

BushBroker[®]

BushBroker process – Permit holders

Information sheet No. 20

Offset search request registration

Prior to registering a BushBroker Offset Search Request (Offset Search Request) through BushBroker, under *Victoria's Native Vegetation Management – A Framework for Action*, permit holders must ensure the following steps have been taken:

1. **Avoid** adverse impacts, particularly through vegetation clearance.
2. If impacts cannot be avoided, **minimise** impacts through appropriate consideration in planning processes and expert input to project design or management.
3. Identify appropriate **offset** options.

Once the above steps have been taken, permit holders wishing to seek an appropriate offset through BushBroker can register an Offset Search Request. You can obtain a Offset Search Request form through the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) Customer Service Centre by calling 131 186 or visiting www.dse.vic.gov.au/nativevegetation.

To avoid delays in processing, please ensure the form contains all relevant information about the clearing site's location, land tenure, vegetation type, quality and quantity to be cleared, as well as threatened species present (and whether the site is best or remaining 50% of habitat for that species). Also make sure you attach relevant maps, consultant's reports and planning permits.

In the week following receipt of your Offset Search Request it will be registered in the BushBroker Database and you will be forwarded a letter of confirmation, along with a copy of the details registered. Please ensure you check your contact details and the details of the site being cleared as this information will be used to search for potential matches for the Native Vegetation Credits you require.

BushBroker Database search

A BushBroker Project Officer will conduct a search of the BushBroker Database in the weeks after registering your offset search request. The BushBroker Project Officer will forward you a list of the potential matches for your offset requirements. You will need to select which sites you would like to pursue from the list of potential matches. The potential matches may be from one or more of three different categories.

Expressions of Interest – Native Vegetation Credits potentially available for these sites are estimates at this stage. A site assessment by a BushBroker Project Officer is required in order to confirm the credits available. A BushBroker Project Officer will also create a BushBroker Management Plan for the landowner's consideration. It may take some weeks for this process to be completed.

Confirmed Assets – the potential Native Vegetation Credits listed as available for these sites are confirmed, but the landowner has not yet signed a BushBroker Landowner Agreement (Landowner Agreement). In most cases the landowner is ready and you can be placed in contact immediately to negotiate a price to allow the credits to be created and recorded in your name on the Native Vegetation Credit Register. The Landowner Agreement will be signed at the same time as the BushBroker Credit Agreement (see below).

Your name will only be recorded against a native Vegetation Credit once payment is received.

Credits – the Native Vegetation Credits listed as available for these sites are confirmed and are recorded on the Native Vegetation Credit Register. The landowner of these sites has signed a Landowner Agreement and is carrying out the management actions and commitments required to generate Native Vegetation Credits. Landowners of these sites are ready and you can be placed in contact immediately to negotiate a price to allow the credits to be recorded in your name on the Native Vegetation Credit Register.

Pricing Native Vegetation Credits

To assist each landowner with developing a price, information is provided by the BushBroker Project Officer that includes the projected habitat score and calculated gain.

Please note that negotiations (i.e. agreement of a price) are between the landowner and permit holder. BushBroker is not involved in these negotiations. Once a price has been agreed, BushBroker will prepare the necessary documentation.

For further guidance on how much the permit holder may be willing to pay, landowners are advised to go to the BushBroker website on the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) web page (www.dse.vic.gov.au) and click on 'Price history'. This website provides a summary of average total prices of previous BushBroker Credit Agreements across common bioregions. However, this information should be used with caution as negotiations are conducted one-on-one between permit holders and landowners and reflect those individual circumstances.

For more information on the factors that landowners may take into consideration when developing a price, please refer to BushBroker Information Sheet No. 17 - *Developing a Price*. Please note this is a guide only and circumstances will vary with each landowner.

Once you have agreed on a price with a landowner, the landowner will submit a Credit Agreement Advice form to BushBroker detailing the number, type and total price of the Native Vegetation Credits that are to be recorded against the name of the permit holder on the Native Vegetation Credit Register.

A BushBroker Project Officer will then develop a BushBroker Credit Agreement (Credit Agreement). A Credit Agreement is an agreement between a landowner and a permit holder which formalises the obligations of each party and details the number, type and price Native Vegetation Credits that are to be recorded against the name of the permit holder on the Native Vegetation Credit

Register. The Secretary of DSE, on behalf of the State of Victoria will receive and hold in trust the money for subsequent progress payments to the landowner, as required by the Landowner Agreement.

A BushBroker Project Officer will fill in the tables listing the proposed offset site so that they can be inserted into the draft BushBroker Offset Plan (Offset Plan) template by the permit holder. This Offset plan should be shown to the responsible (local council) or referral authority (your local DSE) to ensure the Native Vegetation Credits are acceptable.

BushBroker is not responsible for ensuring compliance with your planning permit.

Payment

Once the BushBroker Credit Agreement has been signed by all parties, BushBroker will forward your copy along with an invoice for the total agreed price which must be paid within 30 days. This will then be paid to the landowner in instalments over the period of their 10-year Management Plan.

Once payment is received, BushBroker will issue you with a Native Vegetation Credit Extract from the Native Vegetation Credit Register. The Credit Extract confirms your name has been recorded against the specific Native Vegetation Credits and should be shown, along with your final BushBroker Offset Plan to the responsible or referral authority to seek a Letter of Compliance.

Please note that BushBroker is not responsible for issuing compliance with your planning permit. For more information on the Native Vegetation Credit Register please refer to the DSE website www.dse.vic.gov.au/nativevegetation.

Further information

For further information on BushBroker, please contact the DSE Customer Service Centre on **136 186** or visit the DSE website at: www.dse.vic.gov.au/nativevegetation. All BushBroker Information Sheets are available on the website.

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For more information contact the DSE Customer Service Centre 136 186

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