

Glossary

Term	Definition
Aboriginal cultural heritage	Aboriginal cultural heritage includes a significant Aboriginal area, object or evidence of archaeological or historic significance.
Acid Sulfate Soil (ASS)	A soil or soil horizon which contains sulphides or an acid soil horizon affected by oxidation of sulphides. Acid sulfate soils are the common name given to naturally occurring sediments and soils containing iron sulphides.
Actual Acid Sulfate Soil (AASS)	Soils containing highly acidic soil horizons or layers resulting from the aeration of soil materials that are rich in iron sulphides, primarily sulphide.
Alluvial	A soil developed on a flood plain or delta having only the characteristics of the alluvium (clay, silt, sand, gravel or similar detrital material deposited by running water) of which it is composed.
Ambient noise	The background noise in an area or environment, being a composite of sounds from many sources.
Amenity	A positive element or elements that contribute to the overall character or enjoyment of an area. For example, open land, trees, historic buildings and the inter-relationship between them, or less tangible factors such as tranquillity
Anthropogenic	Produced or caused by human activities.
Aquatic biota	The organisms living in or depending on the aquatic environment.
Aquifer	An aquifer is an underground layer of water-bearing permeable rock or unconsolidated materials (gravel, sand, silt, or clay) from which groundwater can be usefully extracted using a water well.
Biodiversity	Biodiversity is the variation of taxonomic life forms within a given ecosystem, specifically the total of genes, species and ecosystems of an area.
Bioregion	Area which has been arranged by bioregions, which are a landscape-scale approach to classifying the environment using a range of attributes such as climate, geomorphology, geology, soils and vegetation.
Biota	All the organisms, including animals, plants, fungi and micro-organisms in a given area
Borrow pit	A temporary mineral working to supply material for a specific construction project.
Buffer zone	The region near the border of a protected area; a transition zone between areas managed for different objectives.
Catchment	The area of land which collects and transfers rainwater into a waterway.

Term	Definition
Community (ecological)	An integrated group of species inhabiting a given area; the organisms within a community influence one another's distribution, abundance, and evolution.
Design guide	A document providing guidance on how development can be carried out in accordance with good design practice often produced by a local authority with a view to retaining local distinctiveness.
Development plan	A document setting out the local planning authority's policies and proposals for the development and use of land and buildings in the authority's area.
Dewatering	To remove water from (a waste product or streambed, for example).
Dissolved Oxygen (DO)	Dissolved oxygen analysis measures the amount of gaseous oxygen (O ₂) dissolved in an aqueous solution.
Ecology	The interrelationships of living things to one another and to their environment or the study of such interrelationships.
Ecosystem	A dynamic complex of plant, animal, fungal and micro-organism communities and associated non-living environment interacting as an ecological unit to form a recognisable self-contained entity.
Effluent	A discharge of pollutants into the environment, partially or completely treated or in its natural state.
Emission	A discharge of pollutants into the environment, partially or completely treated or in its natural state.
Environmental assessment	See Environmental Impact Assessment
Environmental Impact Assessment	The process of identifying, evaluating and mitigating the biophysical, social and other relevant effects of development proposals prior to major decisions and commitments been made.
Environmental Value (EV)	Environmental values are the qualities of waterways that need to be protected from the effects of pollution, waste discharges and deposits to ensure healthy aquatic ecosystems and waterways that are safe and suitable for community use. They reflect the ecological, social and economic values and uses (e.g. swimming, fishing, agriculture) of the waterway.
Estuary	Areas where the fresh water meets salt water.
Exceedance	When a goal, guideline or standard is exceeded.
Fauna	Animals found in a given area.
Flora	Plants found in a given area.
Freehold	Land that is privately owned.
Greenhouse gas	A gas that is transparent to incoming solar radiation and absorbs some of the longer wavelength infrared radiation (heat) that the Earth radiates back
Habitat	The physical and chemical environment in which a plant or animal lives.

