

Biodiversity Offsets Scheme Update No. 23

21 December 2023

Welcome to Issue No. 23 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. Keep up to date [via our website](#).

This monthly newsletter is one of the ways in which we communicate and help support the implementation of the scheme. You can view our past newsletters [online](#). The Biodiversity Conservation Trust's (BCT) twice-yearly newsletter is another source of information, you can find it at the BCT's [Publication website](#).

For other enquiries on the scheme, contact the dedicated scheme Help Desk team:

- Help Desk Line 1800 931 717, staffed Tuesday to Thursday from 10 am to 4 pm
- Help Desk mailbox, BOS.helpdesk@environment.nsw.gov.au, monitored Monday to Friday from 10 am to 4 pm.

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For accredited assessors

Now available: BSSAR and Management Plan templates and the new BSA Application Guide

The Biodiversity Stewardship Site Assessment Report (BSSAR) and Management Plan templates and new BSA Application Guide are now available via the automated email link here:

[Request the BSSAR and Management Plan templates and the BSA Application Guide.](#)

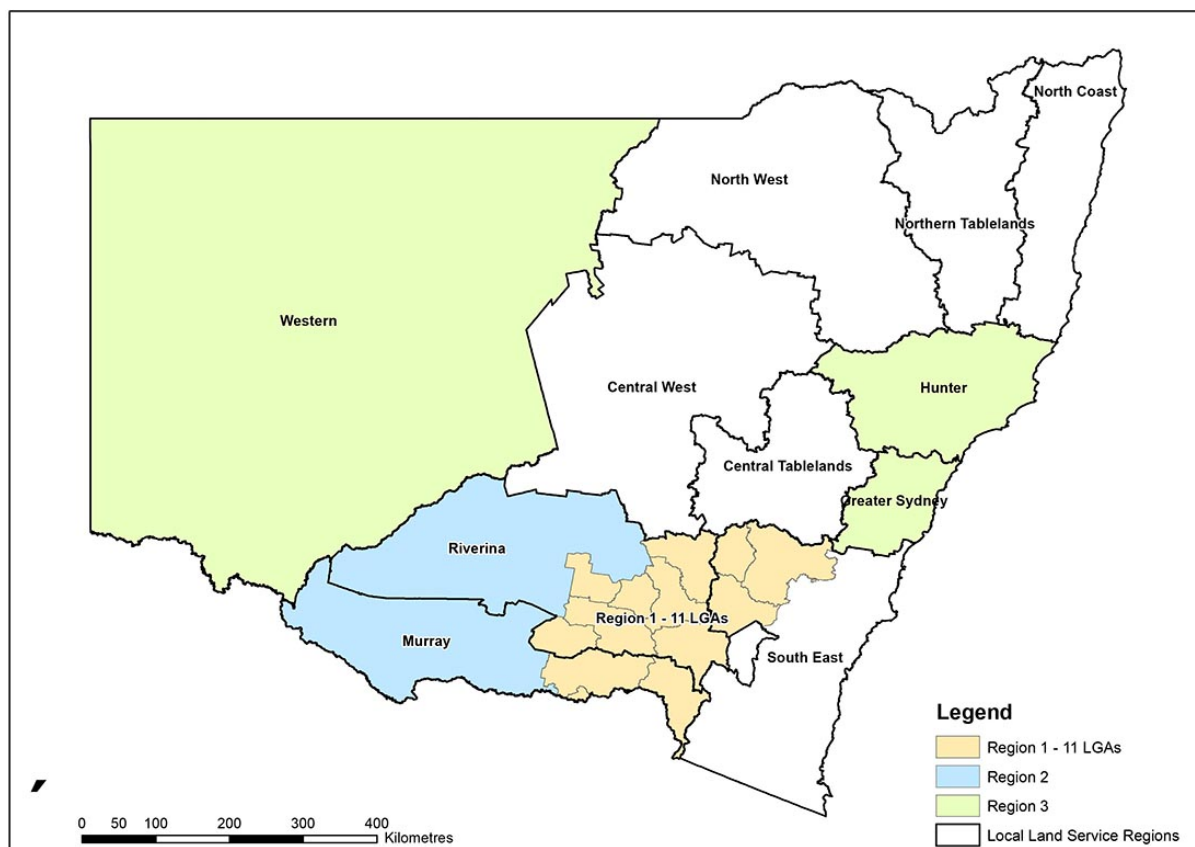
The BSSAR and Management Plan templates will become mandatory from 1 January 2024 to improve efficiency and consistency. If accredited assessors have already prepared these documents for upcoming biodiversity stewardship agreement (BSA) applications, this can be discussed at a pre-submission meeting with the Taskforce. For further information, please email stewardship@environment.nsw.gov.au.

