DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, INDUSTRY & ENVIRONMENT

BOS Support for Assessors & Local Government

Biodiversity Assessment Method 2020 – What's New?

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Why change the BAM?

- 2017 Cabinet Committee decision
- Narrow scope of review
- Improvements based on feedback from stakeholders/users
- To improve usability
- Correct errors and clarify 'problem' sections
- To add an appendix to value land-based conservation measures to support strategic biodiversity certification

Out of Scope:

Equations for calculating vegetation integrity & habitat suitability

General settings in supporting systems

Document structure

Policy settings

Credit market & prices

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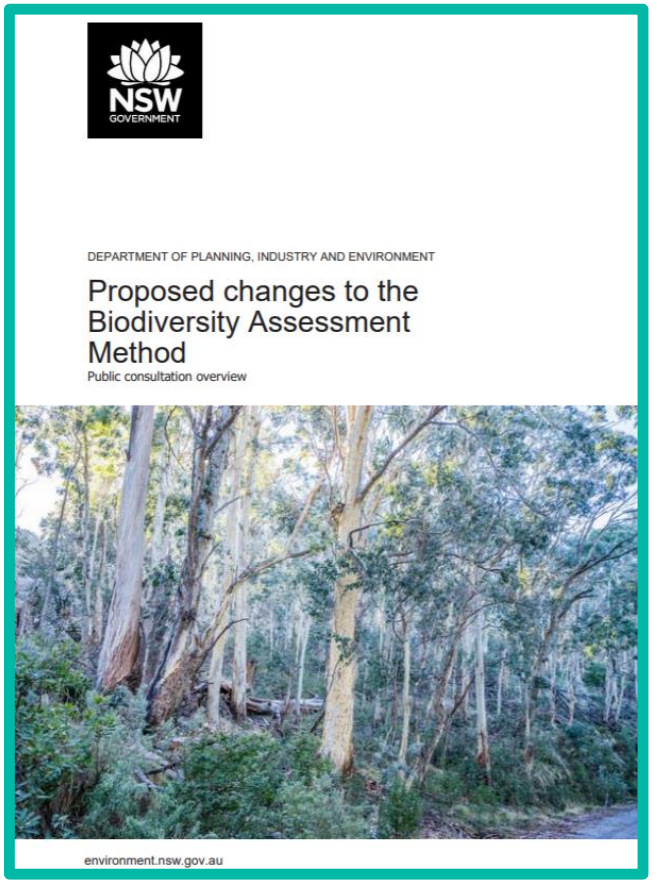
Consultation

- Inter-agency working group
- Public exhibition September 2019
- 19 submissions



What has changed?

Usability

- Consistent terminology, aligned with legislation
- Improved definitions

Section numbering

- Reduced number of chapters
- Appendix lettering instead of numbering
- New format for referencing

Referencing BAM 2020 Example

Chapter 5
Chapter 5(1.-3.) The intro under Chapter 5
Section 5.1
Subsection 5.1.1
Subsection 5.1.1(1.)
Subsection 5.1.1(2.a.)
Subsection 5.1.1(2.a.-2.c.)

Prescribed and indirect impacts

- Defined in glossary
- Consistent terminology to align with Biodiversity Conservation Regulation 2017 (cl. 6.1)
- Removed duplication and inconsistencies
- Clear steps:
  1. identify/describe
  2. avoid/minimise
  3. assess
  4. mitigate/offset

BAM 2020

Chapter 6 – Identifying prescribed biodiversity impacts
Chapter 7 – Avoiding or minimising impacts
- 7.1 Direct and indirect
- 7.2 Prescribed impacts

Chapter 8 – Assessing impacts on biodiversity values
- 8.2 Assess indirect impacts
- 8.3 Assess prescribed impacts
- 8.4.2 Mitigate prescribed impacts
- 8.6 Use of biodiversity credits to mitigate or offset indirect or prescribed impacts