Term	Definition
Heritage	Places, objects and Indigenous languages that have aesthetic, architectural, historical, scientific, technological or social significance or other special value for future generations as well as for the community today.
Highest Astronomical Tide (HAT)	The highest level of water which can be predicted to occur under any combination of astronomical conditions.
Horizon (soil)	A layer of soil, approximately parallel to the soil surface, differing in properties and characteristics from adjacent layers below or above it.
Hydrology	The science dealing with the properties, distribution and circulation of water.
Initial Advice Statement (IAS)	A report containing a brief, preliminary evaluation of the types of impacts that would result from an action. Often used as a screening process to assess whether or not proposals should undergo full scale EIA.
Intertidal	The area along the coast below the high tide and above the low tide.
Introduced species	A species occurring in an area outside of its historically known natural range as a result of intentional or accidental dispersal by human activities.
Lacustrine	Living in or growing beside a lake.
Landscape character	The distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occur consistently in a particular type of landscape. It reflects particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement.
Leasehold	Land owned by government but leased to a specific person or organisation for specific purpose.
Local Planning Authority	The local authority or council that is empowered by law to exercise planning functions. Often the local borough or district council.
Lowest Astronomical Tide (LAT)	The lowest tide level which can be predicted to occur under average meteorological conditions and under any combination of astronomical conditions.
Macroinvertebrates	Animals without backbones that be seen with the unaided naked eye.
Mean High Water Springs (MHWS)	A tidal level. The average of all high water observations at the time of spring tide over a period time (preferably 19 years). Applicable in semi-diurnal waters only.
Mitigation	Measures taken to reduce adverse impacts on the environment.
Natural resources	Natural features that have ecological, economic, recreational, educational or aesthetic value.
Nature conservation	The protection, management and promotion of wildlife habitat for the benefit of wild species, as well as the communities that use and enjoy them.

Term	Definition
Open space	All space of public value, including public landscaped areas, playing fields, parks and play areas, and also including not just land, but also areas of water such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs, which can offer opportunities for sport and recreation or can also act as a visual amenity and a haven for wildlife.
pH	A measure of the acidity or alkalinity of a material, liquid or solid.
Potential Acid Sulfate Soil (PASS)	Soils which contain iron sulphides or sulphidic material which have not been exposed to air or oxidised.
Population (ecological)	A group of individuals with common ancestry that are much more likely to mate with one another than with individuals from another such group.
Potable water	Water suitable for drinking or cooking purposes from both health and aesthetic considerations.
Protected Area	A legally established land or water area under either public or private ownership that is regulated and managed to achieve specific conservation objectives.
RAMSAR	Convention on Wetlands of International Importance. The Convention, including the List of Wetlands of International Importance established under it, is administered by the IUCN.
Regional Ecosystem (RE)	Regional ecosystems were defined by Sattler and Williams (1999) as vegetation communities in a bioregion that are consistently associated with a particular combination of geology, landform and soil.
Rehabilitation	The recovery of specific ecosystem services in a degraded ecosystem or habitat.
Riffle	A rocky shoal or sandbar lying just below the surface of a waterway.
Riparian vegetation	Vegetation living on or beside a river or creek bank
Sediment	Inorganic and organic particulate matter on the bottom of the water column of rivers, lakes, estuaries and oceans.
Sensitive land uses	Sensitive land uses are defined as residential uses (noise sensitive land use – dwelling), sensitive community and commercial uses (noise sensitive land uses other than a protected area or a dwelling) or environmentally significant areas.
Sewage effluent	Household and industrial wastewater that has been treated to reduce solids, organic and nutrient content.
Site visit	A visit to a proposed development site conducted by planning officers, councilors, environmental scientists or inspectors to clarify the appearance of a site or visualise the effects of the proposal.
Suspended solids	Small particles of solid pollutants that float on the surface of, or are suspended in, sewage or other liquids.

Term	Definition
Sustainable development	Development that meets the needs and aspirations of the current generation without compromising the ability to meet those of future generations.
Terms of Reference (TOR)	Documented requirements governing EIS structure and implementation.
Threatened species	A species that is facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild in the immediate (critically endangered), near (endangered) or medium-term (vulnerable) future.
Topography	A description (or visual representation on a map) of the shape of the land, for example, contours or changes in the height of land above sea level.
Total Suspended Solids (TSS)	A measure of the suspended solids in wastewater, effluent, or water bodies, determined by tests for total suspended nonfilterable solids.
Tributary	A stream or other body of water, surface or underground, which intermittently contributes its water in small quantities to another larger stream or body of water.
Turbidity	Measure of the clarity of water
Vulnerable	A plant or animal, whose population is decreasing, has been seriously depleted or is at risk due to threatening processes.
Waste	Waste is any material or object that is no longer wanted and requires disposal. If a material or object is re-usable, it is still classed as waste if it has first been discarded.
Waste water	Water carrying wastes from homes, businesses and industries that is a mixture of water and dissolved or suspended solids.
Wetlands	An area that is saturated by surface or ground water with vegetation adapted for life under those soil conditions, as swamps, bogs, fens, marshes, and estuaries.
Wildlife corridor	Strips of land conserved and managed for wildlife, usually linking more extensive wildlife habitats.