

Roles and Responsibilities: Native Vegetation Offset Register – Site Assessors

The site assessor can complete a gain scoring assessment and develop a security agreement to the standard of the Native Vegetation Credit Register (NVCR) that establishes native vegetation credits.

What is a site assessor?

A site assessor is an individual or organisation that charges a fee or commission for services including assessments in native vegetation on proposed offset sites, developing site management plans and assisting landowners in offset site establishment.

A site assessor can also conduct a gain scoring assessment in accordance with the Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation, 2017 (Guidelines) and developing a security agreement for a landowner to establish an offset site. To operate as a Vegetation Credit Register (NVCR) site assessor the service provider enters into an agreement with the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) which binds them to meet the required standards.

Site assessor rights and obligations

The site assessor agreement specifies how the site assessor must perform their duties, including that they ensure the highest quality of work with the utmost efficiency and that they keep DEECA informed of necessary matters.

Site assessors must work in accordance with and comply with the Guidelines, Rules of the NVCR and the Site Assessor Manual. They must:

- have knowledge of Victoria's native vegetation removal regulations and offset policy, including the Guidelines, planning schemes and relevant policy and regulations as amended from time to time

- apply due diligence including assessing offset site eligibility and potential for long term security of potential offset sites
- have current registration on the Vegetation Quality Assessment (VQA) competency register and have sound botanical and ecological management skills
- apply DEECA standards of management
- have GIS capability to develop aerial and zone plans to the standards described in the Site Assessor Manual
- contract a qualified surveyor to prepare site plans to Land Victoria's specification and standard.

A site assessor cannot possess property, or be engaged in businesses, that may create a Conflict of Interest.

- the agreement specifies that the site assessor must not have any conflict of interest with their duties under the agreement, and when providing services to a landowner and a credit purchaser this must be disclosed to both parties and DEECA. The site assessor must maintain proper records and documents concerning any assessments and agreements and comply with privacy laws.
- DEECA may terminate the site assessor agreement if the site assessor acts dishonestly, breaches the agreement or does not act in good faith.

Assistance to landowners and purchasers

In accordance with the site assessor agreement, a site assessor can provide services to landowners to:

- undertake site assessments, develop site management plans and supporting information, calculate gain, undertake quality assurance checks and submit completed work to the standard of the NVCR;

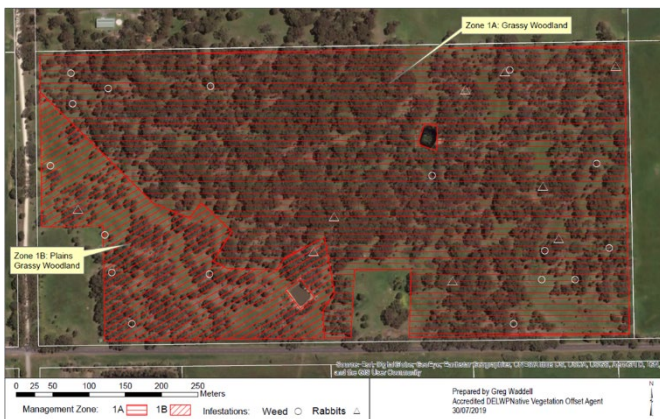
- use the standard documents and templates supplied by DEECA to assess potential native vegetation credit sites, provide information and advice to landowners and develop management plans; and
- develop security agreements between the landowner(s) and the Secretary to DEECA.

The site assessor will have a strong knowledge of the offset market and must provide advice to landowners and purchasers in accordance with market trends.

The site assessor should direct purchasers to the online *Search the Native Vegetation Credit Register* tool and the list of brokers on the DEECA website for comprehensive information about current or likely future offset market including market prices, demand, and availability of native vegetation credits.

The site assessor must advise the landowner that fees apply to the establishment, monitoring and compliance with a security agreement and ensure that landowners understand their ongoing commitments and obligations under the security agreement.

queries about trading and allocating native vegetation credits or nativevegetation.offsetmanagement@deeca.vic.gov.au for queries about setting up a new offset site or managing an existing offset site.



More information

The DEECA native vegetation website has useful information for landowners and credit owners, including:

- the steps required to establish an offset site and has information sheets about this process
- a list of NVCR site assessors and brokers
- the management standards that must be complied with when managing an offset site
- a breakdown of the NVCR fees
- information to help set a price for native vegetation credits, including all past trade prices.

<https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/native-vegetation/native-vegetation/offsets-for-the-removal-of-native-vegetation/i-want-to-establish-a-native-vegetation-credit-site>

You can email

nativevegetation.offsetregister@deeca.vic.gov.au for

Estimated timeframes to establish an offset site

Task description	Responsible party	Timeframe
Complete gain scoring assessment and prepares the security agreement (including management plan, maps and title plan)	Site Assessor and Surveyor	1-3 months
Review the proposal to ensure all standards and rules are complied with and have been correctly applied	DEECA (site assessor may be required to address comments)	3 weeks for each review
Approved proposal is executed, the security agreement is signed by the landowner and the Secretary to DEECA (after which credits are available for trade and allocation through the NVCR)	Site assessor arranges landowner signature then provides to DEECA for signature	2-4 weeks
Signed (executed) agreement is registered on the land title and provided to the landowner	DEECA	2-6 months

We acknowledge Victorian Traditional Owners and their Elders past and present as the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters and commit to genuinely partnering with them and Victoria's Aboriginal community to progress their aspirations.



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