

Accredited Consultant Procedure



Government
of South Australia



Native Vegetation
Council

Objective

To outline the Native Vegetation Council's (the Council) process and criteria for appointing an Accredited Consultant. This procedure supports the Council's Accredited Consultant Policy.

Legislative Context

The Council is established under the *Native Vegetation Act 1991* (the Act) and has a range of functions relating to the protection and sustainable management of native vegetation. This includes determining applications for consent to clear native vegetation. Under Section 28 of the Act, applications must be in a form approved by the Council and accompanied by a report which must be prepared by persons specified by Regulation. Under Regulation 18 of the *Native Vegetation Regulations, 2017*, a specified person is an agency, instrumentality, person or body approved by the Council as an entity that may prepare a report. Accredited Consultants are approved persons under the Regulations.

Scope

'Accredited Consultant' is a term for all persons who are appointed as an Accredited Consultant by the Council. Accredited Consultants must complete the application process, successfully complete the Council's Accredited Consultant training and commit to meeting the ongoing conditions of accreditation.

Application

This procedure applies to the Council and its delegates, Accredited Consultants and staff supporting the Council.

1. Role of the Native Vegetation Branch

The Native Vegetation Branch (the Branch) will identify the need for consultants in South Australia on behalf of the Council. The Branch will monitor the number of active Accredited Consultants, ensuring an available pool sufficient for public demand.

The Branch will also:

- Maintain relevant forms and information to enable interested people to apply for accreditation;
- Deliver the training requirements for consultants to become accredited;
- Monitor the quality of the reports produced by accredited consultants, ensuring optimal accessibility for potential applicants and facilitating success; and
- Maintain and communicate with Accredited Consultants through the platform Basecamp.

The Branch will maintain a list of names and contact details of all Accredited Consultants. This list is publicly available [Accredited Consultant page](#) on the Department for Environment and Water website .

2. Training Requirement

Accreditation training consists of the following:

Pre-reading and online learning modules

The pre-reading and online learning modules are to be completed by the applicant in their own time. These need to be completed before in-person training. Applicants are required to complete a quiz at the end of each module, testing their knowledge and understanding. An 80 per cent pass rate is required.

In-person training

In-person course(s) can include the vegetation assessment methods: Bushland Assessment Method, Scattered Trees Assessment Method, Rangelands Assessment Method, and the Marine Assessment Method. Accreditation is only for the assessment methods where training has been undertaken. Each training method will include theoretical and practical components. Sites where this training is held are at the discretion of the Branch. Training may occur over a 1 or 2 day period, depending on the assessment methods included in the training.

Post in-person training exercise

Applicants must complete a written post-session exercise that will be reviewed and assessed by the Branch and Council. The written exercise is based on the vegetation assessment undertaken during the training days. This exercise is developed by the Branch and includes tasks such as the completion of a mock clearance application including a data report, vegetation assessment scoresheets and supporting documents. The Branch will assess the submitted exercise and recommend to the Council, applicants that meet the criteria for accreditation. The Branch will provide detailed feedback to participants about their post-session exercise.

Information sessions

The Branch will conduct information and/or training sessions throughout the year. Accredited Consultants must attend these sessions to maintain accreditation. Sessions will generally be held on-line, facilitating greater access. Information sessions will be held as required, and dates will be advertised on Basecamp¹.

3. Accreditation Certificate

Following the successful completion of the training requirements, the Branch will recommend to the Council that the applicant be approved to become an Accredited Consultant.

Once approved, the Accredited Consultant will be issued a certificate signed by the Council's Presiding Member. The certificate may be signed electronically in accordance with the Department for Environment and Water [Electronic Signature Policy](#).

The certificate will:

- Acknowledge accreditation under the *Native Vegetation Act 1991* and the *Native Vegetation Regulations 2017*;
- List which of the vegetation assessment methods the consultant is accredited to undertake;
- List any conditions the Council determines are appropriate; and
- Display a signature from the Presiding Member of the Native Vegetation Council.

4. Audit Procedure

4.1 Audit of Accredited Consultants list

Periodic audits of active Accredited Consultants will occur to ensure that public (website) and private (Basecamp) lists are consistent and current. Only practicing consultants available and willing to be contacted by members of the public have their contact details listed on the DEW website (consultants are to advise the Branch of any changes to this [listing](#)).

Only practicing Accredited Consultants who are meeting the minimum requirements for maintaining accreditation will be included on the DEW website.

¹ Basecamp is an online tool for all Accredited Consultants. Consultants must be actively engaged on the platform to receive updates and contribute to discussions. It is the responsibility of Accredited Consultants to ensure their email details are up to date on Basecamp.

