



ECOSYSTEMS

## 1. Ecosystems Element of EnviroDevelopment

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**TITLE:** Ecosystems

**OBJECTIVE:** Healthy, sustainable ecosystems based on natural processes and rich with native biodiversity

**TARGET:** Development that aims to protect and enhance existing native ecosystems and encourages natural systems and native biodiversity and rehabilitates degraded sites.

### PRINCIPLES

- Encourage maintenance (during and after construction) of native vegetation where existing, and rehabilitation of locally native vegetation where not already in existence in a healthy state
- Encourage protection (during and after construction) of existing habitats for native animals or rehabilitation of such habitats where not already in existence in a healthy state
- Protect habitats and maintain connectivity to reduce fragmentation
- Avoid water pollution and degradation of water quality in waterways and natural systems and remediate any water quality problems occurring on-site or in neighbouring areas
- Minimise disruption to landform and natural ecosystems
- Encourage development on previously developed or degraded sites, whilst considering affordability
- Promote biodiversity awareness

### POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND INCENTIVES

#### Benefits for Occupants

- Satisfaction that occupier is reducing ecological footprint and protecting natural ecosystems and native biodiversity
- Enhanced interaction with nature – may offer health and lifestyle benefits
- Enhanced amenity of area

#### Benefits for Local, State or Federal Government and Environmental Groups

- Raises awareness of need to protect ecosystems and biodiversity
- More attractive and sustainable city/shire/state
- Helps raise community awareness of government's efforts to enhance sustainability
- Increased private sector investment in ecosystem and biodiversity protection (reduced costs for council but better outcomes)
- Greater private allocation of land for native biodiversity
- Greater community commitment to ecosystems and native biodiversity
- Help to reduce the ecological footprint of communities

#### Benefits for Developers

- Marketing advantages through quality product and EnviroDevelopment promotion
- Enhanced product
- Visual benefits
- Potential savings in development costs and/or access to incentives
- Reduced approval/assessment times
- Improved corporate image

## REQUIREMENTS

Criteria	Notes on evidence to be provided to Board of Management for approval prior to certification as an EnviroDevelopment
<p><b>1.1 ESSENTIAL ACTIONS</b></p> <p><b>1.1.1</b> As with all sections of EnviroDevelopment, developers must comply with regulatory requirements. Of relevance to this element, this includes the Vegetation Management Act and Environmental Protection Act etc.</p> <p><b>1.1.2</b> Must conduct thorough site analysis to ascertain key features of relevance to this section, including hydrological features, flora, fauna habitats, and landforms. This report forms part of the evidence required for EnviroDevelopment certification.</p> <p><b>1.1.3</b> Achieve the requirements under each of the following sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water quality (1.2)</li> <li>• Land form (1.3)</li> <li>• Flora (1.4)</li> <li>• Fauna (1.5)</li> </ul>	<p>Statement from developer and or appropriately qualified environmental professional confirming that the development has complied with all relevant regulatory requirements and conducted thorough site analysis. Evidence of site analysis e.g. report, should also be included.</p>
<p><b>1.2 WATER QUALITY</b></p> <p>Must meet all the requirements of this section as outlined below.</p> <p><b>1.2.1</b> Protect natural hydrological regime including riparian zones and buffers (where relevant depending on site).</p> <p><b>1.2.2</b> Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) principles incorporated into development design including swales, bioretention basins and wetlands utilised as water treatment devices where appropriate.</p> <p><b>1.2.3</b> Development should be compatible with broadly supported catchment management plans. (Note: for more information regarding catchment management plans and integrated catchment management, please see: <a href="http://www.nrm.qld.gov.au/planning/plans/icm_strategy_specific.html">http://www.nrm.qld.gov.au/planning/plans/icm_strategy_specific.html</a>)</p> <p><b>1.2.4</b> Minimise use of pesticides, herbicides and artificial fertilisers (can be achieved through choice of landscaping and physical termite barriers etc).</p> <p><b>1.2.5</b> Incorporate natural hydrological features into the development design including maintenance of natural watercourses (where relevant depending on their presence on site).</p> <p><b>1.2.6</b> Appropriate drainage to protect both water cycle and development integrity. This should include maintenance of permeable surfaces where possible, including use of permeable pavement in preference to non-permeable pavements where possible and appropriate.</p> <p><b>1.2.7</b> Stormwater management provisions during and post construction must be adequately considered and incorporated to avoid enhanced risk of flooding and flood damage and to reduce risk of pollution entering waterways. Must also consider impact on and from adjacent sites.</p> <p><b>1.2.8</b> Sediment and erosion control measures in place during construction and operation.</p>	<p>Evidence of incorporation of Water Sensitive Urban Design principles (e.g. swales instead of concrete curbs where appropriate etc.), protection of watercourses, design encouragement of water infiltration etc. as necessary to show achievement of this requirement. Evidence could include, but is not limited to, illustrative evidence including maps, drawings etc. showing topography contours, hydrology and WSUD features. Water balance calculations or MUSIC modelling etc. authorised by developer and / or engineer is also helpful as evidence of the sufficiency of WSUD features and the impact of the development on natural hydrology, stormwater quantities and sediment loads. Evidence of water quality measures (and reasons where they have not been incorporated) from engineer, landscape architect (or related professional) and developer as appropriate.</p> <p>Statement and illustrative evidence including topography maps and drawings outlining compatibility with catchment plans, protection of natural hydrological features, riparian zones and buffers.</p> <p>Statement outlining steps to minimise use of pesticides, herbicides and artificial fertilisers.</p> <p>Evidence that appropriate sediment control and stormwater management plans will be in place during and after construction.</p>

