

# Biodiversity Offsets Scheme Update No. 34

16 December 2024

**Welcome to issue No. 34** of the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme Update.

This monthly newsletter is one of the ways in which we communicate and help support the implementation of the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme. You can keep up to date [via our website](#) and view our [past newsletters here](#). 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 Help Desk via the [Customer Portal](#), monitored Monday to Friday from 10 am to 4 pm.

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## General updates

### Biodiversity Offsets Scheme amendment Bill passed

On 22 November 2024 the NSW Parliament passed the Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Biodiversity Offsets Scheme) Bill 2024.

The Bill progresses reforms to the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme in line with NSW Government commitments in the [NSW Plan for Nature](#).

Supporting amendments to the *Biodiversity Conservation Regulation 2017* are now being developed. There will be consultation on the regulations through the first half of 2025

### Biodiversity stewardship agreements milestone and update

The total area of land under biodiversity stewardship agreements (BSAs) has now surpassed 100,000 hectares. This is a significant achievement for the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme and all those involved in working towards this milestone.

Since July 2022, more than 115 BSAs have been approved, creating more than 561,000 biodiversity credits. This increase is a result of efforts by the Assurance and Biodiversity Stewardship branch to improve the processes through which BSAs are reviewed and finalised, along with the work of the Biodiversity Credits Supply Fund and Stewardship Support Program to help landholders create and sell credits.

Working with private landholders to establish BSAs is an essential part of the government's future strategy for the scheme to become net positive. The government is also committed to working closely with Aboriginal communities, industry, environmental groups, and other stakeholders to ensure the scheme maintains its integrity, transparency and equity.

### **Christmas/New Years shutdown for receiving BSA applications**

The virtual front counter for new BSA applications and variations will be closed between Thursday 19 December and 5 January 2025. Any correspondence received during this time will be progressed in the week commencing 6 January 2025.

## **Reminder: retired credits appear on the BOS Credit Transactions register**

The [BOS Credit Transactions public register](#) displays BOS biodiversity credits that have been retired.

The register also displays information about the retirement provided by the credit owner. This includes the reason the credits were retired, the reference number of any obligation to retire the credits and the address, local government area and date of the obligation.

Consent authorities, decision makers and other interested parties can refer to the register to determine whether credits have been retired to meet an obligation conditioned by a planning or vegetation clearing approval.

## **Webpage update on scheme guides, tools and databases**

New webpages have been established which host essential guides, tools and databases for accredited assessors and stakeholders involved in the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme and delivery of the Biodiversity Assessment Method.

Former pages now redirect to the following new pages. Please bookmark for future use.

| <b>Webpage</b>                  | <b>URL</b>   |
|---------------------------------|--|
| BOS guides, tools and databases | <u><a href="https://www2.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/biodiversity-offsets-scheme/maps-systems-and-resources/guides-tools-and-databases">https://www2.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/biodiversity-offsets-scheme/maps-systems-and-resources/guides-tools-and-databases</a></u>                                     |
| BAM tools and resources         | <u><a href="https://www2.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/biodiversity-offsets-scheme/accredited-assessors/biodiversity-assessment-method-tools-and-resources">https://www2.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/biodiversity-offsets-scheme/accredited-assessors/biodiversity-assessment-method-tools-and-resources</a></u> |

If you have any questions about these pages, please contact the BOS Help Desk via the [Customer Portal](#).

## State Vegetation Type Map updates and PCT to TEC association changes are now live

This release incorporates user feedback as part of the ongoing effort to improve the state vegetation type map (SVTM). There are no changes to the plant community type (PCT) master list in this release (version C2.0 remains current). The update includes a revised SVTM (version C2.0M2.1) and an update of threatened ecological community (TEC) associations for three PCTs.

### What do you need to do?

To access the updated **SVTM**:

- Access SVTM version C2.0M2.1 from the [SEED portal](#), via a new download.
- Read the [latest SVTM release notes](#)
- The new SVTM version is automatically incorporated in Trees Near Me NSW and Restore Trees NSW apps.

To access the updated **threatened ecological community PCT associations**:

- Refresh any BioNet power queries stored locally to bring in the updated PCT to TEC associations, and/or re-export data directly from BioNet applications.
- Refresh any non-DCCEEW applications that draw data from BioNet web services to bring in the updated PCT to TEC associations.
- Read the latest [BioNet PCT release notes](#).
- The updated TEC associations have been incorporated into the Plot to PCT Assignment Tool

### Support

For support, please contact us at [bionet@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:bionet@environment.nsw.gov.au).