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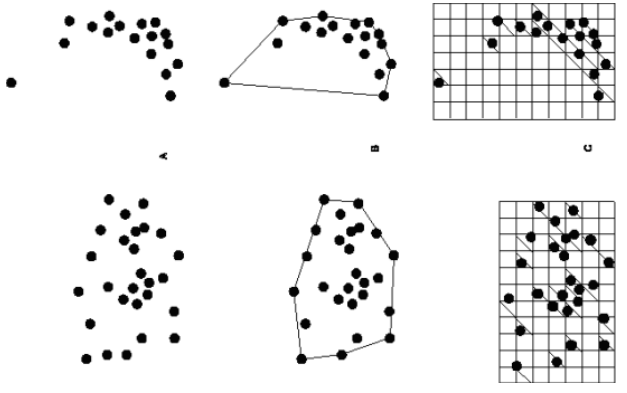
Serious and irreversible impacts (SAIIs)

- Assessing extinction risk
- Removed reference to entity-specific impact thresholds
- To strengthen impact assessment criteria and align with 4 Principles in the Biodiversity Conservation Regulation
- Assessors must address these assessment requirements
- Provision to 'up-list' or 'down-list' an SAII entity
- DPIE to provide information to support assessment
- '*Guidance to assist a decision-maker to determine a serious and irreversible impact*' will be up-dated



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Principles

TECs:
1) reduction in geographic distribution
2) extent of reduction in ecological function for the TEC including degree of environmental degradation or disruption to biotic processes
3) restricted geographic distribution
4) the TEC is unlikely to respond to management

Threatened species:
1) rapid decline
2) small population size
3) limited geographic range for the species
4) the species is unlikely to respond to management

Streamlined assessment module – scattered trees

- Module for paddock trees renamed to scattered trees (Appendix B)
- Improved definition
- Clarified offset requirements – trees <20 cm DBH* with hollows must generate credits
- Can not be applied to candidate (species credit) species or threatened species at risk of an SAII

Improved definition

- Ground cover around or between the scattered trees must be 100% exotic, human-made, bare ground or ground cover species on the widely cultivated native species list
- Any other vegetation around or between the scattered trees must be 100% exotic
- Trees with a DBH ≥5 cm must now be considered (previously >20 cm DBH)

Vegetation that doesn't meet the definition must be assessed using another BAM module.

DBH* – diameter at breast height

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Streamlined assessment module – small area

- Small area module amended (Appendix C)
- Clarified assessment requirements for threatened species and ecological communities
  - If a TEC is detected, include the PCT
  - Only survey for candidate species credit species at risk of an SAII. If present, address all SAII principles
  - If a threatened species (not SAII) is incidentally sighted, record its presence, include in credits
- Reduced area clearing threshold
- May be applied to land identified on the Biodiversity Values Map, except core koala habitat

BAM 2017

Table 13: Area limits for application of small area development threshold on land not shaded on the biodiversity values map

Minimum lot size associated with the property	Maximum area limit for application of the small area development module
Less than 1ha	≤1ha
Less than 40ha but not less than 1ha	≤2ha
Less than 1000ha but not less than 40ha	≤5ha
1000ha or more	≤10ha

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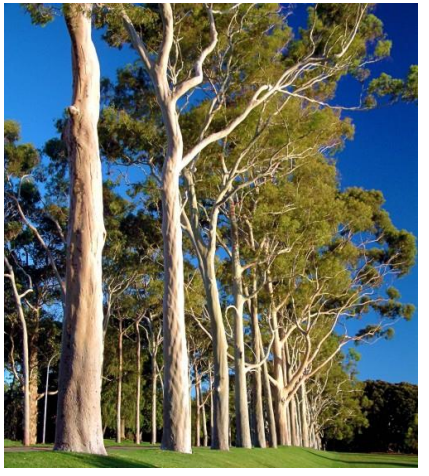
BAM 2020

Table 12 Area clearing limits for application of the small area development module

Minimum lot size associated with the property *	Maximum area clearing limit for application of the small area development module
Less than 1 ha	≤1 ha
Less than 40 ha but not less than 1 ha	≤2 ha
Less than 1000 ha but not less than 40 ha	≤3 ha
1000 ha or more	≤5 ha

Streamlined assessment module – planted native vegetation

- New module for assessing planted native vegetation (Appendix D)
- 6 questions in a decision-making key to determine assessment requirements
- Includes assessing widely cultivated native species
- No plot survey requirements for planted native vegetation



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Summary of decision-making key

