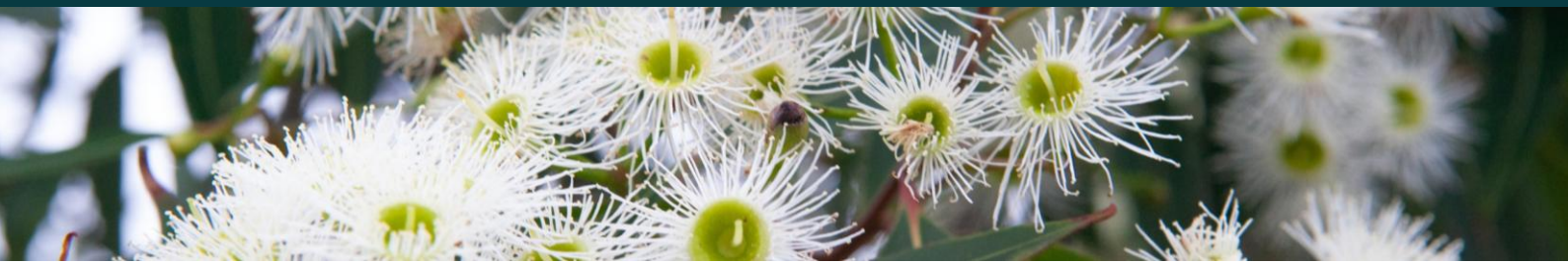

Nature Repair Market

Protect and Conserve Method - Revised scope

02 June 2026

The Nature Repair Market (the Market) is a national, legislated biodiversity market. It is designed to deliver high-integrity biodiversity outcomes and increase investment in nature. The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (the department) oversees policy and legislation for the Market and leads the development of methods.

The department is currently developing a proposed Protect and Conserve (P&C) method. In November 2025, the department released a consultation paper outlining proposed policy settings and design elements of the P&C method. After considering the feedback, the department has revised the scope of the P&C method.

How to provide feedback

- Visit the Ongoing Method Development website
- Read this position paper on the revised scope of the P&C method.
- Email your feedback on the position paper to naturerepairmarketmethods@dcceew.gov.au by 5:00pm AEST on 30 June 2026.

Should you require further information, please email naturerepairmarketmethods@dcceew.gov.au

The Government's environment protection reforms

The Government's environmental protection reform package passed on 28 November 2025. It included some changes to the *Nature Repair Act 2023*. The changes allow for methods under the Nature Repair Market to specify whether projects can be used as environmental offsets.

The department recently consulted on policy settings to enable the Nature Repair Market to supply environmental offsets. The documents associated with this consultation can be found here: https://consult.dcceew.gov.au/methods-have-your-say.

Initial design of the proposed P&C method

The department consulted on the proposed design of the P&C method in November and December 2025. The details can be found here: Nature Repair Market: Protect and Conserve method design - Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water. This consultation occurred before the amendments to allow the Market to supply environmental offsets.

The department received 46 submissions in response to the 2025 consultation process and has continued to engage with experts who provide technical advice to inform the development of the P&C method. In broad terms, key themes from feedback related to:

- complexity of the method, including that the method would need to define many restoration targets across different ecosystems.
- duplication with the proposed Enhancing Native Vegetation (ENV) method and potential future methods.
- challenges in aligning technical requirements with other relevant methods, such as the proposed ENV method and potential future methods that could be applicable in the rangelands and savannas.

Considering this feedback, and also considering the environmental law reforms that enable the Market to supply environmental offsets, the department has revised the scope of the P&C method.

Key features of the revised scope for the P&C method

The method will be streamlined to focus on long-term protection and conservation of biodiversity on land with the option to improve outcomes for threatened species.

All projects under the method will either be, or become, a protected area or a conserved area. This means projects will be on areas already contributing, or eligible to contribute, to the 30x30 target.

100 year permanence period

The P&C method will adopt a mandatory 100 year permanence period. The department has explored including an option for a minimum permanence period of 25 years under limited circumstances, consistent with the Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) Framework[1]. However, a 25-year option will not be included in the method under the revised scope.

Under the *Nature Repair Act 2023,* the permanence period is the duration of the project from registration. The *Nature Repair Act* 2023 provides that at the end of the permanence period, if a biodiversity certificate has been issued (meaning the project has achieved and maintained its biodiversity outcome), the certificate is cancelled and the project is removed from the Register.

The importance of long term protection for projects under this method is the primary reason for the 100 year permanence period. Outside the Nature Repair Market, a commitment of 25 years is possible for conserved areas, under the limited circumstances specified in the OECM Framework.

[1] National Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) Framework

Security of a Nature Repair Market project over the long term

The *Nature Repair Act 2023* works differently to secure project outcomes over the long term compared to mechanisms such as state-based conservation covenants. Conservation covenants are registered directly on the property's title and stay with the land, meaning the covenant binds current and future landowners. Under the Nature Repair Market, obligations to maintain the project are placed on project proponents for the duration of a project's permanence period. The *Nature Repair Act 2023* includes monitoring, reporting and compliance mechanisms for the proponent and the Clean Energy Regulator ensures a project is carried out according to the project plan, and maintained over the permanence period. These mechanisms assist proponents and the Clean Energy Regulator to manage disturbances or reversals of biodiversity outcomes, with relinquishment or cancellation of the biodiversity certificate as a last resort.

