

Biodiversity Credit Exchange | New approaches to biodiversity offsetting in South Australia

The Native Vegetation Council has developed an initiative to promote biodiversity offsetting on private land. The initiative known as the Biodiversity Credit Exchange provides private landholders with the ability to develop and receive income from biodiversity credits on areas of their land.

The objective is to accelerate the establishment of an offset credit market in South Australia and providing opportunities for third party providers and private landholders to work with the Native Vegetation Council to achieve robust offsetting outcomes.

Through use of the Native Vegetation Fund, the NVC are paying landholders to establish credit sites. The program will include the provision of an on-ground assessment and management plan to guide the achievement of a "net gain" at each site. In addition, the Native Vegetation Branch of the Department for Environment and Water will administer the process to assist landholders and industry in the provision and purchase of credits.

The Biodiversity Credit Exchange has received a lot of interest from private landholders looking to diversify their income base and provide a positive environmental income. To date we have received a number of expressions of interest in key areas, which we are progressing through the NVC.

The Biodiversity Credit Exchange is the result of a substantial shift towards contemporising legislation and policy to support better conservation outcomes and provide alternatives to offset payments.

Proactive Partnerships in Conservation: SA Heritage Agreement Program | 1 million hectares & beyond

The Native Vegetation Council's Heritage Agreement Program began in 1980 in response to a rapid increase in land clearing. A Heritage Agreement is a conservation area within private land that contributes to protecting and/or restoring indigenous biodiversity.

Heritage Agreements are established in perpetuity to protect and enhance the natural character of the flora and fauna. Many unique features are found within privately-owned land and can often form part of an important wildlife corridor, provide an extension to National or Conservation Parks, or help establish private sanctuaries.

A Native Vegetation Heritage Agreement is a conservation area on private land, established between the landholder and the Minister for Environment and Water on recommendation of the Native Vegetation Council (NVC).

The HA scheme has been widely publicised with landholders and Conservation groups since its inception.

To date there are 2,900 heritage agreement sites protecting more than 1 million hectares. These sites contain important remnants of pre-European vegetation in excellent condition. Private landholders have received a range of benefits from financial incentives since the scheme's inception in 1980.

While the Incentives Program has now closed, Heritage Agreement landholders can still receive some rebates on rates and taxes through Concessional Property Valuations administered through the State Valuation Office.

The Heritage Agreement scheme has been operational in SA for over 30 years. Significant investment from the Government saw over 540 landholders sign up in the first two years. As a result of HA's there is now an additional 1 million hectares of remnant vegetation protected in perpetuity throughout SA.

Biographies

Russell Seaman | Manager, Native Vegetation Branch

Russell is Manager of the Native Vegetation Branch of the Department for Environment and Water. The branch is responsible for developing programs, policy and guidelines as part of its role in administering the Native Vegetation Act 1991.



Sarah Reachill | Coordinator Offset Program South Australia at Department for Environment and Water

Sarah is responsible for the SEB program which includes development of initiatives to facilitate on ground offsets, monitoring and review of SEB areas and improved methods of achieving an environmental gain.



Karina Mercer - Heritage Agreements Officer

Karina is responsible for development of Heritage Agreement areas in South Australia. Heritage Agreements are areas that are set aside from development due to their significant contributions to the State's biodiversity.