The Branch will keep record of Accredited Consultant audits and audit outcomes. If the minimum requirements for maintaining accreditation are not being met, the lapse or revocation procedures are to be followed (See section 5.4 and 5.5).

Accredited Consultants contact details (provided on application forms) will be publicly available via the Accredited Consultant List on the DEW website. It is the responsibility of the Accredited Consultant to contact the Branch if their details need to be updated or if they are no longer practicing.

4.2 Work practice audit

The Council may audit consultant data reports and vegetation assessments or conduct site visits to ensure that work meets required standards. These audits will occur without notice. If audits reveal any issues with data report quality or a lack of adherence to the requirements of accreditation, the revocation procedure may be implemented.

5. Accreditation Process

5.1 Application form

To become an Accredited Consultant, applicants must complete the application form on the DEW website. By signing this form, the applicant agrees to the conditions of accreditation - including requirements outlined in the Accredited Consultant Policy and Procedure.

5.2 Eligibility criteria

To be eligible for accreditation, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Relevant Tertiary qualifications – including but not limited to studies of:
 - Ecology
 - Environmental Science
 - Environmental Management
 - Science
 - Biodiversity
 - Conservation
 - Land Management
 - Natural Resources
 - Sustainability
 - Botany
- A minimum of 7 years **industry** experience post qualification in a field relevant to the management and assessment of vegetation condition;
- Have and be able to demonstrate knowledge of plant identification;
- Demonstrate high-level skills in report writing when completing training and training exercises.
- Provide a current CV; and
- Agree to the conditions of accreditation as listed in this Procedure and associated Accredited Consultant Policy.

5.3 Conditions of accreditation

The following are standard conditions of accreditation:

- Accreditation is held by an individual and not an organisation;
- An Accredited Consultant must meet the requirements to obtain/maintain accreditation;
- An Accredited Consultant must declare any conflicts of interest to the Council when discharging their duties as an Accredited Consultant;
- The Council may audit an Accredited Consultant's data reports, including by visiting the relevant site(s);
- Council may review the accreditation status of any Accredited Consultant at any time; and
- An Accredited Consultant or the company they are employed by must hold adequate and suitable professional indemnity and liability insurance. The Council does not require evidence of this.

To maintain accreditation Accredited Consultants must:

- Complete a minimum of 2 data reports and/or native vegetation management plans per year².

² This number can be varied in exceptional circumstances if discussed and approved by the Council.

- Attend Accredited Consultant information sessions.

It is the responsibility of the Accredited Consultant to ensure that their accreditation is current while practicing. If circumstances change, they are to contact the Council at their earliest convenience.

5.4 Lapsed accreditation

If the conditions of accreditation (outlined in 5.3) are unable to be met due to personal circumstance, Accredited Consultants must submit a written application to the Council for consideration, detailing their situation. The Council has discretion to waive conditions where reasonable.

Where conditions have not been met, accreditation may be considered lapsed and could be revoked.

If accreditation lapses, the Council will determine the appropriate actions required for the consultant to 're-instate' their accreditation. This may include:

- Compulsory attendance at the next Accredited Consultant information session.
- Attendance at the relevant portion of in-person training days; and
- Satisfactory completion of the relevant training exercises.

5.5 Revocation of accreditation

The Council can revoke accreditation if the Accredited Consultant has not met the conditions for accreditation and fails to respond to enquiries regarding maintaining accreditation.

Revocation can occur if a consultant is:

- Not practicing regularly enough to maintain accreditation; and/or
- Routinely submitting reports of an unsatisfactory standard, and/or
- Not meeting or maintaining the conditions of accreditation.

The revocation process is as follows:

- The Branch will contact the Accredited Consultant via details listed online or on basecamp regarding the issues;
- The Branch will work with the Accredited Consultant to attempt to rectify the issues to enable accreditation to be maintained, this includes implementing the processes outlined in section 5.4 lapsed accreditation;
- If the matter is not resolved, a recommendation will be made to the Council to revoke accreditation; and
- Accredited Consultants can write to the Council stating the reasons why they should retain accreditation.

Where it is determined that accreditation will be revoked, a notice of revocation must be prepared. This notice must be signed by the appointing authority, the Council, and acknowledged by the Accredited Consultant. The Accredited Consultant will then be removed from Basecamp and the list of practicing Accredited Consultants on the website.

Endorsed:



Dr Marilyn Henderson

Presiding Member

Native Vegetation Council

Date: 11 June 2025

Next review: June 2027
