

The *PSP Notes* are a series of documents providing advice to key stakeholders and organisations responsible for preparing precinct structure plans. These are expected to be updated from time to time. This document represents current thinking about planning for biodiversity in growth areas.

In all precinct structure plans, the assessment, protection and management of biodiversity values should be considered in the context of the surrounding and long term urban development. Where biodiversity values need to be retained within the precinct, the aim should be to incorporate these into open space networks (both public accessible spaces and nature reserves) where appropriate. These areas should be managed to assist with long term viability.

Policy and legislative context

The primary goal for conserving native vegetation in Victoria is 'to achieve a reversal, across the entire landscape, of the long-term decline in the extent and quality of native vegetation, leading to a **'Net Gain'**'. Protecting the environment for future generations is also one of the government's top ten goals listed in Growing Victoria Together.

Melbourne 2030 aims to 'protect native habitat and areas of important biodiversity through appropriate land-use planning'.

Clause 15.09 of the *Victoria Planning Provisions* notes that:

- Planning authorities should have regard to *The National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biological Diversity*;
- Planning and responsible authorities must have regard to *Victoria's Native Vegetation Management – A Framework for Action*; and
- Planning and responsible authorities must ensure that any changes in land use or development would not adversely affect matters of national environmental significance including wetland wildlife habitats designated under the *Convention on Wetlands of International Importance* (the Ramsar Convention).

Biodiversity conservation is implemented by the Commonwealth through the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) and administered by the Australian Government Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA). Matters of national environmental significance to be protected in the Urban Growth Zone include:

- Threatened ecological communities and threatened species
- Migratory birds
- Wetlands of international importance (Ramsar listed wetlands)

To maximize positive environmental and planning outcomes the requirements of the EPBC Act should be taken into account during the entire precinct structure planning process. The Strategic Assessment of 2009 provides a context for conditional approval under the EPBC Act for protection of matters of national environmental significance through rigorous assessment under the precinct structure plan development requirements.

The Program to be endorsed in the Strategic Assessment (2009) for the Urban Growth Boundary may specify prescriptions for treatment of matters of national environmental significance. Where prescriptions are specified in the Program these must be followed. Where treatments are not defined, appropriate approvals must be obtained separately from the Commonwealth.



Native vegetation framework

The Native Vegetation Framework requires a three step approach to applying Net Gain:

1. To **avoid** adverse impacts, particularly through vegetation clearance.
2. If impacts cannot be avoided, to **minimise** impacts through appropriate consideration in planning processes and expert input to project design or management.
3. Identify appropriate **offset** options.

In the context of precinct structure planning this three-step approach is dealt with by a native vegetation precinct plan (NVPP) (See Clause 52.16 of *Victoria Planning Provisions*). The NVPP will form part of the implementation provisions of the precinct structure plan, and it will set out the native vegetation to be retained and the vegetation to be removed as a result of the precinct structure plan, including mechanisms for offsetting any losses. In some cases this will reflect decisions made in the location of the urban growth boundary.