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<p><b>1.3 LAND FORM</b></p> <p><b>1.3.1</b> Must conduct thorough site analysis to identify areas of prime significance for preservation and to identify areas where clearing and/or major earthworks should specifically not occur. This site analysis should also consider the suitability of the site for earthworks and construction. The development must adequately consider and preserve significant areas based on the advice of this report.</p> <p><b>1.3.2</b> Must also achieve at least four out of the following options</p> <p>(Note: if a development is unable to achieve four of the following options and the developer shows good reason why the criteria could not be met (for example, with regards to minimising cut and fill), but they have managed to achieve a significant net benefit to the environment and given appropriate consideration to downstream impacts, then they may still be considered for EnviroDevelopment Ecosystems recognition at the discretion of the Board of Management.</p> <p><b>1.3.2.1</b> Retain local and adjacent natural landform and integrate with natural landscape and topographic features or build on brownfield site<sup>1</sup> rehabilitating open space areas and minimise detrimental landform-change impacts on water or sediment movement.</p> <p><b>1.3.2.2</b> Locate on a brownfield site or site that had been significantly modified from its natural state and had little or no ecological value. Site must be decontaminated and where there will be significant open space efforts must be made to rehabilitate natural ecosystems, natural resources, and native biodiversity values of the site.</p> <p><b>1.3.2.3</b> Build only on stable, non-flooding land, or if building on land prone to flooding, the site design must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a flood credit and reduce levels in flood volumes</li> <li>• Reduce velocity of floods coming off the site</li> <li>• Deliver environmental benefits (e.g. wetland) to site or adjoining land</li> </ul> <p><b>1.3.2.4</b> Maximum cut and fill of 1.5m (i.e. total retaining wall height of 1.5 metres or 75cm cut and 75cm fill for example) including bulk earthworks (excluding those earthworks which are necessary for WSUD measures or which have been included to meet local Council requirements). Credit can not be gained for this point if there is reason to believe that builders will later increase the cut and fill. This may mean that for sloping lots some form of architectural solutions or review mechanism (e.g. for body corporates) may need to be provided.</p> <p><b>1.3.2.5</b> Cut and fill on max 30% of site. Credit can not be gained for this point if there is reason to believe that builders will later increase the cut and fill. This may mean that for sloping lots some form of architectural solutions or review mechanism (e.g. for body corporates) may need to be provided.</p> <p><b>1.3.2.6</b> Construction methods to minimise disruption to landform and natural drainage contours (e.g. elevated platforms lightweight in construction are generally encouraged on sloping sites in preference to cut and fill concrete slabs on earth, unless other significant environmental benefits can be shown from the cut and fill approach).</p> <p><b>1.3.2.7</b> Minimise site disturbance during construction and limit earthworks and clearing of native vegetation to a maximum of 15 metres beyond building footprint, 2 metres beyond roadway curbs or swales, and 10 metres beyond other constructed areas (e.g. detention basins etc.), although concessions will be made where necessary for protection against bushfires.</p> <p><b>1.3.2.8</b> Street layout is designed and constructed to fit with topography with only minimal disruption.</p>	<p>Specific information and wording in development specifications, drawings and plans and in letters of instruction to contractors and briefings to staff to indicate requirements to protect ecosystems as per options.</p> <p>Evidence or statement from engineer/planner stating how this requirement has been met.</p> <p>If building on a brownfield site, provide details of use of site prior to new development.</p> <p>Evidence that buildings have been designed so as to be considerate of existing site landforms, topography and constraints.</p> <p>Evidence could include topography maps / contour maps, site photos, site plans with an explanation of how site disturbance has been minimised.</p>

<sup>1</sup> Brownfield site: land within an urban area on which development has previously taken place.

