

BushBroker®

The site visit

Information sheet No. 4

The site visit process

Once you have submitted an Expression of Interest to participate in BushBroker you will be registered on the BushBroker Database.

The timing for site assessments depends on the demand for certain types of native vegetation credits in particular regions. Therefore, it may be some time before you are contacted by a BushBroker Project Officer for a site assessment.

The BushBroker Project Officer will call you to arrange a site visit and meet with you on your property to discuss the BushBroker process and to gain an overview of your property. During the visit you can show the Project Officer the sites that you are interested in including in BushBroker.

The BushBroker Project Officer will conduct an assessment of the site(s). The assessment will generally take about one day however; the time taken will depend on the size and number of sites. Further site assessments may be required at a later date for properties which have a number of sites.

After the site assessment is complete, the Project Officer will discuss the findings and possible management of the site(s) with you. The information collected during the site assessment and the commitments and management actions you agree to will form the basis of your draft BushBroker Management Plan (Management Plan).

Sites and zones

A site may be made up of one or more zones. A zone is an area of vegetation consisting of a single ecological vegetation class (EVC) with similar quality and management requirements.

The calculation of gain (which then determines the number of Native Vegetation Credits) is based on the characteristics and management of individual zones. Each zone has a unique zone identification number.

Native Vegetation Credits

The attributes that the BushBroker Project Officer will assess are dependent on how you wish to

generate Native Vegetation Credits on your property. You can generate three types of credits:

- 1. Habitat Hectares:** Protecting, maintaining and improving the management of a remnant patch of native vegetation. This could include activities such as weed control, rabbit control and/or stock exclusion.
- 2. Large Old Trees:** Protecting Large Old scattered trees and/or protecting Large Old Trees in a remnant patch from adverse impacts and managing the area around the tree to facilitate the regeneration of native plants.
- 3. New Recruits:** Planting New Recruits into an area that was previously cleared of native vegetation through revegetating using plants indigenous to the area.

Assessment of Habitat Hectares

During the site assessment of **Habitat Hectares** the BushBroker Project Officer will:

1. Identify the type(s) of remnant native vegetation present and determine the conservation status.
2. Map the remnant vegetation site(s). The map will include sites and zones of different native vegetation types and condition. Each site and zone may require slightly different management actions.
3. Undertake an assessment of the condition of the remnant native vegetation at each zone based on various condition and landscape criteria. These include:
 - number, density, health and canopy cover of very large and large old trees
 - recruitment of trees
 - diversity, density and recruitment of understorey plants
 - presence, cover and threat status of weeds
 - presence of logs and organic litter
 - importance of the site at a landscape scale, including its size, and vegetation cover and connectedness to surrounding native vegetation.

The assessment compares your site with the average characteristics of a typical mature and long undisturbed stand of the same native vegetation type.

Assessment of Large Old Trees

During the site assessment of **Large Old Trees** the BushBroker Project Officer will:

1. Map the Large Old Trees scattered across the site(s) Where appropriate some trees may be incorporated into a revegetation site.
2. Identify the type(s) of native vegetation that would have originally been found on the site and determine the conservation status.
3. Assess the number and size of very large and large old trees present.

Assessment of New Recruit sites

During the site assessment of potential **New Recruit** sites the BushBroker Project Officer will:

1. Map the sites where New Recruits will be established.
2. Identify the type(s) of native vegetation that would have originally been found on the site and determine the conservation status.
3. Determine the plant species that would be suitable for the site and the appropriate densities.

Conservation status

The conservation status of the native vegetation on your property depends on the rarity of that vegetation type on a regional level. Native vegetation may have a conservation status of Endangered, Vulnerable, Rare, Depleted or Least Concern.

The BushBroker Project Officer will also assess whether any rare or threatened species are present, or the potential for them to be present on your property. If species are found, the BushBroker Project Officer will record whether the habitat falls within the 'best 50% for the bioregion' or the 'remaining 50% for the bioregion'.

Should rare or threatened species be found, the BushBroker Project Officer will give you a BushBroker Victorian Rare or Threatened (VROT) species form. Sign this if you wish the species to be recorded in the Statewide Flora and Fauna Database, and therefore included as part of your BushBroker site assessment.

Rare or Threatened species may increase the conservation status of your site under BushBroker.

Landowner and BushBroker Project Officer discussion

The site assessment will provide the basis of the discussion regarding appropriate management of your site(s). The BushBroker Project Officer will discuss with you possible commitments and management actions and explain the advantages in terms of the site(s) potential biodiversity outcomes and the potential native vegetation credits available on your site within BushBroker.

A *Site Management Summary* sheet with the agreed commitments and management actions will be given to you at the conclusion of your site visit. This information will aid the BushBroker Project Officer in developing your draft Management Plan and help you to start formulating the costs of implementing the plan. You will be sent a draft Management Plan for each site assessed in the weeks following the site visit.

For more information on the types of commitments and management actions you may be required to undertake, please refer to BushBroker Information Sheet No. 5 – *Landowner Agreement*.

Further information

For further information on BushBroker, please contact the Department of Sustainability and Environment (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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