## Multi-factor authentication (MFA) for BOAMS and BAAS

To enhance security, Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) was successfully enabled on 7 October 2024 for the Biodiversity Offsets and Agreements Management System (BOAMS) and the Biodiversity Assessors and Accreditation System (BAAS).

Additionally, Council and Consent Authority users now log in with individualised credentials, replacing generic accounts, boosting system security.

While this transition has improved overall security, we acknowledge there has been a small number of challenges.

Thanks to feedback and troubleshooting support from our users, the project team swiftly addressed these issues:

- **Access Issues:** Updates have been implemented to restore seamless access to case records for Council and Consent Authority users who have established individual accounts.
- **Mobile One Time Password (OTP) Errors:** Improvements were deployed to ensure OTPs are delivered promptly via mobile, leading to a steady increase in mobile OTP usage.

In the two weeks after enabling MFA over **1,100 successful logins** have been recorded.

### Ongoing Support

For ongoing support please contact the relevant support teams as listed below:

- For Accredited Assessor accounts in BOAMS/BAAS, email [BAM\\_Accreditation@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:BAM_Accreditation@environment.nsw.gov.au)
- For Community User accounts in BOAMS, email [BOSCredits@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:BOSCredits@environment.nsw.gov.au)
- For Council/Consent Authority account creation requests, email [BOS.Helpdesk@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:BOS.Helpdesk@environment.nsw.gov.au)

We greatly appreciate your patience and support during this transition. Your collaboration has been vital in achieving a more secure and efficient system.

## For credit owners and buyers

### Application fee waivers end 31 December 2024

The fee waivers for biodiversity stewardship agreement (BSA) applications and BSA variation applications will come to an end on 31 December 2024.

From 1 January 2025, the fees for these applications will be in line with the regulation - please see the [DCCEEW website](#) for further information.

The fee waivers helped to improve the uptake of BSAs and create more in-demand biodiversity credits. We also introduced the [Stewardship Support Program](#) to assist landholders, addressing barriers to enter into BSAs.

### Virtual front counter for new BSA applications closes Friday 20 December

The biodiversity stewardship team will be taking a well-earned break over the shutdown period. This means that no applications will be reviewed at the virtual front counter between Friday 20 December and Monday 6 January 2025.

## Upcoming credit transfer and retirement applications

Applicants for BOS credit transfers and/or retirements are encouraged to notify the Department of any upcoming applications using this [online form](#). Providing this information is voluntary and will assist us to improve processing time. There is often high demand for these credit transactions at the end of each calendar year.

Applications submitted after 29 November 2024 may not be approved until after 13 January 2025. If you have any questions, please contact [bos.credits@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:bos.credits@environment.nsw.gov.au).

## Supply Fund October 2024 reverse auction results

The results of the Biodiversity Credits Supply Fund's October 2024 reverse auction have now been published online.

The auction closed on 23 October 2024 and received 69 bids covering more than 26,500 credits. Bids were evaluated in accordance with the published auction documentation, and more than 5,000 credits have been approved for purchase, totalling around \$23 million.

To see which credit types were purchased, go to the [Supply Fund and credit purchasing webpage](#).

## BCT Credit Tender 24-02 – Progress update

The BCT expects to start making Round 1 offers to purchase successful credit offers from **13/01/25**. As indicated in the [participants guide](#), if the BCT offers to purchase your credits then you will be provided **four business days to respond**. This timeframe is required to enable the BCT to make offers to other applicants in a timely manner if you choose not to accept the BCT's offer. It is important to regularly check your emails, including your 'spam folder' in case the email is not displayed in your inbox.

Offers are made in rounds in ranked prioritised order. If you haven't received a Round 1 offer by the end of January, it is possible you may receive an offer in a subsequent round, depending on how many Round 1 offers are accepted. We expect to have completed most offers by mid-February. We have started sending notifications for unsuccessful bids and this will continue in January and February. You can view our estimated program timeline on our [Credit Tenders webpage](#).

If you have any other questions about the Tender, please email us at [offsets@bct.nsw.gov.au](mailto:offsets@bct.nsw.gov.au).

# Training and support

## New webinar series for local government

A webinar series to support local government in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities under the scheme has commenced. While the webinars are targeted to local government, other scheme participants will also likely benefit from topics presented.

