

State Policy for Vegetation Management

Version 3

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1. Introduction

The State Policy for Vegetation Management has been prepared in accordance with Section 10 of the *Vegetation Management Act 1999* (VMA).

2. Purpose

This policy describes the outcomes for vegetation management and the actions proposed to achieve those outcomes.

3. Principles

This policy is based on the following principles:

- responsible land use
- support for regional communities
- balanced decision making
- conservation of biodiversity
- maintenance of ecological processes and services
- voluntary protection of vegetation.

4. Outcomes

This policy seeks to achieve the below outcomes in accordance with the purpose of the VMA.

4.1 Responsible land use

- Support the government's commitment to growing a four pillar economy based on construction, resources, agriculture and tourism through the responsible use of land and management of vegetation.
- Provide a self-regulated framework to enable landholders to responsibly manage their land for routine land management activities and to improve the operational efficiency of existing agricultural businesses.

4.2 Support regional communities

- Enable economic growth, particularly in the areas of agriculture and construction, whilst maintaining key environmental protections.
- Recognise regional variations in biodiversity, ecological processes and factors affecting land degradation in regulatory arrangements and procedures.
- Provide for necessary activities to prepare for the likelihood of natural disaster.
- Provide certainty and property scale planning for the management of vegetation using tools such as property maps of assessable vegetation (PMAVs).
- Ensure commercial timber resources on State land are recognised in the self-regulated framework.



4.3 Balanced decision making

- Balance the environmental considerations and beneficial land management outcomes when approving area management plans and developing self-assessable vegetation clearing codes.
- Make transparent, timely and balanced decisions on relevant purposes under section 22A of the VMA, PMAVs and area management plans.
- Provide special considerations for significant community projects when clearing regulated regrowth under the vegetation management framework.

4.4 Conservation of biodiversity

- Recognise that conservation of biodiversity can be achieved through responsible land management practices, including avoiding then minimising clearing of particular regional ecosystems, networks and corridors of vegetation, essential habitat, wetlands and watercourses.
- Provide for restoration of the ecological and environmental condition of land.
- Provide for the voluntary protection of vegetation to allow landholders to contribute to positive land management outcomes.

4.5 Maintenance of ecological processes and services


- Conserve vegetation to ensure that ecological processes are maintained across the landscape.
- Manage vegetation to assist the maintenance of the hydrological cycle, surface water and groundwater quality and quantity, and ground water levels.
- Conserve networks and corridors of vegetation.
- Maintain and manage riparian vegetation along waterways and reef catchments to improve water quality and mitigate nutrient and sediment run-off onto the Great Barrier Reef.

4.6 Ensure clearing does not cause land degradation

- Maintain the ecological integrity and physical stability of landscapes, including watercourses, wetlands and associated habitat.
- Manage vegetation to protect land from soil erosion, salinity and other forms of land degradation by regulating clearing.
- Provide for restoration of the ecological and environmental condition of land.

4.7 Manage the environmental effects of clearing that achieve the purpose of the VMA

- Provide for clearing and the environmental effects of clearing to be managed to achieve the outcomes 4.1 to 4.6 through area management plans and self-assessable vegetation clearing codes.

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- Balance the environmental considerations and beneficial land management outcomes when approving area management plans and developing self-assessable vegetation clearing codes.

5. Actions proposed to achieve outcomes

The outcomes will be achieved by:

5.1 Vegetation clearing for relevant purposes

- Applications for clearing vegetation under the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009* must only be for a relevant purpose under section 22A of the VMA.

5.2 Clearing under self-assessable vegetation clearing codes

- Self-assessable vegetation clearing codes provide opportunities for landholders to self-manage clearing for low-risk property management activities such as weed control, fodder harvesting, thinning and encroachment; and to improve the operational efficiency of existing agricultural activities, provided they comply with the code and notify the Department of Natural Resources and Mines prior to undertaking clearing activities, where required.
- Self-assessable vegetation clearing codes identify the required outcomes and practices, and voluntary best practice activities that are consistent with the outcomes of this policy. They also provide for the recognition of commercial timber if clearing on State land.
- Set out the circumstances when an exchange area must be provided.

5.3 Area management plans

- Area management plans enable landholders to address landscape or regional issues by managing their land for activities such as fodder harvesting, weed control, encroachment and thinning in accordance with the area management plan.
- Area management plans must be consistent with this policy.

5.4 Property maps of assessable vegetation

- PMAVs can provide certainty to landholders by providing a mechanism for amending the regulated vegetation management map.
- PMAVs can provide protection for vegetation which requires restoration.



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