Maintain ecosystem condition with an option to enhance outcomes for threatened species

Projects will be required to maintain ecosystem condition within permissible values over a 100 year permanence period. The method will require project proponents to implement activities to maintain ecosystem condition, while also providing flexibility to respond to external impacts that are outside their control (e.g. climate change).

A key difference in the revised method scope is that the option to enhance the ecosystem condition characteristic will not be enabled. The ecosystem condition characteristic is one of five 'variable biodiversity project characteristics' in the *Nature Repair (Biodiversity Assessment) Instrument 2025* (BAI). The other four characteristics relate to *culturally significant entities*, *commitment to protection*, *threatened species* and *removal or reduction of threats*.

Removing the option to enhance the ecosystem condition characteristic was made in response to feedback to simplify and streamline the method and reduce duplication with other methods. Projects seeking to enhance ecosystem condition will be able to use the ENV method, or other future methods that include an enhancement option for the ecosystem condition characteristic.

The P&C method will provide an incentive for projects to target activities to enhance or maintain the capability of the project area to support threatened species through the threatened species (TS) characteristic. It will be voluntary for projects to include the TS characteristic, unless the project is being designed for use as an environmental offset for threatened species (see below). The TS characteristic will enable the participation of existing protected or conserved areas as these projects will be able to implement activities that enhance the capability of the project area to support threatened species while maintaining ecosystem condition.

The TS characteristic, as defined under the BAI, covers species or ecological communities that are categorised as threatened under a law of the Commonwealth, a State or a Territory. The P&C method will not include the threatened ecological communities component of the TS characteristic. In order to recognise and quantify the benefit a Market project will have on a threatened ecological community, it would be necessary for the project to enhance the ecosystem condition characteristic. However, the revised P&C method will not enable projects to enhance ecosystem condition. Projects that want to enhance threatened ecological communities will be able to apply the ENV method. There will be opportunities to enhance the threatened ecological communities that are not within the region covered by the ENV method through future methods that enable the enhancement of ecosystem condition.

Other variable biodiversity project characteristics in the method

Alongside the TS characteristic, the culturally significant entity (CSE) characteristic may be nominated for the project to capture benefits to species and ecological communities of importance to Traditional Owners. Inclusion of the CSE characteristic would be done consistent with requirements set out under the *Nature Repair Act 2023* and the BAI for appropriate engagement with the relevant Traditional Owners and could apply where nomination is led by the relevant First Nations people.

The method will include the commitment to protection (CtP) characteristic to communicate the degree of security and duration of the protection of the project area and how it changes due to the project. It will be mandatory for projects to include the CtP characteristic.

The CtP characteristic provides an incentive to create new protected and conserved areas and also recognises the value of any existing protection. For example, projects that establish new in-perpetuity protection through a conservation covenant would receive the highest CtP score as they establish protection arrangements consistent with Australia's protected area network, the National Reserve System.

Environmental offsets

The method will allow for offsets under specific circumstances, aligning with the draft Environmental Offsets Standard. For projects to meet requirements to supply environmental offsets for threatened species, enhancement of the TS characteristic will be mandatory. The TS characteristic helps align with key offset principles such as demonstrating *measurable improvements* for impacted protected matters (in this case threatened species), *additionality, like-for-like* and *direct and tangible*.

The department is considering how methods, including the P&C method, might support projects that could be considered as offsets for other protected matters under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999)*.

Allowing projects that implement the P&C method to be used as environmental offsets may facilitate the delivery of environmental offsets through the Nature Repair Market, including in areas of land not covered by the proposed ENV method.

Layering with other Nature Repair Market methods

This revised scope focuses the P&C method on long-term protection and conservation of biodiversity on land with the option to improve outcomes for threatened species, rather than on the enhancement of ecosystem condition.

P&C projects could be 'layered' with projects under different Nature Repair Market methods. For example, a P&C project focused on long term protection could be layered with a project under a method that focuses on enhancing ecosystem condition. This could allow multiple certificates on the same area of land, where the outcomes are additional and the requirements of both methods are met.

Timing for a revised P&C method

Nature Repair Committee consultation is anticipated to occur later in 2026, and the P&C method is expected to be legislated in early 2027.

Links and resources

- Nature Repair Market: Ongoing development
- Methods for the Nature Repair Market

- Nature Repair Market scheme | Clean Energy Regulator
- Further work related to offsets is underway to develop National Environmental Standards and establish the Restoration Contributions Holder. Learn more: Stronger environmental protection and restoration - DCCEEW.
- National Environmental Standard for Environmental Offsets - Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water - Consultation on the exposure draft of the Environmental Offsets Standard is open until 9 June.

Contact us

Email naturerepairmarketmethods@dcceew.gov.au

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to land and sea, waters, environment and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands we live and work on, their culture, and their Elders past and present.