The first webinar in this series “BOAMS for local government” is now available for viewing on the department’s [Local government training and resources’ webpage](#). The webinar provides guidance on using BOAMS in the role of a decision-making authority.

Local government staff who have previously enrolled in the local government eLearning modules or workshops or are registered to receive BOS Updates will be notified about future webinars in this series. If you are not on our local government mailing list but would like to be added, please contact the BOS Help Desk via the [Customer Portal](#).

## Free local government training

The Department is offering sponsorships for local government staff to access a tailored scheme eLearning program to June 2025.

The eLearning program is designed to help local government staff understand the fundamental concepts of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*, the scheme, and the Biodiversity Assessment Method. It is designed to support councils in implementing their roles and responsibilities in the scheme.

The training has been well received with more than 425 participants since commencement.

For information on how to apply, please go to the [BOS Training Section](#) of WSP’s training webpage, click on the ‘Biodiversity offsets scheme training’ dropdown option, and scroll down to Local government training.

You can download an EOI Form and send it to the BOS Help Desk via the [Customer Portal](#).

## Ecological Monitoring Module – Upcoming Field Training Days

The BCT is delivering a series of field training sessions designed to improve understanding and capacity among BAM Accredited Assessors and other ecological consultants on applying the agency’s Ecological Monitoring Module (EMM) to BSA sites.



The sessions cover:

- EMM field methods,
- The use of BCT's Survey123 data collection tools,
- Development of monitoring components of a BSA Management Plan, and
- Data management, analysis and reporting requirements.

The first of these sessions was held on 3 December at Tuggerah Nature Reserve. The BCT is planning to run additional sessions in early 2025, with locations flexible, depending on demand. Please get in touch via [ecological.ats@bct.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ecological.ats@bct.nsw.gov.au) to express your interest in a particular location or region in NSW.

## BOS Help Desk Customer Portal

The BOS Help Desk Customer Portal is undergoing a refresh to improve your enquiry experience. The new-look portal has improved navigation for accessing resources and assistance, including a range of knowledge articles addressing common questions and key topics related to the scheme. These articles cover areas from policy to survey advice to systems troubleshooting, helping users quickly access reliable information.

Over time we will transition scheme support from BOS Help Desk emails to the portal. Any changes to scheme support processes will be communicated to stakeholders before and after they are implemented.

## BOS Help Desk Christmas and New Year Shutdown Period

As the holiday season approaches, please be advised of the upcoming BOS Help Desk closure dates. During this period, our team will be unavailable for new requests and general enquiries.

### **No new requests from 16 December 2024 to 3 January 2025 (inclusive)**

The BOS Help Desk will not be processing new requests from Monday 16 December 2024 to Friday 3 January 2025 (inclusive) and will be operating with reduced staff over January 2025. Processing of new enquiries will recommence 6 January 2025.

### **Enquiry line closed from 16 December 2024 and will reopen 14 January 2025**

The BOS Help Desk enquiry line will be closed from Monday 16 December 2024 to Monday 13 January 2025 and will reopen for our normal opening hours (Tuesday to Thursday 10am to 4pm) on Tuesday 14 January 2025.



# For accredited assessors

## Accredited Assessor Compliance and Assurance

We acknowledge leading into the Christmas period is a busy time of year with many accredited assessors out in the field and preparing reports. It is important to act in a professional manner and be respectful and courteous in all interactions with stakeholders when implementing the scheme.

The Department would like to remind you that when acting as an accredited assessor, you must comply with all conditions of your accreditation, including the Code of Conduct for Accredited Assessors and requirements of the BAM.

## Accredited Assessor Training Courses

The Department recently released two new accredited assessor training courses for January and March-April 2025. Places for these courses were filled via the expression of interest list (EOI), and both sessions are now full.

Additional courses will be scheduled for the second half of 2025. If you wish to add your name to the EOI list, please email [bos.training@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:bos.training@environment.nsw.gov.au)

## Accredited Assessor Renewal Training Courses

Accredited assessors whose accreditation is due in 2025 are reminded to book in for renewal training. You may only register within three months of your due date via your BOAMS login.

### **Accredited assessor renewal training can be booked for the following dates:**

- February 4 and 5 (registration almost full)
- February 25 and 26
- March 6 and 7
- March 13 and 14
- April 14 and 15
- May 6 and 7
- June 17 and 18

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