1. Mosaic of **planted and remnant** native vegetation - allocate to best-fit PCT & apply **BAM**
2. Planted for environmental rehabilitation/restoration under existing **conservation obligation** – allocate to best-fit PCT & apply **BAM**
3. Individuals of a native species **planted/translocated to provide threatened species habitat under a species recovery project**, SoS project or other government funded project or legal obligation – assess vegetation integrity and habitat suitability per **BAM**

Other planted native vegetation assess suitability for threatened species. If species present – address

apply mitigation measures

Streamlined assessment modules - report requirements

New appendix provides checklists of report requirements for each module

Appendix L: Requirements for a Biodiversity Development Assessment Report – Streamlined assessment modules

Table 26 Minimum information requirements for a Biodiversity Development Assessment Report: Streamlined assessment module – Scattered trees assessment

Table 27 Minimum information requirements for the Biodiversity Development Assessment Report: Streamlined assessment module – Small area

Table 28 Minimum information requirements for the Biodiversity Development Assessment Report: Streamlined assessment module – Planted native vegetation

Report section	BAM ref.	Information	Maps & tables (in document)	Data (to be supplied)
Introduction	Chapters 2 and 3	**INFORMATION** Introduction to the biodiversity assessment including: ☐ brief description of proposed development ☐ identification of subject land[4] boundary, including: ☐ operational footprint		

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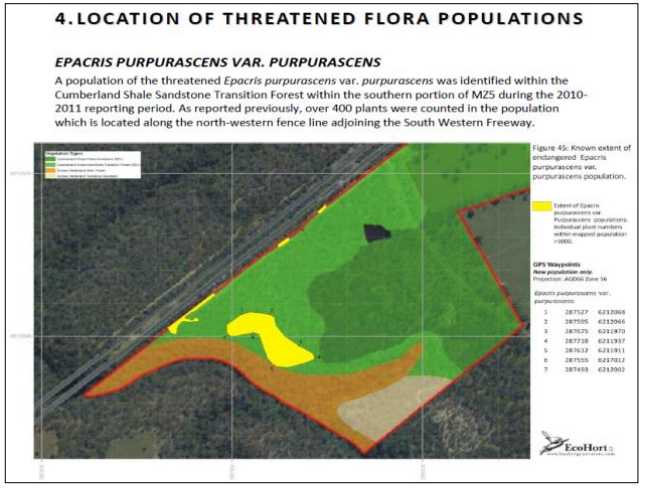
Key amendments to BAM stage 3



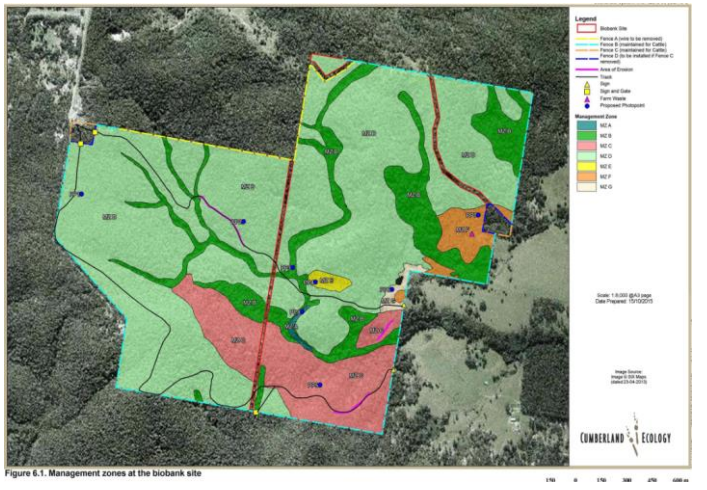


Figure 6.1. Management zones at the biobank site

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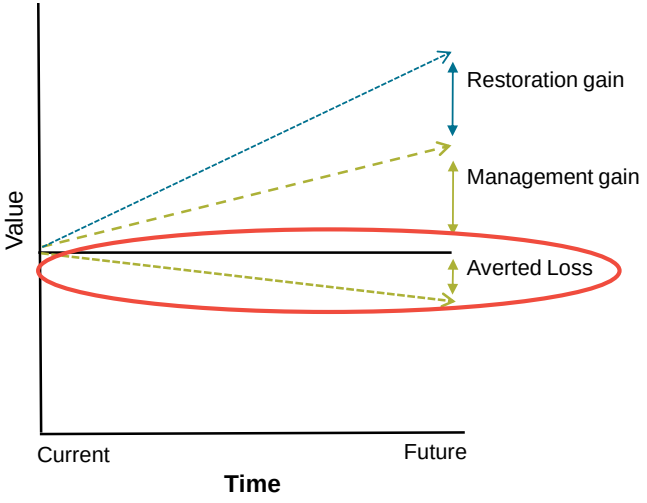
Biodiversity gain – amending the rate of decline

