

Design Guidelines Scorecard

Medium & High Density Residential
Developments

Nature-based development excellence for better urban
environments

Project Address: _____

Developer: _____

Architect: _____

Landscape Architect: _____

Site Area: _____



The Nature Based Cities Design Guidelines Scorecard is for developers who care about sustainable design and want to focus on nature-based solutions.

The scorecard comprises a set of achievable landscape based design goals, which can be adopted as a design brief to guide architects and landscape architects. The scorecard sets the two following levels of achievement: 'Commended' or 'Exemplary'.

Once the schematic design is complete and submitted for approval, the scorecard is formalised based on actual outcomes. Submitting it with supporting documents secures the Nature Based Cities rating.



Commended 60%

To achieve Commended status, projects must achieve a minimum score of 60–80% of available points.



Exemplary 80%

Exemplary projects are the highest rated NBC projects, designed in accordance with the Nature Based Cities Guidelines with a scoring of 80% or more of available points.

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Mandatory Criteria

Protection of threatened species and habitats

The site does not include threatened ecological communities or threatened species.

All onsite threatened ecological communities and habitats for threatened species are protected.

Explanatory Notes

The project needs to satisfy one of the above to receive accreditation. No points are awarded in this category.

Threatened ecological communities include Ecological Vegetation Communities (EVCs) deemed to be at risk of extinction under the EPBC Act.

Threatened species are species assessed as being at risk of extinction under the EPBC Act or relevant state legislation. The likelihood of threatened species is typically established through a Flora and Fauna Assessment for greenfield sites and a desktop assessment for brownfield sites.

Additional information required

Does the site include threatened ecological communities? *

Has a Flora and Fauna Assessment or desktop ecological analysis been undertaken? *

Does the site include threatened species? *

Will habitat for threatened species be protected? *

Additional Notes

*Mandatory information

1. Views and Site Planning

Provide a connection to nature via views to green open space

1 Point

At least 50% of apartments have a view to green open space.

2 Points

All apartments have a view to green open space.

Explanatory Notes

Green open space must be visible from a habitable room. It can be on or off site and include:

- Parks, Gardens or communal open spaces with at least 3 canopy trees visible from apartment.
- Streets with trees. At least 3 street trees should be visible from the apartment.

Aligns with Green Star Credit 15 – Connection to Nature (Views)

Provisional Score

Additional information required

How many apartments are in your project?*

How many of these will have views to green open space?*

Percentage of apartments with views?*

Additional Notes

*Mandatory information

2. Private Open Space

Provide direct access to gardens for residents

1 Point

At least 10% of residential apartments have planting within their private open space.

2 Points

At least 20% of residential apartments have planting within their private open space including all ground level residential apartments.

Explanatory Notes

Planting includes fixed and irrigated planters such as balcony planters, in-situ planters, or in-ground planting. It does not include pot plants.

Provisional Score

Additional information required

Percentage of apartments with planting within their private open space?*

Percentage of ground level apartments that have planting within their private open space?*

Additional Notes

*Mandatory information

3. Communal Spaces

Provide meaningful open spaces with access to nature and sunlight

1 Point

- Provide landscaped, communal open space with a minimum area of 30sqm or 2.5sqm per dwelling, whichever is greater. A minimum 30sqm of the communal open space is to receive at least 2 hours of sunlight.

2 Points

- Provide landscaped, communal open space with a minimum area of 30sqm or 3.5 sqm per dwelling, whichever is greater. A minimum 30sqm of the communal open space is to receive at least 4 hours of sunlight.

Explanatory Notes

- Communal open space must be on site, accessible to all residents and tenants, and include at least 1 canopy tree or pergola with climbers and at least 20% planted area.
- The hours of sunlight required are to be calculated at the winter solstice (21st June) and apply to at least 30 square metres of the designated communal open space.

Aligns with the intent of BESS Urban Ecology – 1.1 Communal Open Space.

Provisional Score



Additional information required

Area (sqm) of communal open space?*

Does 30sqm of communal open space receive at least 2 hours sunlight?*

Does 30sqm of communal open space receive at least 4 hours sunlight?*

Additional Notes

*Mandatory information

4. Existing Trees

Preserve mature trees which take decades to replace

N/A there are no existing high or moderate value trees on site.

1 Point

Retain all high value trees.

2 Points

Retain all high value trees and at least 50% of moderate value trees.

If there are no high value trees on-site points can be achieved by:
1 Point: Retain at least 50% of moderate value trees.
2 Points: Retain all moderate value trees.
If this applies to the project site, please tick the corresponding points box above.

Explanatory Notes

Tree value is to be assessed by a Consultant Arborist prior to commencement of the development.
Retention of trees is preferred, but if a tree can't be retained in its location, it is acceptable to transplant the tree if it remains on the development site. Relocation of trees must be carried out by a suitably qualified tree transplanter under the supervision of an arborist.
Aligns with the intent of the Green Factor Tool: Category – In Ground Retained / Existing.

Provisional Score

Additional information required

Percentage of high value trees retained?*

Percentage of existing moderate value trees retained?*

Additional Notes

*Mandatory information

5. Canopy Trees

Include large canopy trees for habitat

1 Point

Provide at least 1 large canopy tree per 2,000sqm.

2 Points

Provide at least 1 large canopy tree per 1,000sqm, including at least 1 large habitat tree per 5,000sqm.

Explanatory Notes

A large canopy tree is at least 12 metres high with a canopy spread of at least 8 metres when mature.

Retained existing trees can be included in the calculations.

Habitat tree is a tree that can reach 15 metres height or can be demonstrated to provide wildlife habitat.

Aligns with Green Star Credit 36 – Biodiversity Enhancement.