Now released: Draft Native Vegetation Regulatory map Region 3

As part of the ongoing staged release of the draft Native Vegetation Regulatory (NVR) map, the department published Region 3 covering Western, Hunter and Greater Sydney Local Land Services Regions on 7 December 2023. In total 60.2% of the state has now been released.

The draft NVR map is a tool landholders can use when considering how best to manage native vegetation on their land. It does not impose any new legal obligations. The map provides certainty when determining whether an approval is or isn't required.

Free map reviews will continue to be available for all versions. Landholders with any enquiries about the map can submit these via our [online enquiry form](#), by email to map.review@environment.nsw.gov.au or call our staff on 1800 001 490.



Updated tool released: Ecosystem Credit Trading Groups Tool

The [Ecosystem Credit Trading Groups Tool](#), (previously named the plant community type (PCT) to Offset Trading Group (OTG) Tool), has been enhanced with new search functions for credit holders and proponents. The tool allows users to search by PCT or OTG and discover the like-for-like and variation credit retirement, or credit trading, options for ecosystem credits.

For eastern New South Wales, the tool includes decommissioned and approved plant community types to show how legacy plant community types can continue to trade under the offset rules.

The following search functions can now be accessed through the [Ecosystem Credit Trading Groups Tool](#).

Credit retirement options for proponents

- Like-for-like credit retirement options for threatened ecological communities
- Like-for-like credit retirement options for non-threatened vegetation
- Variation credit retirement options for threatened ecological communities
- Variation credit retirement options for non-threatened vegetation

Credit trading options for credit holders

- Like-for-like credit trading options for threatened ecological communities
- Like-for-like credit trading options for non-threatened vegetation
- Variation credit trading options for threatened ecological communities
- Variation credit trading options for non-threatened vegetation

Update to threatened entity data in BioNet and the BAM-C

BioNet data for the species pale-headed snake (*Hoplocephalus bitorquatus*) has been updated to add the following PCT association: **PCT101** (Poplar Box – Yellow Box Western Grey Box grassy woodland on cracking clay soils mainly in the Liverpool Plains, Brigalow Belt South Bioregion).

The BAM-C will not yet include this updated PCT association due to unavoidable delays in importing BioNet updates into the BAM-C. In the meantime, assessors should manually add the species to candidate species lists in the BAM-C. For more information about changing the candidate species lists in the BAM-C, please refer to the 'Biodiversity data' tab of the [Assessor questions and answers webpage](#). At all times, the data in the BAM-C is to be used in an assessment and is considered correct. However, assessors should continue to access BioNet for the most current information.

Improvements to the Vegetation and Threatened Species Tool in Biodiversity Offset and Agreement Management System (BOAMS)

The department is improving how credits wanted (credit demand) and expression of interest (EOI) listings are made in BOAMS.

The most recent improvements are to the tool that underlies the credit demand and EOI listings, the Vegetation & Threatened Species (V&TS) Tool.

Earlier stages of the improvements went live in December 2022 and June 2023 and are explained in [BOS Update No. 11](#) and [BOS Update No. 17](#). The most recent changes expand the fields to ensure all credit class attributes can be displayed and allows PCTs that were decommissioned by the introduction of ECPCT to be listed (there can still be obligations to retire decommissioned PCTs). For more information about the improvements, please refer to the PDF attachment titled, 'Improvements to V&TS Tool'.

Will you be listing credit demand or an EOI soon? We would like to hear from you.

The department is looking for any accredited assessors and other external users who will be listing credit demand or an EOI soon to assist with testing the live improvements in BOAMS and on the BOS public registers. If you are interested in assisting, please contact BOSCRECITS@environment.nsw.gov.au.

Planned plant community type updates to BioNet Vegetation Classification

The first annual update of the Integrated BioNet Vegetation Data was released on Friday 15 December 2023.

The update has been informed by user feedback and new data and is a routine part of the ongoing effort to continuously improve the NSW plant community type (PCT) classification and the state vegetation type map (SVTM).

The changes will not apply to BAM assessments until they are imported into the BAM-Calculator, along with other updates as part of the scheduled import in early 2024. For details on the changes, please visit [Plant community type changes annual update](#) published by BioNet on 21 November 2023. For BioNet support, please contact bionet@environment.nsw.gov.au or visit www.bionet.nsw.gov.au.

Threatened species taxonomic review and the scheme

If a threatened species is undergoing taxonomic review, any changes to the taxonomy are not yet recognised under NSW legislation until a formal assessment of the species has been completed by the NSW Threatened Species Scientific Committee (TSSC). For NSW planning matters, all occurrences of the species are to be assessed as the original species until review by the TSSC has occurred.

Accredited assessor training dates for 2024

Dates for accredited assessor training for 2024 have been set.

