit Tender](#) is now open for applicants to offer the BCT a selling price for their credits. All bids must be submitted in the [Credit Offer Portal](#) by **11:59 pm, Wednesday 28 September**. This tender is available for hundreds of wanted credit types across the state, with the BCT seeking many new credit types for the first time.

You can check the current Wanted Credits List and find more information [here](#). The [participants' guide](#) also provides more detailed information for applicants.

New subdivisions and threshold videos

The department is developing a series of videos to support local government staff working with the scheme. [Two new videos](#) in the series have now been released.

The **subdivision applications and the subsequent development of land** video provides an overview of:

- when and how the scheme applies to a subdivision application
- transitional arrangements for planning arrangements in place before the scheme commenced (Clause 34A Certification)
- applying the scheme thresholds.

The video also provides information on the consideration of biodiversity impacts of future development applications on land after it has been subdivided.

The **Biodiversity Offsets Scheme Threshold** video provides an overview of the threshold, how to apply the threshold to determine if a development application or clearing proposal triggers the scheme, and next steps when the scheme does or does not apply.

Both videos will be a useful refresher to local government staff who have previously received scheme training and those new to the scheme.

You can view the videos on the [local government and other decision maker support webpage](#).

Have your say on a National Biodiversity Market

The Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water is seeking public feedback on a proposed voluntary national biodiversity market. You can find out more and submit [here](#). The survey will close at **4 pm on Friday 16 September 2022**.



September Top Tip: Staying up to date in the accredited assessor public register

It is important to stay up to date in the accredited assessor public register. The accredited assessor public register is populated from your account in Biodiversity Offsets and Agreements Management System (BOAMS). The register only shows assessors with current accreditation dates.

To update your details, log in to BOAMS and click on 'My profile'. Scroll down to find the Public Register fields and update. Click on the pencil to edit.

Public Register Details (hover info icon below for details)

I Agree to public register terms 

OEH Assessor Public register Url

[Click Here](#)

Public Register Email Address

Public Register Phone Number

Preferred Work Location

Update your 'organisation type' using the drop-down arrow. Government employees should not show as consultants and vice versa.

Organisation Type

State Government