

[Home](#) > [Conservation programs](#) > [Biodiversity offsets](#) > Biodiversity offsets policy for major projects

NSW biodiversity offsets policy for major projects

This policy will be phased in over a transitional period commencing on 1 October 2014

The [NSW biodiversity offsets policy for major projects, PDF 331KB](#) clarifies, standardises and improves biodiversity offsetting for major project approvals. The policy applies to state significant development and state significant infrastructure under the [Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979](#), including projects such as highways, mines and hospitals.

The policy aims to strike an effective balance between the needs of proponents, communities and the environment by:

- providing clear, efficient and certain guidance for stakeholders
- improving outcomes for the environment and communities
- providing a practical and achievable offset scheme for proponents.

Framework for Biodiversity Assessment

The policy is underpinned by the [Framework for Biodiversity Assessment \(FBA\), PDF 1.27MB](#). The FBA sets out the process for:

- assessing biodiversity impacts on a proposed development site
- determining the biodiversity offset requirements for those impacts.

Credit calculator

The Framework for Biodiversity Assessment Credit Calculator is a Microsoft Access program. It is a decision support tool that should be used in conjunction with the FBA. It will assist industry groups and ecological consultants to:

- assess the biodiversity on a proposed development site, in conjunction with the Framework for Biodiversity Assessment
- calculate the number and type of credits required to offset the impacts of a major project on biodiversity
- estimate the approximate area of land required for an offset.

The credit calculator is being finalised and will be available for use by 1 October 2014.

NSW Biodiversity Offsets Fund

Interim fund

The NSW Government is currently in the process of developing an interim biodiversity offsets fund.

The interim fund will act as a brokerage service on behalf of the Government that will assist landowners set up stewardship agreements in areas forecast to have a high demand for offsets in the future. This may enable landowners to receive income for managing biodiversity on their own land. Under this approach, landowners will have opportunities to receive stewardship payments for managing biodiversity on their land from the commencement of the policy, rather than waiting for the NSW Biodiversity Offsets Fund to be established.

Work is currently being undertaken on this project and it is expected further information, including how landowners can become involved, will be available around November 2014.

Biodiversity Offsets Fund

The NSW Biodiversity Offsets Fund (the fund) is a new initiative that will complement the policy. The fund will be developed over 12-18 months after the policy commences in October 2014.

The fund will allow proponents to satisfy their offset requirement via a monetary contribution into the fund. The fund will then purchase offsets on their behalf. This will increase the certainty for proponents and will enable a more strategic approach to purchasing offsets.

It is intended that the fund program manager will work closely with landowners and will provide information and assistance to landowners so they can set up agreements that will enable them to receive stewardship payments for managing biodiversity on their land as a way of meeting proponent offset requirements.

Draft biodiversity offsets policy

The [Draft NSW Biodiversity Offsets Policy for Major Projects](#) was released for public consultation ending Friday 9 May 2014. **The consultation period has now closed.**

Submissions

Public input into the draft policy has been very constructive. A total of 72 submissions were received from key stakeholders, including local government, individuals, local community groups, development organisations, environmental groups, and professional associations.

OEH has prepared the [report of submissions, PDF 437KB](#), which provides an analysis of stakeholder submissions. The report aims to address the various issues raised by stakeholders during the public consultation period and makes recommendations and proposed changes to the draft policy resulting from the submissions.

[Individual submissions](#) to the policy are available on the OEH website. Some confidential submissions have not been made available at the request of the individual or organisation.

Next steps

The policy will be phased in over a transitional period which will commence on 1 October 2014. During this time, proponents and the consent authority will apply the policy administratively (that is, the policy will not be mandated through legislation). There will be some flexibility in its application to address any problems and include finer details.

Feedback from key users throughout the transitional period will enable government to fine-tune the policy.

More information

- phone Environment Line on 131 555
- email offsets.policy@environment.nsw.gov.au

Page last updated: 10 September 2014