- Course 1: 13–14 and 16–17 May – field day location TBC
- Further dates for the second half of 2024 will be added in the new year

To register, please look under the accreditation training heading on [the Applying for assessor accreditation webpage](#). For people who are accredited assessors, renewal training is only being held once on 11–12 March 2024. Register via your account in Biodiversity Offset and Agreement Management System (BOAMS).

For landholders, credit owners, and credit buyers

Newly launched: Credits Near Me NSW mobile and web app

On 17 November 2023, the NSW Government released Credits Near Me NSW.

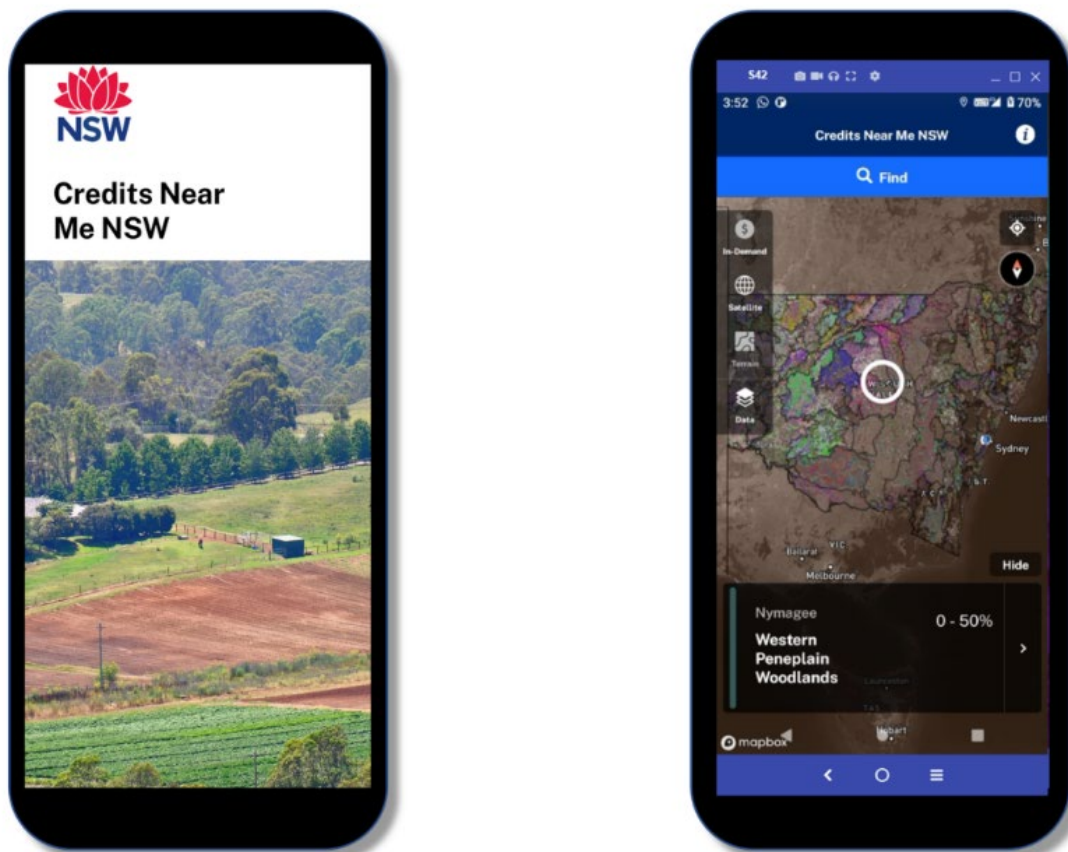
What is Credits Near Me NSW?

It is an easy-to-use prototype app and website that helps users understand the types of biodiversity credits in potential supply and demand across New South Wales. It helps landholders discover if they could get paid to protect native vegetation on their land.

Benefits of Credits Near Me

- It is a starting point for landholders who are considering setting up a biodiversity stewardship agreement (BSA) under the scheme.
- It provides a quick and easy way for landholders to discover the potential credit types on their land and gives them a broad understanding of the potential demand for such biodiversity credits.
- It provides an indication of where offset obligations could be met for developers. Users can search by their location, street address or Lot and DP. The application can be used anywhere there is an internet connection.

Credits Near Me is available for free via a web app (accessed via your mobile or desktop browser) or iOS and Android platforms via the Apple and Google Play stores. To access the app or for more information, visit our [Credits Near Me NSW app website](#).



Biodiversity Credits Catalogue: Advertise your available credits in the February/March 2024 edition

The Credits Supply Taskforce is now accepting submissions for the next edition of the Biodiversity Credits Catalogue to be released in February/March 2024. The catalogue provides credit owners with a free and easy way to advertise their available biodiversity credits and connect with potential buyers.

