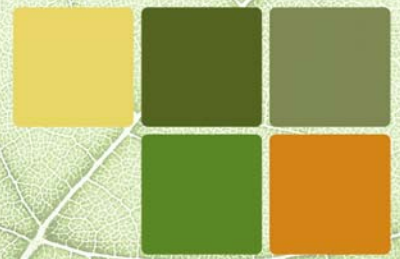


Review of the Native Vegetation Regulation



Fact Sheet 4: Clearing using a code of practice

The draft Regulation proposes a new group of Routine Agricultural Management Activities (RAMAs) that farmers can undertake without approval as long as they follow a code of practice.

These codes of practice RAMAs will allow management of Invasive Native Species (INS) using some treatments, thinning of dense vegetation, clearing of feral native plants and clearing for environmental works. These types of clearing have a low risk to the environment if they are done in accordance with the codes of practice.

Previously, farmers would have needed to go through a sometimes lengthy process of negotiating a Property Vegetation Property Plan (PVP) with the local catchment management authority (CMA) to get approval for many of these types of clearing. The proposed RAMAs will cut red tape and help rebuild the trust between government and landholders in the management of native vegetation.

A revitalised extension and education campaign from the CMAs will make sure that landholders have the information and support they need to understand what is required under the codes of practice before they begin clearing. The codes of practice, called 'ministerial orders' in the Regulation, will be made by the Minister and placed on the local CMA website where they apply. Before the Minister can make an order it must be released for public consultation to give the community the opportunity to comment.

Managing Invasive Native Species (INS)

Under the draft Regulation, farmers will be able to clear INS using certain techniques without needing approval from the CMA, as long as they follow the INS code of practice for their area. The INS codes of practice will allow clearing of INS using management burns, chemical spot treatment, stem injection, ringbarking or grubbing. Previously, farmers would have needed to get permission from the CMA through an INS PVP to use these techniques.

There will be an INS code of practice specific to each CMA in which INS occur. The INS codes of practice will list the species of INS for that CMA and describe how they can be cleared. A draft 'Code of Practice for the Management of INS in the Namoi CMA' has been released for public comment as an example of the proposed INS codes.

Farmers who want to undertake more substantial INS clearing using chaining, slashing, roping, blade-ploughing and short-term cropping will still need to contact their local CMA. Approval for INS management using these techniques will be provided by negotiating a PVP with the CMA. CMAs will assess this type of clearing using the existing INS assessment; no offsets will be required. CMAs will give a guarantee of service for how long these decisions will take.

For more information see clause 34 of the draft Regulation.

Would you like to have your say on the proposed changes?

To have your say on the proposed changes, send your comments to OEH by:

email: native.vegetation@environment.nsw.gov.au

post:

Native Vegetation Regulation Review
Level 12, PO Box A290 Sydney South NSW 1232

fax: (02) 9995 6791 (attn: Native Vegetation Regulation Review).

Please send your comments by **midnight Friday 24 August 2012** so that they can be considered in the development of the final Regulation and supporting documents.



Thinning dense vegetation

Under the draft Regulation farmers will be able to thin dense vegetation to a benchmark without needing CMA approval, as long as they follow a code of practice. Thinning native vegetation that has become dense helps reduce competition and encourage the remaining plants – especially groundcover – to grow. Previously, farmers needed to go through an often lengthy PVP process to get permission from the CMA to thin dense native vegetation. A draft 'Thinning to Benchmark Stem Densities Code of Practice' has been released for public comment. The code of practice describes when farmers are able to thin vegetation, which vegetation types may be thinned, and what clearing methods are allowed.

For more information see clause 36 of the draft Regulation.

Clearing feral native plant species

Under the draft Regulation the Minister can prepare a ministerial order that lists native plant species as feral. Farmers can clear feral native plant species without approval from the CMA if they follow the conditions set out in the ministerial order. The change proposed under the draft Regulation is to remove the duplicative step of the Minister consulting with the Natural Resources Commission before listing a species as feral. This step has been replaced with a single public consultation process.

For more information see clause 33 of the draft Regulation.

Clearing for environmental works

Under the draft Regulation landholders will be able to follow codes of practice to undertake environmental works, such as ecological burning, revegetation and rehabilitation, without needing CMA approval. This RAMA will make sure that government is not getting in the way of farmers of who want to undertake works that benefit the environment. Codes of practice for these environmental works will be developed following public consultation on the draft Regulation. These codes will be released for public comment before they are made by an order of the Minister for the Environment.

For more information see clause 35 of the draft Regulation.

More information

For more information, visit the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) website at www.environment.nsw.gov.au/vegetation/ReviewofNVRegulations.htm

On this website, you can download the consultation documents, including the draft Regulation and a regulatory impact statement examining the costs and benefits of the proposed changes. A range of fact sheets explaining the proposed changes, along with a 'frequently asked questions' page, is also available on the OEH website.

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