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<p><b>1.4 FLORA</b></p> <p><b>1.4.1</b> Must conduct thorough Ecological Assessment (as outlined on page 16) to identify areas of prime significance for preservation and to identify areas where clearing and/or major earthworks should specifically not occur. The development must adequately consider and preserve significant areas based on the advice of this report.</p> <p><b>1.4.2</b> Avoid planting invasive species as per WONS (Weeds Of National Significance) and weeds on the National Environmental Heritage List (Department of Environment and Heritage).</p> <p><b>1.4.3</b> Must achieve at least 10 points out of the following options:</p> <p><b>1.4.3.1</b> Have an appropriately qualified scientific professional conduct an upfront site assessment of areas of ecological value and ensure that the development will protect such areas to the greatest extent possible.</p> <p><b>1.4.3.2</b> Conduct thorough ecological flora survey to ascertain biodiversity and populations of vulnerable or threatened species and design development to facilitate the preservation of such species. The development should take significant additional steps over and above the standard requirements and demonstrate significant net gain to the flora and ecosystems, above the standard requirements.</p> <p><b>1.4.3.3</b> &gt;40% of all plants introduced to the site for landscaping public spaces, or for landscaping private areas prior to sale, are locally native<sup>2</sup> and &gt;90% are native to Australia or productive.</p> <p><b>1.4.3.4</b> Designate and protect any sensitive conservation areas.</p> <p><b>1.4.3.5</b> Rehabilitate disturbed sites and degraded natural ecosystems.</p> <p><b>1.4.3.6</b> Locate on a brownfield site or site that had been significantly modified from its natural state and had little or no existing ecological value.</p> <p><b>1.4.3.7</b> Have a bushfire mitigation and management plan and take appropriate management actions.</p> <p><b>1.4.3.8</b> Demonstrate appropriate consideration of future maintenance of native flora and habitat, including initiating a maintenance plan and arranging means for the continuation of this beyond the development and sales stage.</p> <p><b>1.4.3.9</b> Retain at least 40% of the existing native trees above 3 metres in height.</p> <p><b>1.4.3.10</b> Encourage local native plant species and natural ecosystems through retaining them where possible on 30% or more of the site.</p> <p><b>1.4.3.11</b> Implement an appropriate weed and pest management strategy, including site rehabilitation and removal of noxious weeds.</p> <p><b>1.4.3.12</b> Encourage local native plant species through their incorporation in landscaping and encouragement of their use by purchasers and private land holders.</p>	<p>Evidence of Ecological Assessment and its findings and appropriate consideration in plans and site management and landscape plans.</p> <p>Evidence should include appropriate plans (flora/bushfire management/weed and pest etc), landscaping schedules/lists and details of measures to protect areas, species or features of conservation value.</p> <p>Evidence from environmental science professional, landscape architect (or related professional) and developer as appropriate.</p>

<sup>2</sup> Locally native: native plants which are endemic to the area.