If you have credits you would like to advertise, please submit your details in the [Biodiversity Credits Catalogue advertiser's form](#) **by Friday 26 January 2024**.

Credits Supply Fund Reverse Auction 4

The Biodiversity Credits Supply Fund received 75 bids in the October/November 2023 reverse auction covering more than 116,000 credits. Credits were offered for 22 of the 75 target species credit types and 25 of the 51 target ecosystem credit types.

Bids were evaluated for eligibility and against price-based criteria. More than 17,000 credits (\$33 million) were approved for purchase, including 12 species and 13 ecosystem credit types.

The next reverse auction is scheduled for February 2024. For more information, please refer to the [Supply Fund webpage](#) or email SupplyFund@environment.nsw.gov.au.

BSA applications update

The Taskforce are pleased to see so many BSAs being progressed, and ahead of last year in area and number of credits being created. Working with landholders and assessors, we have also created some of the first ever Regent Honeyeater credits and Giant Burrowing Frog credits this month.

The Taskforce would like to thank everyone we have worked with this year. We wish you a happy festive period and look forward to working with you again in 2024.

The Taskforce will be closed between Friday 22 December 2023 to Friday 5 January 2024. During this time, BSA applications submitted will not be marked as 'received' until the Taskforce resumes operations on Monday 8 January 2024. If you have any questions, please email stewardship@environment.nsw.gov.au.

For local government

Local government capacity building project – survey ends 22 December

The department is undertaking a survey to better understand how to support local government in their roles and responsibilities related to scheme.

The survey will take about 10 minutes to complete, and we appreciate you taking time out of your day to share your thoughts. Survey responses will be used to inform local government training, engagement activities and resources relating to the scheme.

Please submit your feedback here: [Local government capacity and training requirements survey](#).

The survey closes 5 pm this Friday 22 December 2023.

Important notices: BOS credit applications

Applications for assessment of reasonable credit equivalence

The department is currently processing a high volume of assessment of reasonable credit equivalence applications. Any applications submitted after Friday 1 December

2023 may not have a reasonable equivalence statement drafted until after Monday 15 January 2024.

More information is available on the [Assessment of reasonable equivalence](#) webpage.

Applications for BOS credit transfers and retirements

The department is currently processing a high volume of BOS credit transfer and retirement applications. Any applications submitted after Friday 1 December 2023 may not be approved until after Monday 15 January 2024.

Applicants should account for the following when planning for completion of their applications to transfer or retire biodiversity credits:

- allow time to make any payment of the TFD to the BCT, that may be due
- allow time for the [application fee](#) to be received by the department when planning their deadlines for an application to be processed.

The department will make every effort to expedite an application where the applicant advises a deadline and provides a completed application form and supporting documents.

The department can also review draft (non-executed) applications. This is a useful way to make sure the application is complete and accurate before it is signed by people with the appropriate legal authority.

More information is available online about [credits transactions](#) and [transferring and retiring Biodiversity Offsets Scheme credits](#) including the usual timeframe to process an application and the review process.

If you have any queries regarding these 2 reminders, please contact boscredits@environment.nsw.gov.au.

Christmas and New Year shutdown period

To all our customers and stakeholders, we would like to wish you and your families all a happy and safe Christmas, new year and holiday period. Thank you for your continued support and understanding this year. We hope you have a well-deserved break and quality time is spent with your loved ones.

BOS Help Desk mailbox and enquiry line closure

No new requests from 18 December 2023 to 5 January 2024 (inclusive)

The BOS Help Desk will not be processing any new requests from Monday 18 December 2023 to Friday 5 January 2024 (inclusive) and be operating with reduced staff over January 2024. New enquiries will recommence processing from Monday 8 January 2024.

Mailbox unmonitored from 22 December 2023 to 5 January 2024 (inclusive)

There may also be delays in responding to enquiries in the weeks before and after this period due to reduced staff capacity within both the BOS Help Desk and subject matter officer teams.

Enquiry line closed from 18 December 2023 and will reopen 16 January 2024

With reduced BOS Help Desk staff during the holiday period, the BOS Help Desk enquiry line will be closed from Monday 18 December 2023 to Monday 15 January 2024 and will reopen for our normal opening hours (Tuesday to Thursday 10am to 4pm) on Tuesday 16 January 2024.

Credit Supply Taskforce closure

Closed from 22 December 2023 and will reopen 8 January 2024

During this time, BSA applications submitted will not be marked as 'received' until the Taskforce resumes operations on Monday 8 January 2024.

NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust closure

Closed from 25 December 2023 and reopen 8 January 2024

In preparation for the Christmas shutdown, we will not be issuing quotes or section 6.33 certificates for payment into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund until 8 January. In addition, any requests for price estimate statements will be processed after 8 January.

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