



Biodiversity
Conservation
Trust

Biodiversity Conservation Trust

Policy – mapping BCT agreement boundaries |
June 2020

Mapping agreement boundaries

The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust (BCT) works with landholders to conserve biodiversity on their land. This involves establishing one of three agreement types: Wildlife Refuge Agreements (WRAs), Conservation Agreements (CAs) (funded and unfunded) and Biodiversity Stewardship Agreements (BSAs).

Each agreement includes a map showing the areas of a property and a list of cadastral parcels (lots) that the agreement applies to. It is important for the landholder and the BCT to have a clear and common understanding of the area of the property subject to the agreement.

When mapping agreements the BCT references spatial records of lot and property boundaries maintained by Spatial Services NSW (<https://www.spatial.nsw.gov.au/>). This process commonly highlights differences between what a landholder recognises on the ground or in aerial imagery as their property boundary and the boundary depicted in digital cadastral records, particularly in rural areas. Differences mainly occur due to the imprecise nature of historical mapping and fence placement, but can also be a result of errors in cadastral records.

This policy clarifies and standardises the way BCT maps the boundaries of agreements where these inconsistencies occur.

Scope and application

This policy applies to BCT's role in identifying and mapping the boundaries of WRA, CA and BSA agreements.

Principles for mapping agreement boundaries

The BCT applies the following principles when mapping the boundaries of agreement areas:

- Mapping of agreements adopts a risk management approach to identify the level of accuracy or degree of consensus with the NSW digital cadastral database (DCBD)
- Mapping of agreements is evidence-based and utilises the most accurate data available
- The BCT adopts an efficient and cost-effective approach to mapping agreements that is fit for purpose.

Risk management approach to identifying agreement boundaries

Mapping of BCT agreement boundaries for the conservation area or biodiversity stewardship site boundary map that is in the agreement should be based on either field collected coordinates with an accuracy of 10 metres (95% confidence level) or latest rectified imagery.

A plan of survey may be prepared by a registered surveyor for agreements that:

- have highly complex boundaries involving many part lots
- have very poor (i.e greater than GPS +/- 10 metres) accuracy at the time of assessment
- are difficult to clearly identify in relation to high quality aerial imagery, the cadastre or readily identifiable features on the ground
- are part of the Revolving Fund program involving the sale of property
- are considered by the BCT more likely to be higher risk.

A landholder may choose to have a plan of survey prepared for their agreement at their own cost.

A sketch plan may be suitable in some circumstances where BCT staff provide accurate GPS points to a professional drafter who prepares a plan for approval by a registered surveyor.

Mapping agreement boundaries

The BCT, accredited assessors or contractors will use the most accurate data available to map the agreement boundary. In most cases, this will be field collected GPS data.

Agreement boundaries will be aligned to the digital cadastre where field collected data is within the +/- 10 m tolerance.

The digital cadastre will not be used as the basis for mapping agreement boundaries where a consistent spatial error is observed in the data. The BCT will not deliberately or knowingly carry through errors or inaccuracies in the digital cadastre to the agreement area boundary map.

Coordinates with a known accuracy collected in the field by assessors (BCT staff or external assessors) can potentially be a source of information for improvements to the digital cadastre.

Agreement boundaries will not knowingly be mapped on land that is not owned by the landholder entering into the agreement. Existing land surveys should be obtained and consulted to clarify property boundaries where available. Note that fences do not always accurately reflect property boundaries.

Where the boundary description in a Survey Plan or Crown Plan describes the boundary as being formed by a natural feature such as a riverbank or centreline of a stream, the agreement boundary should be mapped to the current riverbank or current centreline, in accordance with the Registrar General's Guidelines.

Where the boundary occurs along a natural watercourse but there is no description in the Survey Plan or Crown Plan that describes the location of the boundary in relation to the watercourse, the digital cadastre should be used as the boundary.

Survey Costs

Where a landholder elects to have a survey plan prepared, but this is not a BCT requirement, the landholder will cover the cost of the survey.

Cost sharing arrangements may be applicable in limited circumstances.

BSA applicants are required to cover the costs of all mapping associated with a BSA and any variation, including mapping the agreement boundary.

Where an agreement with an existing survey plan is varied at the landholder's request, and is not deemed by the BCT to result in a net benefit to biodiversity, the landholder is required to pay for the cost of a new survey, otherwise the varied agreement is applied to the entire lot upon registration with NSW Land Registry Services.

A public authority would usually pay mapping costs associated with a variation required as a result of any proposal by a public authority.

Questions or clarification

Contact the BCT at info@bct.nsw.gov.au.