

**Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy
MINISTER'S MEETING BRIEF – Dr Anthony Lynham MP**

SUBJECT: Meeting with World Wildlife Fund

TIMING: Routine

MEETING: Date and time: Thursday 1 February 10:30 am
Venue: 1 William Street
Attendees: Damian McGreevy, World Wildlife Fund

Policy Advisor.....	OK
Chief of Staff	OK
Approved / Not approved / Noted	
Minister	
Dated/...../.....	

RECOMMENDATION:

The suggested approach the Minister should take for this meeting is:

- a. **Note** the program of work put forward to meet the government's 2017 election commitments for vegetation management which may be referenced for the upcoming meeting with the World Wildlife Fund.

KEY ISSUES:

1. The Queensland Government is working to implement a program that will involve five key deliverables to bring the government's 2017 election commitments for vegetation management to fruition.
2. The first deliverable is to release a major update to the Vegetation Management Maps based upon the Queensland Herbarium's regional ecosystem mapping. An update of this scale has not been undertaken since 2013 and will ensure the vegetation management framework is using the best available science. The update will include changes to regional ecosystem, essential habitat and wetland mapping.
3. The second action is to introduce a Vegetation Management Amendment Bill 2018 (the Amendment Bill) to Parliament in the first Parliamentary sitting in 2018 to deliver on the government's vegetation management commitments. The Amendment Bill is substantially the same as the defeated 2016 Reinstatement Bill and aims to deliver a responsible vegetation management framework for Queensland.
4. The Amendment Bill will reinstate protections that were removed by the previous government in 2013 and introduce enhanced compliance measures to assist with enforcement of vegetation management laws. In particular, the Bill will:
 - Reinstate the protection of high-value regrowth vegetation on freehold and Indigenous land.
 - Remove provisions which allow clearing for high value agriculture and irrigated high value agriculture.
 - Broaden the protection of regrowth vegetation in watercourse areas (Category R) to the Burnett-Mary, Eastern Cape York and Fitzroy catchments, which will provide consistent protection to regrowth vegetation in all Great Barrier Reef catchments.
 - Re-introduce provisions into the *Water Act 2000* (Water Act) to regulate the removal of vegetation in a watercourse under a riverine protection permit.
5. Additionally, the Amendment Bill will provide enhanced compliance measures that will better enforce vegetation management laws and support the implementation of the self-assessable codes. Changes to the compliance framework will ensure the *Vegetation Management Act 1999* is contemporary and aligns with other natural resource legislation.
6. To minimise pre-emptive clearing, certain provisions in the Amendment Bill will apply retrospectively from the date of its introduction.
7. The third deliverable is the progression of the 2017 thinning and fodder self-assessable codes and a rolling program to revise and implement nine self-assessable codes throughout 2018. The revised thinning and fodder codes have been developed by the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy based on scientific input from the Queensland Herbarium and has been the subject of extensive stakeholder consultation.

Author:	Recommended – ED:	Endorsed – DDG:
Name: Peter Jamieson Title/Business Group: Land Policy Telephone: 73(2)Irrelevant Date: 23 January 2018	Name: Lyall Hinrichsen Title/Business Group: Land Policy Telephone: 73(2)Irrelevant Date: 24 January 2018	Name: Nicole Buchanski Title/Business Group: Deputy Director-General Policy Telephone: 73(2)Irrelevant Date: 30 January 2018

8. The fourth area will be aligning the definition of high conservation value with high value regrowth vegetation. Options will be developed following examination of the mapping requirements and policy and legislative tools to support the 'High Conservation Values' classificatory approach as advocated by the High Conservation Resource Network.
9. The fifth deliverable is the development of a 'State of Native Vegetation Report'. This will establish a comprehensive monitoring programme for the vegetation management framework to better support evidence based policy into the future. This action will build upon the Statewide Landcover and Trees Study to provide up-to-date scientific information that will better enable government to evaluate and report on the effectiveness of the vegetation management framework.

BACKGROUND:

10. The latest clearing figures contained within the 2015-16 Statewide Landcover and Trees Study (SLATS report) show a total statewide woody vegetation clearing rate of approximately 395 000 hectares per year.
11. These increases highlight the impacts of the reinstatement of broadscale clearing in 2013 for agricultural purposes and clearing under the self-assessable vegetation clearing codes.
12. The clearing rate of 395 000 hectares per year represents an approximate increase of 33 per cent from the 2014-15 clearing rate of 296 000 hectares. It is the highest clearing rate since 2003-04. This also represents approximately 0.45 per cent of the total area of woody vegetation in Queensland (approximately 87 million hectares or about 50-51 per cent of the state).
13. In terms of remnant clearing, in 2015-16 clearing of remnant vegetation increased by approximately 21 per cent to 138 000 hectares from 114 000 hectares in 2014-15.
14. The proportion of total statewide clearing that is remnant vegetation has also increased, from 22 per cent in 2012-13, to 35 per cent of total statewide clearing in 2015-16.
15. In terms of non-remnant (i.e. regrowth) clearing, in 2015-16 the rate of non-remnant woody vegetation clearing was 257 000 hectares, an increase of 39 per cent from the 185 000 hectares cleared in 2014-15.
16. Clearing rates in Great Barrier Reef catchments have also increased from 109 000 hectares per year in 2014-15, to 158 000 hectares per year in the 2015-16 period which represents a 45 per cent increase.