- Used to predict improvement in biodiversity values at biodiversity stewardship sites – minor amendments



Amended rates of decline

Type	Field	Attribute	BAM 2017	BAM 2020
Rate of decline – without management (Low Risk Land)	Composition	All attributes	0 – 0.05	0.15
	Structure	All attributes except tree cover	0.05	0.15
		Tree cover	0.25	0.25
	Function	Litter cover, tree regen, stem size classes	0	0.15
		No. large trees	0.5	0.5
		Length of fallen logs	0.25	0.25

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Broadening the definition of high risk land for averted loss

Existing	New additions
• Category 1-exempt land on the native vegetation regulatory map published under Part 5A of the LLS Act (in the absence of the Native Vegetation Regulatory Maps the assessor will be required to identify lands as category 1-exempt land or category 2-regulated land by applying the definitions in the LLS Act, with support from Local Land Services) • Zoned for residential (including rural residential), business or industrial uses in a local environmental plan • Zoned RU1 (primary production)	• Zoned RU2 (rural landscape) or RU4 (primary production small lots) • The native vegetation present is listed as an endangered or critically endangered ecological community • Located in a Mitchell landscape that is ≥30% cleared • Adjoins urban or industrial development (or future urban development if the proposed biodiversity stewardship agreement is part of the biodiversity certification proposal

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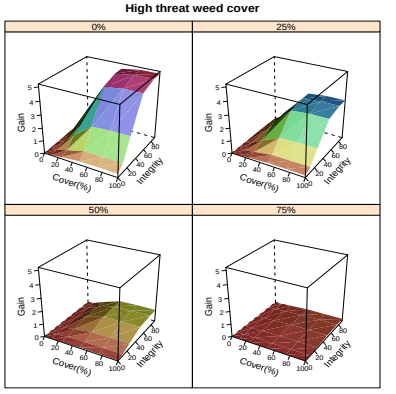
Biodiversity gain – including a rate of management gain for all condition attributes

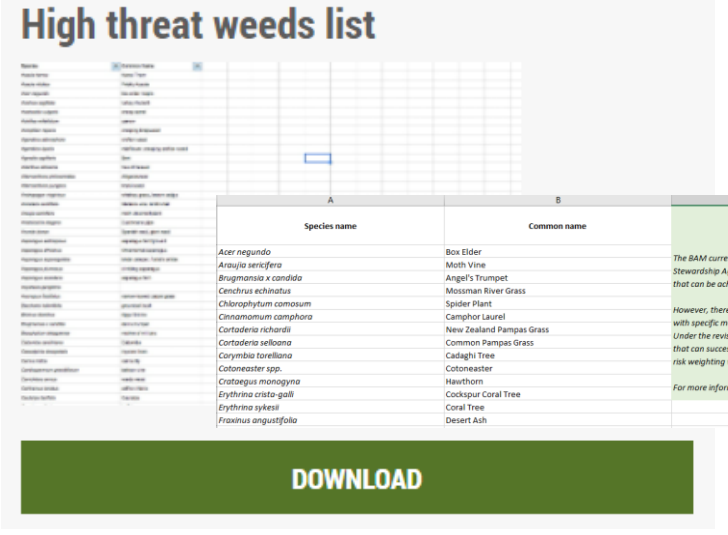
Amendments

Type	Field	Attribute	BAM 2017	BAM 2020
Rate of gain – with Management	Composition	Other	0	0.03
	Structure	Other	0	0.06
	Function	No. large trees	0	0.02
		Stem size classes	0	0.06

Biodiversity gain – risk weighting and high threat weeds

- The gain modifier and risk weighting may be removed for manageable high threat weeds
  - e.g. African olive , Lantana, Privet etc.
- Management actions must be listed in the management plan
- Changes can provide a modest increase in credit yields





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New appendix to support strategic biodiversity certification

Additional approved conservation measures include:

- reservation
- adoption of development controls
- contributions that conserve or enhance the natural environment
- measures approved by the Minster

Provides a method for valuing land-based conservation measures in credits.

