



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, INDUSTRY AND ENVIRONMENT

# BAM Assessor Update – Number 31 – 11 February 2020

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## 1. Upcoming Webinar – Important Mapped Areas and landholder initiated review of the Biodiversity Values Map

The first webinar topic for 2020 has changed from that previously advertised. Unfortunately, the recent fires have impacted Dr Josh Dorrough and his family, so we have postponed the BAM Gain Model and Active Restoration presentation until a later date. The replacement webinar is:

- Topic: BAM Spatial Tools: Important Mapped Areas and landholder initiated review of the Biodiversity Values Map
- When: Wednesday 19 February 2020, 12:00 - 1:00 PM (AEDT)
- Presenters: Shannon Simpson, Project Officer in the Ecosystem Assessment Team, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, and Glenn Harpley, Senior Team Leader of the Map Review Team, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

Important mapped areas are used in in the Biodiversity Assessment Method (BAM) to assess species that are highly mobile and difficult to reliably detect by survey, and for which the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment holds extensive, long-term data sets that indicate the importance of particular areas in the landscape. The approach is used for a limited number of species. In this webinar, Shannon will provide a description of the methods used to map important areas and explain the application of these maps to the BAM. She will also demonstrate the viewer which is being prepared to allow accredited assessors access to the maps. Glenn will then describe the process used to consider landholder initiated map reviews for property-scale refinements of the Biodiversity Value Map.

[Register online](#) for the *BAM Spatial Tools: Important Mapped Areas and landholder initiated review of the Biodiversity Values Map* webinar.

## 2. Commencement of first audit of Accredited Assessors

As advised in the assessor update No. 30, the Department will shortly commence an audit of the Accredited BAM Assessors. The audit, in accordance with section 20 of the Accreditation Scheme for the Application of the *Biodiversity Assessment Method (BAM) Order 2017*, may check either:

1. compliance by an accredited person with the conditions of their accreditation
2. biodiversity assessment reports prepared by an accredited person
3. the application of the BAM by an accredited person.

The audit will focus on Part 4 local development (Council Development Applications) and will be conducted over the next few months. It will seek to assess compliance, identify opportunities for education and ongoing scheme improvement, as well as identify areas that the Department may target for future audits. Findings from the audit may be made public once it is complete.

The Department will select a sample of Biodiversity. Development Assessment Reports (BDARs) to audit. Those accredited assessors whose BDARs are selected will shortly be contacted by the Department for the provision of relevant records and to arrange a time for an interview.

### What does this mean for you?

With the upcoming audit, we would like to remind all accredited assessors that you must comply with the conditions of your accreditation. This includes providing information to the audit team (as delegates of the Environmental Agency Head) during an audit, as specified in the *BAM Assessor Code of Conduct*.

In particular, **we recommend that all accredited assessors log into their Biodiversity Offsets and Agreements Management System (BOAMS) account** and ensure that all cases where a BDAR has been lodged with and/or approved by a determining authority (e.g. Council) as part of a development application that has been correctly finalised in BOAMS. This means parent cases in BOAMS should be at a status of 'submitted' and the relevant child case in the BAM-C should be at a status of 'finalised'.

This is an important aspect of demonstrating compliance with accreditation condition 1, and assists the Department to accurately report and evaluate the performance of the Biodiversity Offset Scheme and the conservation of NSW biodiversity.

## 3. Updated Biodiversity Values Map and Threshold Tool User Guide

The Biodiversity Values Map and Threshold (BMAT) Tool User Guide is a step-by-step guide to using the Tool.

A fix and enhancements were made to the BMAT Tool as part of the Biodiversity Values Map Version 7 Update, published on the 28 August 2019. These include:

- fixes to the way the Tool determines the Minimum Lot Size (MLS) Method, MLS and clearing area threshold
- a layer showing LEP Lot Size maps

- replacement of the base map with two new base maps
- replacement of the SPOT 5 2013 imagery with more current imagery for New South Wales
- increased zoom capability from 1:8,000 to 1:4,500

An updated version of the [BMAT Tool User Guide](#) has been published to reflect these changes. Links to the User Guide are in the [BMAT Tool](#) and on the [Biodiversity Values Map webpage](#).

## 4. Area Clearing Threshold Technical Explanation

The area of native vegetation clearing associated with development and clearing proposals (clearing area threshold) is one of the elements of the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme (BOS) Threshold. The other element is clearing native vegetation or a prescribed action on land on the Biodiversity Values Map. Clause 7.2 of the Biodiversity Conservation (BC) Regulation 2017 states that the area clearing threshold is based on the minimum lot size (MLS) of the lot(s) on which the development/clearing proposal is located. If the land on which the proposed development is located has different MLSs, the smaller or smallest of those MLSs is used to determine the area clearing threshold. Information on the BOS Threshold is on the BOS entry requirements webpage.

The version 7 update to the Biodiversity Values Map included a fix to the BMAT Tool in the way it determines the MLS and clearing area threshold for proposed developments. The [Area clearing threshold technical explanation](#) explains how the BMAT Tool determines the area clearing threshold and provides a range of examples to explain the process. A link to the document is in the section on the BMAT Tool on the [BOS entry requirements webpage](#).

## 5. Systems update – BAM-C (Code 1 error) and Biodiversity Offsets and Agreements Management System

There have been some recent IT issues that have affected BAM-C and BOAMs. In the BAM-C, some assessment cases were displaying a 'Code-1' error that was triggered when the case was opened from within BOAMS. The error prevented data from appearing. The error has now been resolved. You should be able to access your assessment with your most recently saved data. If the error still occurs when you attempt to open a BAM-C assessment, try refreshing the page.

There was also an issue within BOAMs where the buttons for creating new cases has disappeared from the landing page. This issue was resolved this morning. There is also an upcoming update to the salesforce software. We have been doing broader testing of the system in the test environment and so far there are no further issues.

We appreciate the quick response from assessors to alert the team to any issues that arise in the systems from time to time. If either of these errors persists, please contact the BAM Support Mailbox ([bam.support@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:bam.support@environment.nsw.gov.au)). We apologise for any delays in getting this issue resolved and any inconvenience this may have caused and appreciate your patience.

## 6. BAM support mailbox – how are we tracking?

The BAM support mailbox commenced on 19 August 2019, and since then:

- We have received around 520 enquiries, which comes in at an average of just over four emails per day.
- To-date we have responded to over 90% of enquiries, with an average response time of seven working days.
- The top three topics you ask about are:
  - Technical Systems Support (25% of queries) – relating to BAM-C, BOAMS and the BOPC.
  - Important Mapped Habitat (18% of queries) – seeking to determine if a site is on a mapped important habitat area for the Regent Honeyeater or Swift Parrott;
  - BAM / BDAR Requirements (16% of queries).