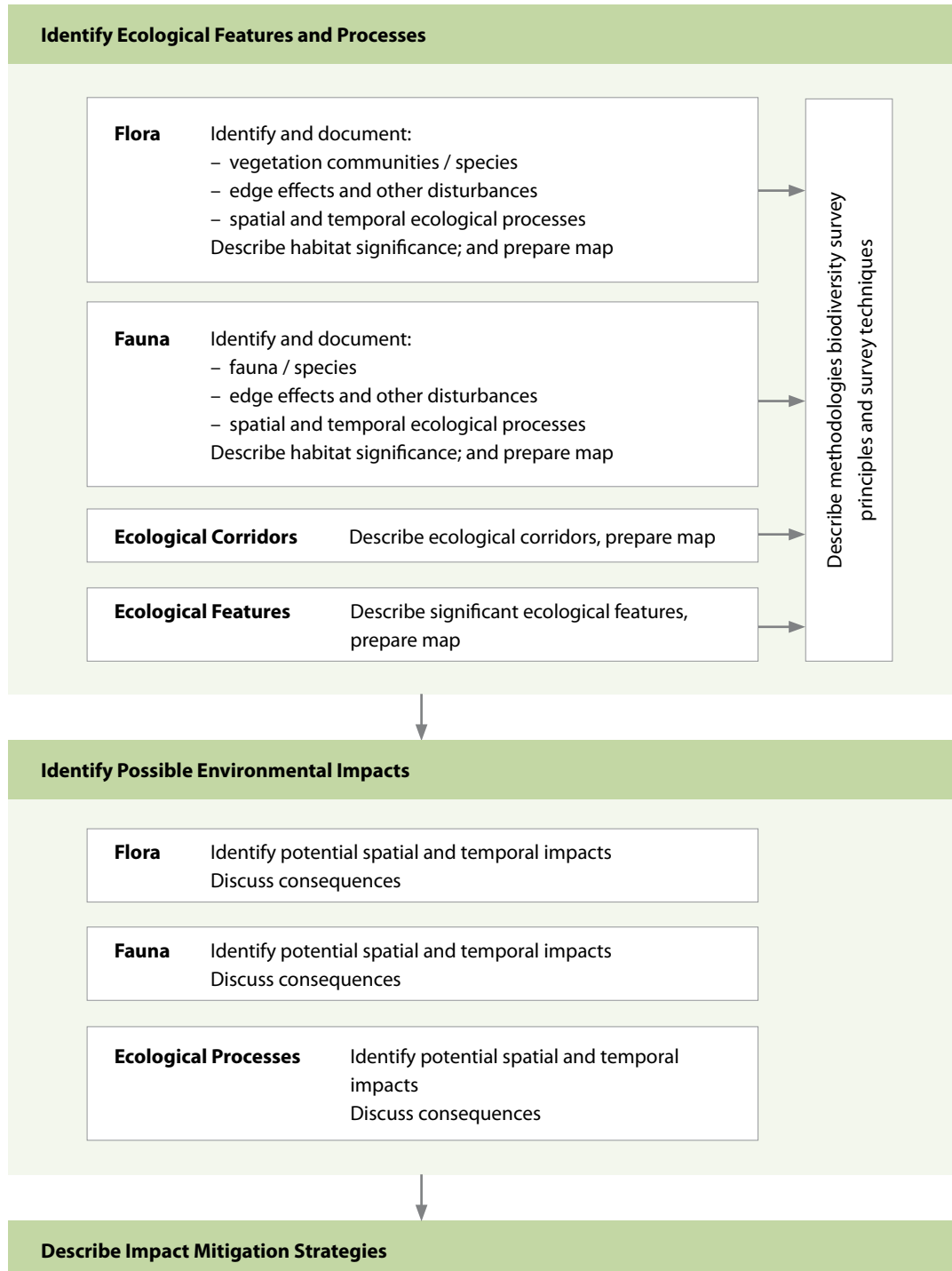
Criteria	Notes on evidence to be provided to Board of Management for approval prior to certification as an EnviroDevelopment
<p><b>1.4.3.13</b> Contribute green space (as a nature conservation area) significantly in excess of the requirements for green space (subject to acceptance by government (usually local government but may be State or Federal Government)) of its suitability as either parkland or for conservation value. This requirement can be fulfilled by either provision of an appropriate area of suitable land (under secure title though not necessarily handed over to government) or monetary contribution to the relevant authority or an established not-for-profit green group for conservation or green space purposes. Points are to be allocated pro-rata for each 20% (i.e. 1 point for each 20% contribution in excess of government requirements and 5 points for 100% in excess of government requirements). This is capped at a maximum of 5 points. Stringent statutory covenants or other protective measures to secure the use of private land for open space and flora and fauna purposes may also be applicable and contribute to the green space calculations for EnviroDevelopment purposes (however, if the longevity of such measures or benefits is likely to be less than through other means there may need to be a discount factor used in the calculations).</p>	<p>Note: If claiming points under this category, a statement must be made regarding the ongoing ownership and maintenance arrangements for this land to provide certainty about the longevity of its maintenance as green space.</p>
<p><b>1.5 FAUNA</b></p> <p><b>1.5.1</b> Must conduct thorough Ecological Assessment (as outlined on p16) to identify areas of prime significance for preservation and to identify areas where clearing and/or major earthworks should specifically not occur. The development must adequately consider and preserve significant areas based on the advice of this report.</p> <p><b>1.5.2</b> Must achieve at least 10 points out of the following options:</p> <p><b>1.5.2.1</b> Conduct thorough ecological fauna survey (as outlined on p16) to ascertain biodiversity and populations of vulnerable or threatened species and design development to facilitate the preservation of such species. Take significant additional steps over and above the standard requirements and demonstrate significant net gain to fauna above the standard requirements.</p> <p><b>1.5.2.2</b> Locate on a brownfield site or a site that has been significantly modified from its natural state and had little or no ecological value.</p> <p><b>1.5.2.3</b> Retain and enhance ecological corridors linking vegetated and open space areas.</p> <p><b>1.5.2.4</b> Protect land and aquatic habitats for native species, with particular focus on threatened or endangered species.</p> <p><b>1.5.2.5</b> Ensure ecological corridors are not severed by road networks without provision of appropriate fauna crossings, bridges or tunnels.</p> <p><b>1.5.2.6</b> Limit fencing and other structures that restrict safe fauna movement.</p> <p><b>1.5.2.7</b> Adopt traffic management strategies to protect fauna.</p> <p><b>1.5.2.8</b> Provision of appropriate structures and policies to facilitate native fauna habitation.</p> <p><b>1.5.2.9</b> Adopt measures to protect native animals through maintenance of habitat and control of non-native predators or competing species.</p> <p><b>1.5.2.10</b> Implement a pest management strategy.</p>	<p>Evidence of Ecological Assessment (see Ecological Assessment Guidelines on p16) and appropriate consideration in plans and site management and landscape plans.</p> <p>Evidence should include appropriate plans (ecological fauna survey, master plan, pest management strategy, etc) and details of measures to protect areas, species or features of conservation value.</p> <p>Evidence from environmental science professional, landscape architect (or related professional) and developer as appropriate.</p>