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Transitional arrangements

cl. 6.31 of the Biodiversity Conservation Regulation 2017

From 22 Oct 2020, a biodiversity assessment report may be submitted based on BAM 2017 for:

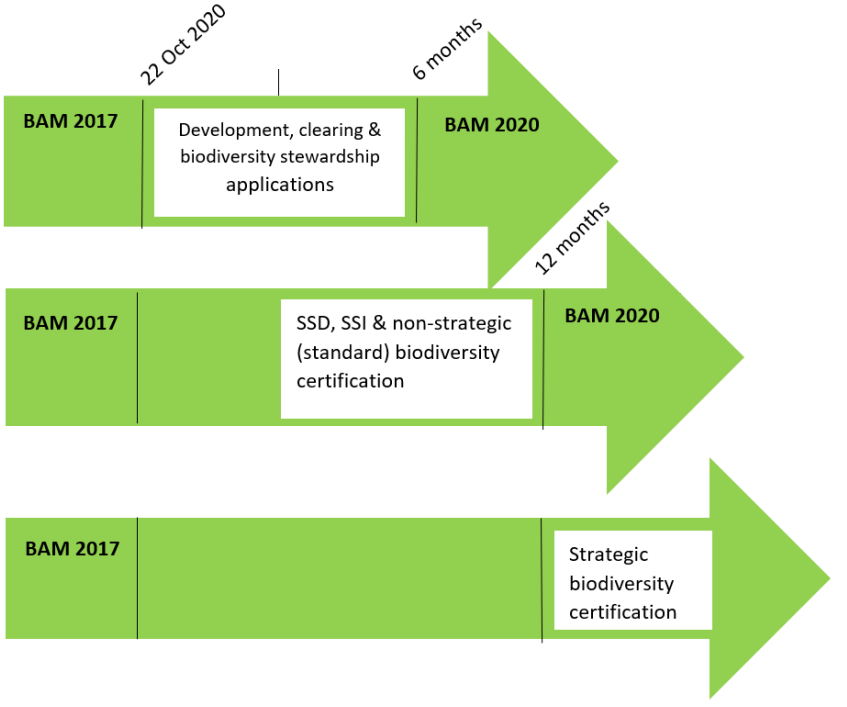
- 12 months or longer - strategic biodiversity certification
- 12 months - state significant development or infrastructure and non-strategic (standard) biodiversity certification
- 6 months - all other development and clearing applications or biodiversity stewardship applications.

Must be stated in the Biodiversity Assessment Report.

Contact BCT if proposing to apply BAM 2017 to a biodiversity stewardship site.

Contact bam.support@environment.nsw.gov.au to apply BAM 2017 to streamlined assessments (scattered trees or small areas).

https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/biodiversity/biodiversity-assessment-method



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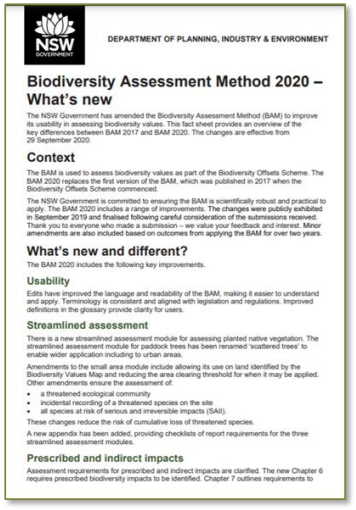
What next?

- BAM 2020 comes into effect 22 October
- Update supporting documents
- Stakeholder communications
- Q&A webinar 28 Oct 11-12:00am
  via ‘Biodiversity offsets scheme support webinars’
- 5 year review 2022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Biodiversity Assessment Method 2020 – What's new

The NSW Government has amended the Biodiversity Assessment Method (BAM) to improve its usability in assessing biodiversity values. This fact sheet provides an overview of the key differences between BAM 2017 and BAM 2020. The changes are effective from 29 September 2020.

Context

The BAM is used to assess biodiversity values as part of the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme. The BAM 2020 replaces the first version of the BAM, which was published in 2017 when the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme commenced.

