

Determining serious and irreversible impacts

Entities most at risk of extinction are known as ‘potential serious and irreversible impact’ entities

The [Guidance to assist a decision-maker to determine a serious and irreversible impact](#) (the Guidance) identifies threatened entities that are considered most vulnerable to development resulting in a serious and irreversible impact.

Applicants should be encouraged to avoid impacts on entities at risk of a serious and irreversible impact (SAIL) in the early stages of designing a development proposal.

The biodiversity development assessment report will provide further information on each potential serious and irreversible impact

Section 10.2 of the Biodiversity Assessment Method outlines specific information that is to be provided to support the consent authority to determine whether an impact is serious and irreversible. This information is to be included in the biodiversity development assessment report for the proposal.

The consent authority can expect this information to be addressed in a specific chapter in the biodiversity development assessment report. The additional information should be separately provided for each potential serious and irreversible impact.

If this information is missing, in whole or in part, the consent authority should ask the applicant to supply the information.

The consent authority is responsible for deciding whether an impact is serious and irreversible

The accredited assessor does not provide an opinion on whether the impact should be considered serious and irreversible.

The consent authority must determine whether any impact is serious and irreversible having regard to principles in the *Biodiversity Conservation Regulation 2017* and the Guidance. The Guidance provides criteria and supporting information to assist with the application of the principles.

In the context of a Part 4 local development, the consent authority must go through this decision-making process once a development application has been received. Development applications should not be rejected simply because the development impacts upon a potential SAIL entity.

In general terms, potential serious and irreversible impacts entities are highly threatened and/or unlikely to respond to management actions at a biodiversity stewardship site.

All critically endangered entities are potential serious and irreversible impacts. Entities that would be likely to meet the requirements of critically endangered if re-assessed are also potential serious and irreversible impacts.

An entity that is unlikely to respond to management actions may, for example, have key threats that are difficult to control; reproductive characteristics that limit their ability to increase the population; or habitat features that cannot be recreated.

Thresholds are one of the factors that the consent authority will consider

Serious and irreversible impact thresholds provide guidance as to the level of impact that could be sustained by a threatened entity, beyond which a proposed impact is likely to contribute significantly to the risk of extinction. Impact thresholds for potential SAI entities are available in the Threatened Biodiversity Data Collection hosted by [BioNet](#).

For some entities the threshold is zero. For a number of entities the field in BioNet relating to thresholds will be blank or 'under development'. This means no threshold is currently available.

Thresholds, alongside the information provided in the biodiversity development assessment report, are considered in determining whether a serious and irreversible impact is likely to occur.

A development must be refused if, **after considering all relevant information** and following the decision-making framework established in the Guidance, the consent authority determines that a serious and irreversible impact is likely to occur.

In the absence of a published threshold the consent authority will disregard thresholds in decision making

If thresholds are still under development, the consent authority will rely on the information provided in the biodiversity development assessment report in determining whether a serious and irreversible impact is likely to occur.

Guidance is available to assist authorities to identify potential serious and irreversible impacts in their local IBRA sub-region

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment has developed instructions for Councils to generate a list of potential serious and irreversible impacts in relevant IBRA sub-regions from publically available data. This guidance can be obtained from your Local Government Support Officer.