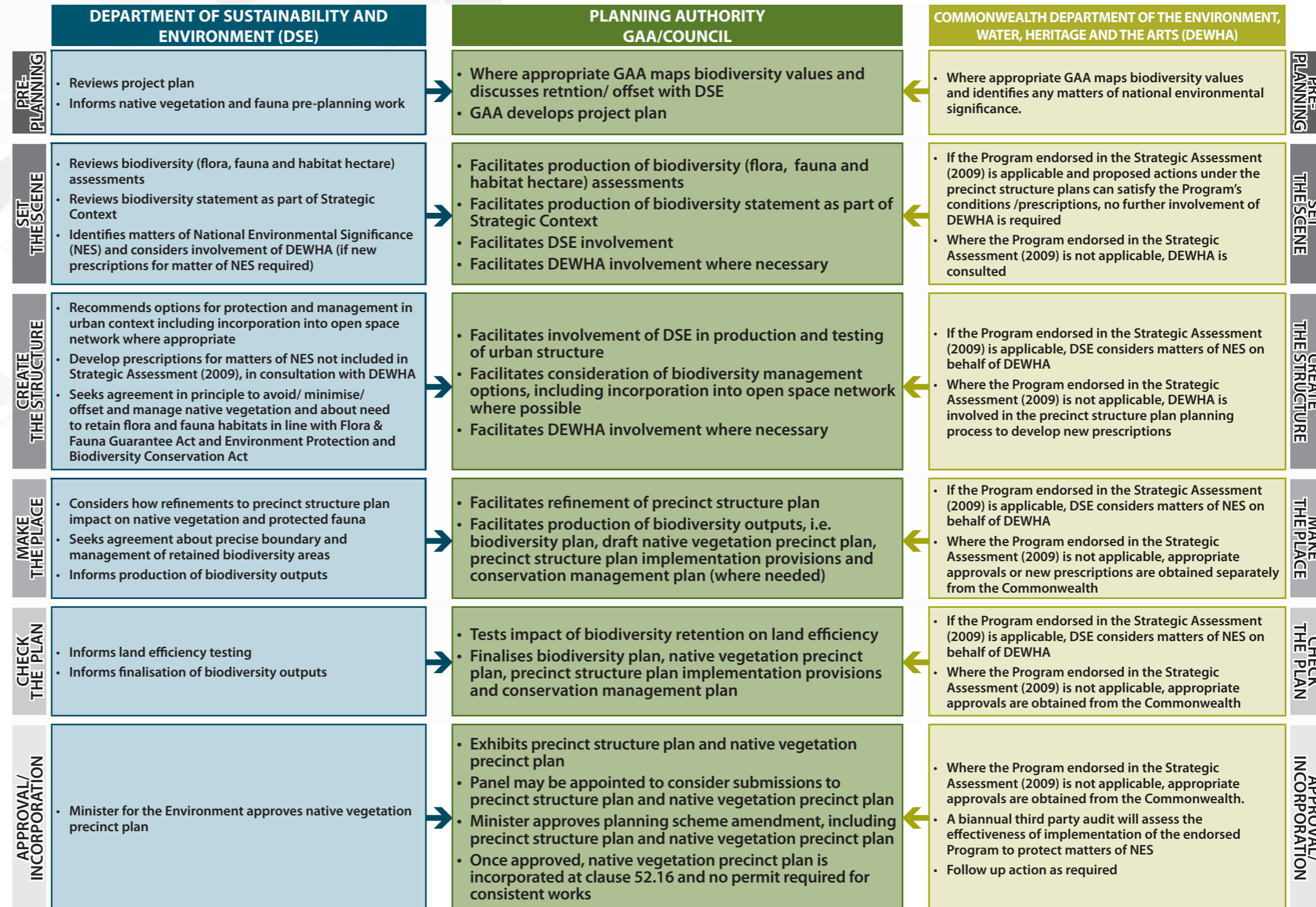
These biodiversity and native vegetation frameworks operate within the objectives of Melbourne 2030, so the task for managing biodiversity in precinct structure plans is to protect and manage biodiversity values whilst enabling urban development.

Approach to integrating biodiversity requirements

A standard approach to integrating biodiversity requirements into the precinct structure planning process is set out in the following table.

The Biodiversity Precinct Planning Kit assists Councils, developers and consultants in the preparation of biodiversity background reports and biodiversity components for precinct structure planning. It identifies the information required by DSE and ensures assessment of biodiversity values is sufficiently detailed and of a standard that enables resultant documents (including Strategic Context (Biodiversity), Biodiversity Plan, Native Vegetation Precinct Plan and associated planning tools) to be prepared as part of the Precinct Structure Plan. The Kit has been developed by DSE and endorsed by DPCD and GAA.

Approach to integrating biodiversity requirements



Note: All references to *the Program* mean the endorsed Program, and the actions or classes of actions approved in accordance with it under the strategic assessment process in Part 10 of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