Provisional Score

Additional information required

Number of large canopy trees?*

Number of large habitat canopy trees?*

Additional Notes

*Mandatory information

6. Canopy Cover

Deliver climate resilience, shade and habitat through the urban forest

1 Point

- Provide a minimum of 15% canopy coverage across the site from trees and/or climbers on pergolas.

2 Points

- Provide a minimum of 20% canopy coverage across the site from trees and/or climbers on pergolas.

Explanatory Notes

Canopy cover is the total land area that will be covered by tree canopy and climbers on pergolas, calculated using the expected mature spread of the proposed trees and pergola area to be covered by climbers.

Trees planted outside the site boundary (e.g., street trees) can be included in calculations.

Adequate soil volumes must be demonstrated to gain these points.

Required soil volume is to be calculated in cubic metres by multiplying the mature canopy area of a tree by 0.6.

Exemplary Standard aligns with Enviro Development 1.3.11 Canopy Cover (1 credit).

Provisional Score

Additional information required

Percentage of canopy cover?*

Has adequate soil volume been demonstrated?*

Additional Notes

*Mandatory information

7. Biodiversity

Promote locally appropriate and resilient plant communities

1 Point

Plant at least 60% indigenous plants.

2 Points

Plant at least 80% indigenous plants. Implement a diverse planting palette with 10/20/30 benchmark.

Explanatory Notes

Indigenous means native to the site’s bioregion as defined by the state government authority responsible for environment.

10/20/30 benchmark means no more than 10% of any species, 20% of any one genus and 30% of any single family.

Your ecologist may recommend additional species native to the region to suit the specific requirements and objectives of your development.

Exemplary Standard aligns with Green Star Credit 36 – Biodiversity Enhancement.

Provisional Score

Additional information required

Percentage of indigenous plants proposed?*

Will 10/20/30 benchmark be achieved?*

Additional Notes

*Mandatory information

8. Ecology

Deliver developments that protect and enhance local ecology

1 Point

- Engage a qualified Ecologist to provide a report of recommendations for development.

2 Points

- Engage a qualified Ecologist to provide a report of recommendations for the development and implement all core recommendations. Ecologist to prepare a Biodiversity Management Plan. 50% of any identified high value biodiversity area must be retained in order to achieve core ecommendations.

Explanatory Notes

The Biodiversity Management Plan should include an assessment of the current site conditions, potential threats and recommended actions to mitigate threats and enhance habitat.

The ecologist should be engaged early enough to influence key decision making. They will carry out a site survey to understand existing biodiversity and to provide appropriate and meaningful ecological enhancement recommendations. The purpose of the Biodiversity Management Plan is to ensure recommendations achieve the intended outcomes.

Exemplary Standard aligns with Green Star Credit 36 – Biodiversity Enhancement

Provisional Score



Additional information required

- Has an ecologist been engaged?*
- Will core recommendations be implemented?*
- Will a Biodiversity Management Plan be prepared?*
- Has any area of the site been identified as having high value biodiversity?*
- Will 50% of identified high value biodiversity area be retained?*

Additional Notes

*Mandatory information

9. Planted Area

Provide habitat complexity and ecological function

1 Point

- Garden bed area at a minimum 15% horizontally across the site.

2 Points

- Garden bed area at a minimum 25% horizontally across the site.

Explanatory Notes

Garden bed area includes mulched and irrigated in-ground planting beds, on-structure planters with a minimum 300mm soil depth and internal planting to lobbies or communal spaces.

Commended Standard aligns with Green Star Credit 36 – Biodiversity Enhancement. Exemplary Standard aligns with Enviro Development 1.3.3 Green Infrastructure. Consistent with BESS: Urban Ecology – 2.1 Vegetation.

Provisional Score

Additional information required

Percentage is garden bed, horizontally across the site?*

Additional Notes

*Mandatory information

10. Vertical Greening

Extend nature based design principles to building facades

1 Point

- Vertical greening to provide at least 3% coverage of the lowest 4 storeys of the building.

2 Points

- Vertical greening to provide at least 10% coverage of the lowest 4 storeys of the building, or 5% of the total facade.

Explanatory Notes

Vertical greening includes climbing plants, well maintained green walls and shrubs in balcony planters that are visible from street level. All planting must be irrigated.

The preference is to concentrate façade greening at the lower levels of buildings where it can be appreciated by people at street level.

Vegetated coverage is calculated based on the expected vertical area to be covered by the plants at maturity as a percentage of the façade area on an elevation.

Internal green walls can be included in the calculations.

Generally aligns with Green Star Credit 36 – Biodiversity Enhancement, BESS Urban Ecology – 2.3 Green Walls & Facades, Green Factor Tool Green Wall & Green Facade and Enviro Development 1.3.3 – Green Infrastructure, though no minimum areas are provided in these rating tools.

Provisional Score

Additional information required

Percentage of coverage of lowest 4 storeys?*

Percentage of coverage of total facade?*

Additional Notes

*Mandatory information

Thank you for completing the Scorecard.

Your provisional score is:

Out of a possible 20 points you must score 12–15 points to be accredited as a Commended Nature Based Cities project, and 16 points or more to be accredited as an Exemplary Nature Based Cities project.

Please note: If existing trees are not located on-site, the calculation is based off 18 points. In this case, 11–14 points are required for Commended Nature Based Cities accreditation and 15 points or more are required for Exemplary Nature Based Cities accreditation.



Commended
60%

To achieve Commended status, projects must achieve a minimum score of 60–80% of available points.



Exemplary
80%

Exemplary projects are the highest rated NBC projects, designed in accordance with the Nature Based Cities Guidelines with a scoring of 80% or more of available points.

Please get in touch with us via email
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