Melbourne Strategic Assessment

Habitat compensation obligations: GIS requirements

The Program

The Melbourne Strategic Assessment (MSA) Program provides for urban development in four growth corridors within Melbourne's Urban Growth Boundary. The Commonwealth government approved the taking of actions associated with urban development within four defined growth corridors on 5 September 2013 and 11 September 2014, under Part 10 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth).

The Commonwealth approvals are subject to conditions, which include that persons taking actions associated with urban development within the growth corridors must meet habitat compensation obligations. These obligations offset the loss or deemed loss of particular listed threatened species habitat and/or native vegetation.

Habitat compensation obligations are determined with reference to habitat data contained in the habitat compensation layer dataset maintained by DELWP, and the applicable fee schedule. Fees are payable to DELWP. The current fee schedule for each unit of obligation is set out in the document *Habitat Compensation under the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy* (DELWP, August 2013), which is available at http://www.depi.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0015/204360/HabCom.pdf.

The habitat compensation layer dataset incorporates native vegetation and threatened species habitat mapping undertaken as part of the development of the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy, as well as information on scattered trees where available.

Determining obligations

Prior to the approval of works within the four growth corridors, habitat compensation obligations must be met in full (for infrastructure, residential or non-residential parcel developments), or through a staged obligations agreement (residential developments only).

Habitat compensation obligations for parcel based developments are either calculated based on the VicMap cadastral boundary for the property, or on a GIS shapefile of the parcel boundary. Infrastructure project obligations are determined based on a GIS shapefile of the proposed construction footprint[1]. Applicants seeking to determine the habitat compensation obligations based on GIS shapefiles are required to submit spatial data to DELWP. DELWP assesses the spatial data against the standards outlined, below, and if acceptable then advises the applicable habitat compensation obligations.

Spatial Data Standards

DELWP calculates habitat compensation obligations using ESRI **polygon** shapefile spatial data. A shapefile is a common format of spatial data that stores the geometric location and attribute information of geographic features, in this case, a polygon represents the area of a construction footprint or parcel.

Shapefiles are processed against habitat data and other inputs using an automated process to determine obligations for habitat compensation, land security requirements and other conditions present.

Spatial data submitted as lines only **will not** be processed as they do not demonstrate the entire impact of a project.

Checks before submission

When submitting GIS spatial data to DELWP, the following standards should be met:

- ✓ ESRI polygon shapefile, representing the entire area being impacted or parcel area, with the following mandatory files extensions:

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[1] The construction footprint is defined as any area impacted by works, including areas used for vehicle access, vehicle turn around, and materials storage.

- ***.shp** – this file contains the geometry of the polygon and shows the outline of the development area.

- ***.shx** – this file contains the shape index format and provides a positional index for the polygon.

- ***.dbf** – this file contains the attribute format for the polygon (table or records).

- ***.prj** – this file defines the projection of the polygon (see below).

✓ The shapefile supplied must be projected in Geocentric Datum of Australia 1994 (VICGRID94).

✓ Linear infrastructure footprints should be greater than 3 metres wide to account for likely disturbance from access.

✓ The polygon should not contain overlaps, as this could lead to higher amounts of applicable obligations being reported.

✓ The shapefile supplied should only represent the area (single polygon) requiring obligations to be calculated. For example, polygons of development stages within parcel based projects are not required.

✓ If multiple polygons are supplied (either representing multiple land parcels or different components of a linear infrastructure project whereby individual obligations are required to be calculated) these should be easily identifiable in the data.
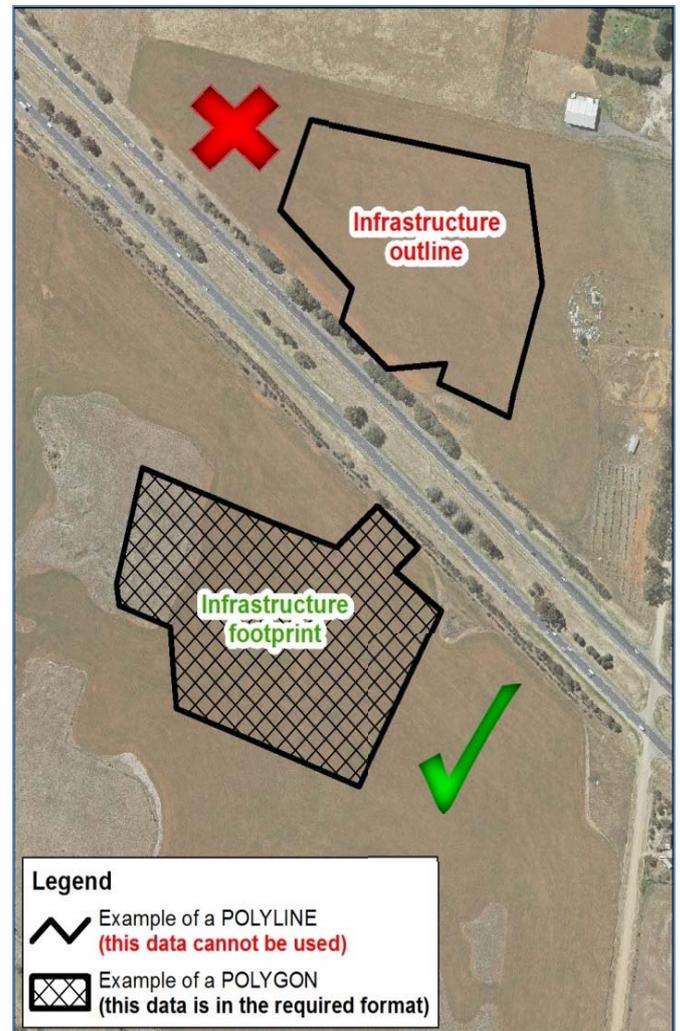
Lodgment

All shapefiles and supporting information should be emailed to:
msa.habitatcompensation@delwp.vic.gov.au

Further Information

For further information, please contact the MSA Habitat Compensation team on
msa.habitatcompensation@delwp.vic.gov.au or the DELWP Customer Service Centre on 136 186.

Disclaimer

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that data supplied is correct and free from errors. Data that does not meet the required standards will be returned to the applicant for amendment, which can lead to delays in the MSA team providing obligations.

DELWP will not convert files to polygons or correct erroneous polygons as this may result in inaccurate representations of submitted data that would affect the applicable obligations.