

BushBroker[®]

Over the counter

Information sheet No. 16

Improving the quality and extent of native vegetation in Victoria is fundamental to fulfilling our expectations of a healthy and productive environment.

The Victorian Government has adopted a whole of landscape approach to protect and restore native vegetation to ensure better biodiversity outcomes and achieve greater certainty and economic efficiency.

As part of this approach, BushBroker *Over the Counter* (*Over the Counter*) provides a quick process for sourcing third party offsets required to offset the clearing of native vegetation. These third party offsets are created by a landowner protecting existing native vegetation or conducting revegetation on their own property.

Offsets

A native vegetation offset is any works, or other actions to make reparation for the loss of native vegetation arising from the removal or destruction of native vegetation. The gains achieved must be permanent and on-going, and linked to a specific clearing site.

Permit holders can often generate offsets on their own property. However, there are situations where this is not possible or preferred.

In these situations native vegetation offsets must be sought elsewhere. Permit holders may purchase Native Vegetation Credits from landowners who are willing and able to generate the appropriate offsets on their property.

BushBroker *Over the Counter*

In some cases planning permits advise an applicant that an appropriate offset will require the protection of a remnant patch of native vegetation (**Habitat Hectares**), protection of **Large Old Trees** or revegetation of native plants (**New Recruits**).

BushBroker has introduced *Over the Counter* to allow permit holders to seek Native Vegetation Credits from a Habitat Hectares, Large Old Trees or New Recruits created by a third party.

Over the Counter offers a simple and secure process for permit holders.

Under this system, landowners generating Habitat Hectare or Large Old Tree as Native Vegetation Credits provide the service of protecting, maintaining and improving native vegetation at a fixed price. Landowners generating Native Vegetation Credits from New Recruits provide the service of planting and maintaining New Recruits at a fixed price.

The price is set by the landowner who is providing the offset site and the associated protection, maintenance and improvement works. This price is not negotiable once set by the landowner.

All offsets are subject to approval from the responsible authority. See your planning permit for more information.

Landowners

A landowner who has a potential Native Vegetation Credit site can apply under BushBroker for a site assessment. Once the site is assessed, BushBroker will develop a BushBroker Landowner Agreement (Landowner Agreement) for the site for the landowner's signature.

If there is a demand from permit holders in your region for the types of Native Vegetation Credits you have available, BushBroker may discuss this option with you.

Once set up, a BushBroker Credit Agreement (Credit Agreement) which outlines details of the sale including vegetation type and the price per unit must be signed by the landowner and the Secretary of the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) prior to commencement.

For more information on developing a price please refer to BushBroker Information Sheet No 17. – *Developing a price.*

Payments are made to the landowner as per the payment schedule in the Landowner Agreement.

Native Vegetation Credit Extracts will be sent from the Native Vegetation Credit Register to show how many credits remain in the landowner's name.

For more information on the Landowner Agreement please refer to BushBroker Information Sheet No 5 – *Landowner Agreement*.

For more information on Revegetation please refer to BushBroker Information Sheet No 10 – *Standards for management - Revegetation*.

Permit holders

To utilise this service, permit holders should contact BushBroker through the DSE Customer Service Centre on 136 186. BushBroker will advise if *Over the Counter* is available in your region and whether it is suitable for your offset requirements (subject to approval from the responsible authority).

If *Over the Counter* is a suitable option, make an appointment with a DSE staff member in the region to pursue this. Alternatively requests can be made through the post.

A planning permit must be presented at the appointment and specify the offset requirements.

An BushBroker Offset Plan will need to be signed at the appointment. If the *Over the Counter* request is on behalf of an organisation, the person signing any documentation must have the authority to sign on behalf of the organisation.

Payment will need to be made immediately either by credit card or a cheque made out to the "Department of Sustainability and Environment".

Credit Extract or Proof of record

All *Over the Counter* Native Vegetation Credits are registered on the Native Vegetation Credit Register. Once a Landowner Agreement and the Credit Agreement is executed (signed), a Native Vegetation Credit Extract from the Native Vegetation Credit Register will be sent showing the details of the number and type of Native Vegetation Credits recorded against the name of the permit holder.

A Native Vegetation Credit Extract is proof that an offset has been secured. This must be shown, along with a signed BushBroker Offset Plan (issued at time of Landowner Agreement) to the responsible authority (i.e. local Council) when applying for the 'Letter of Compliance'. A 'Letter of Compliance' indicates that the offset requirements have been met.

BushBroker is not responsible for ensuring compliance with planning permits.

For more information on the Native Vegetation Credit Register, please refer to the DSE website.

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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