The NSW Government is committed to ensuring the BAM is scientifically robust and practical to apply. The BAM 2020 includes a range of improvements. The changes were publicly exhibited in September 2019 and finalised following careful consideration of the submissions received. Thank you to everyone who made a submission – we value your feedback and interest. Minor amendments are also included based on outcomes from applying the BAM for over two years.

What's new and different?

The BAM 2020 includes the following key improvements.

Usability

Edits have improved the language and readability of the BAM, making it easier to understand and apply. Terminology is consistent and aligned with legislation and regulations. Improved definitions in the glossary provide clarity for users.

Streamlined assessment

There is a new streamlined assessment module for assessing planted native vegetation. The streamlined assessment module for paddock trees has been renamed 'scattered trees' to enable wider application including to urban areas.

Amendments to the small area module include allowing its use on land identified by the Biodiversity Values Map and reducing the area clearing threshold for when it may be applied. Other amendments ensure the assessment of:

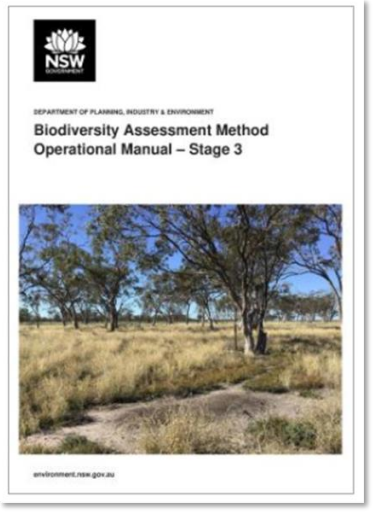
- a threatened ecological community
- incidental recording of a threatened species on the site
- all species at risk of serious and irreversible impacts (SAII).

These changes reduce the risk of cumulative loss of threatened species.

A new appendix has been added, providing checklists of report requirements for the three streamlined assessment modules.

Prescribed and indirect impacts

Assessment requirements for prescribed and indirect impacts are clarified. The new Chapter 6 requires prescribed biodiversity impacts to be identified. Chapter 7 outlines requirements to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Biodiversity Assessment Method Operational Manual – Stage 3

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■ species credits, which measure the offset requirement for impacts on threatened species individuals or area of habitat.

A proponent must provide the BAR to the decision-maker or the Biodiversity Conservation Trust as part of their development, activity, clearing, biodiversity certification or stewardship site application. A BDAR and a BCAR will be placed on public exhibition with the relevant application.

Read the **Biodiversity Assessment Method 2020 (PDF 1.2MB)**.

New BAM 2020

The BAM 2020 comes into force on 22 October 2020. The **Biodiversity Assessment Method 2020 – What's New fact sheet** outlines the key amendments made to BAM 2017. Clause 6.31 of the Biodiversity Conservation Regulation 2017 provides transitional arrangements to minimise the impact that amendments to the BAM may have on proponents and landholders with a biodiversity assessment underway. This includes assessments for development, activities, clearing, biodiversity certification and biodiversity stewardship agreements.

Transitional arrangements

From 22 October 2020, transitional arrangements allow proponents and landholders to submit a biodiversity assessment report based on **BAM 2017**, for:

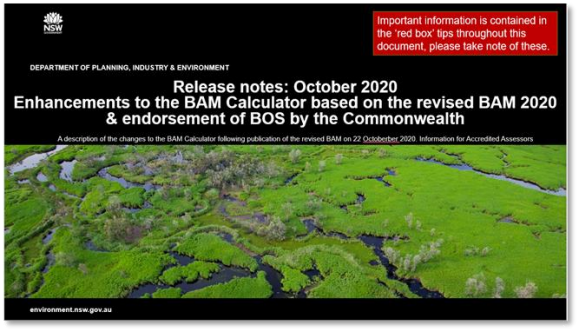
Biodiversity Assessment Method 2020

The BAM 2020 comes into force on 22 October 2020. The BAM is established for the purpose of assessing certain impacts on threatened species and threatened ecological communities, and their habitats, and the impact on biodiversity values, where required under the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016, Local Land Services Act 2013 or the State Environmental Planning Policy (Vegetation in Non-Rural Areas) 2017.

PDF 1.8MB

DOWNLOAD

MORE INFO



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For further information on the BAM

https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/biodiversity/biodiversity-assessment-method

Or contact us via bam.support@environment.nsw.gov.au