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<p><b>1.5.2.11</b> Have dog and/or cat exclusion zones to allow safe movement of native fauna, particularly in wildlife corridors.</p> <p><b>1.5.2.12</b> Heat Island reduction - consider reduction of pavement, carparks, roofs or different materials for their construction (e.g. open-grid pavement) etc. or green (vegetated) or shaded surfaces or light coloured surfaces.</p> <p><b>1.5.2.13</b> Minimise light and noise pollution during and post-construction i.e. no direct beam light should be directed beyond the site boundaries or upwards, except where it is falling directly on a surface that it is intended to illuminate (exemptions may be made for illuminated place names).</p> <p><b>1.5.2.14</b> Contribute green space (in the form of nature conservation area) significantly in excess of the requirements for green space (subject to agreement by government (usually local government but may be State or Federal Government) of its suitability as either parkland or for conservation value – however this does not mean that the land title must be handed over to government). This requirement can be fulfilled by either provision of an appropriate area of suitable land (under secure title though not necessarily handed over to government) or monetary contribution to the relevant authority or an established not-for-profit environmental group for conservation or green space purposes. Points are to be allocated pro-rata for each 20% (i.e. 1 point for each 20% contribution in excess of government requirements and 5 points for 100% in excess of government requirements). This is capped at a maximum of 5 points.</p> <p>Stringent statutory covenants or other protective measures to secure the use of private land for open space and flora and fauna purposes may also be applicable and contribute to the green space calculations for EnviroDevelopment purposes (however, if the longevity of such measures or benefits is likely to be less than through other means there may need to be a discount factor used in the calculations).</p>	<p>Note: If claiming points under this category, a statement must be made regarding the ongoing ownership and maintenance arrangements for this land to provide certainty about the longevity of its maintenance as green space.</p>

Notes: • Drafted with reference to THG Eco Index and LEED ND and, to a lesser extent, BRE and Melbourne Docklands ESD Guide.  
 • Unless otherwise stated, each option is worth one point.

### Ecological Assessment Report Guidelines

The following guidelines should be used when preparing an ecological assessment for the flora and fauna requirements.



Source: Brisbane City Council: Ecological Assessment Guidelines, Available: [http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/BCC:STANDARD:1326879150;pc=PC\\_1644](http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/BCC:STANDARD:1326879150;pc=PC_1644)