

# Ecological Value

## Aim of Credit

To reward projects that improve the ecological value of their site.

## Credit Criteria

0	<b>Endangered, Threatened or Vulnerable Species</b>	To be awarded points in this credit, the project must demonstrate that no endangered, threatened or vulnerable species were present on the site at time of purchase.								
1	<b>Ecological Value</b>	<p>Up to 3 points are awarded where the ecological value of the site is improved by the project</p> <p>The number of points awarded is determined by the Green Star - Change of Ecological Value Calculator based on a comparison of the state of the site before and after design/construction.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Relative Improvement of Ecological Value</th> <th>Points Achieved</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>20%</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>40%</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>60%</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Relative Improvement of Ecological Value	Points Achieved	20%	1	40%	2	60%	3
Relative Improvement of Ecological Value	Points Achieved									
20%	1									
40%	2									
60%	3									

## Compliance Requirements

### 0 - Protection of Endangered Species

For compliance with this credit, the site shall not contain critically endangered, endangered, or vulnerable species or ecological communities as defined in the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999 (EPBC Act).

The EPBC Act protects Australia's native species and ecological communities by providing for:

- identification and listing of species and ecological communities as threatened
- development of conservation advice and recovery plans for listed species and ecological communities
- development of a register of critical habitat
- recognition of key threatening processes

If a check for threatened and vulnerable species was carried out as part of the Design Approval process, it will be sufficient to provide this check to demonstrate credit compliance.

If a check was not carried out as part of the Design Approval process, the project team shall submit a report from a Qualified Ecologist confirming that no threatened or vulnerable species or ecological communities were present on the site at time of purchase

Should this 'Conditional Requirement' also exclude projects whose sites are a home to endangered species according to state and local government legislation?

### **Qualified ecologist**

A qualified ecologist is considered to be an ecologist who has a degree in ecology or similar and/or a minimum of five years continuous experience as a working ecologist. The ecologist must be independent and have no vested interest in the project.

The assessment for this project does not have to be limited to the site itself. If the assessment by the ecologist was for a broader community and the site is located within this community, this assessment can be used to demonstrate compliance. The project site must have been part of the assessment, not be adjacent to, or nearby.

## **1 - Change in Ecological Value**

To determine the points that shall be awarded for this criterion, projects are required to complete the Change in Ecological Value Calculator

The change in ecological value is determined by comparing the total Ecological Value Score of the site at purchase and as built to calculate the percent improvement.

To calculate the Ecological Value of the site, the total area of site must be divided up into sections of the same land type, as defined in table 1. The Ecological Value score of a region is the plan area of each area multiplied by the relative weighting for the Land type obtained from table 1. The Total Ecological Value of the site is the sum of all Ecological Value Scores.

### Land Types with High Relative Weightings

If the project is claiming land types with a relative weighting over 51%, this must be confirmed by a report by a Qualified Ecologist.

Land Type	Relative Weighting (%)
1. Hard surface (including building / concreted area and bare ground)	0
2. Exotic vegetation (including exotic garden, lawns, weed infestation, non-native plantation forest, crop-farming)	5
3. Non-improved pastures (paddocks with minimal cover of native grasses (<25% cover))	35
4. Planted native vegetation (including native garden, indigenous native garden, green roof, native plantation forest)	50
5. Regenerating native habitat (re-growth) < 5 years old	50
6. Regenerating native habitat (re-growth) 5 – 10 years old	75
7. Regenerating native habitat (re-growth) > 10 years old	90
8. Remnant native vegetation (including indigenous native grassland and indigenous native habitat)	100
9. Natural water-bodies (including wetlands, rivers, creeks, billabongs, streams)	100
10. Artificial water-bodies (including dams, constructed wetlands, channels, bores)	50

Table 1: Land Types and Relative Weightings

Do you support the revised proposed relative weightings as defined in Table 1? Please refer to Discussion Paper for background details.

Do you support the proposed maximum points being awarded for an ecological value improvement of 50%?

### Vertical gardens and green roofs

Only the soil surface of gardens contributes towards recognition in this credit (i.e. in vertical gardens and green roofs, only the amount of soil/substrate in which the plants are rooted is recognised, not the total area covered by the plants).

Vertical gardens are to be included as follows:

- Only outdoor vertical gardens can be included in the Calculator
- Only the soil/substrate area of the vertical garden can count
- The Ecological Land Type is determined by the associated vegetation
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## Guidance

### Legislation Noted in This Credit

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999 (EPBC Act).

### Example of Change of Ecological Value Calculation

<b>Ecological Value at Time of Purchase</b>				
<b>Area Description</b>	<b>Land Type</b>	<b>Relative Weighting</b>	<b>Area (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>	<b>Ecological Value Score</b>
Playing Field	Exotic Vegetation	5%	100	5
Car park	Hard surface	0%	200	0
Building	Hard surface	0%	20	0
Bush	Remnant native vegetation	100%	100	100
<b>Totals</b>			420	105
<b>Ecological Value - As Built</b>				
<b>Area Description</b>	<b>Land Type</b>	<b>Relative Weighting</b>	<b>Area (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>	<b>Ecological Value Score</b>
Building	Hard surface	0%	80	0
Car park	Hard surface	0%	100	0
Pond	Artificial Water Body	50%	40	20
Planted Vegetation	Planted Native Vegetation	50%	100	50
Bush	Remnant native vegetation	100%	100	100
<b>Totals</b>			420	170
<b>Check Areas match</b>	<b>OK</b>			
<b>Increase in Ecological Value</b>	<b>61%</b>			
<b>Points Awarded</b>	<b>4</b>			

## Documentation Requirements

### **'Design Review' Submission (Optional)**

Project teams are to submit information/documentation marked with an asterisk\* for 'design review'

### **As Built Submission**

All project teams are to submit the following documentation:

#### **Submission Template**

- Date of Purchase\*
- Confirmation that no vulnerable or endangered species or ecological communities are present on the site
- Description of the site at purchase and as built\*
- Description of how the ecological value of the site has been improved\*

#### **Change of Ecological Value Calculator\***

Project teams are required to provide documentation supporting credit compliance. The following documents may be used to demonstrate compliance:

- **Proof of Date of Purchase\***
- **DA Approval Report** confirming that no vulnerable or endangered species or ecological communities are present on the site
- **Ecologist's Report** confirming that no vulnerable or endangered species or ecological communities are present on the site, or confirming the Land Types found on site
- **Site Plans** marked up with land type regions
- **Aerial Site Photographs** marked up with land type regions
- **Landscape Drawings and Specifications** showing types of planting, hard-standing, water-bodies etc.

Please provide feedback on the technical content of this credit:

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