

Report under the NV Act 2003 in relation to a Minor Variation (clause 27 of the Native Vegetation Regulation 2005)

Accredited expert number: 30638

Qualifications: Salt Tools Developer

PVP reference numbers: 769

I am of the opinion that:

- a) a minor variation to the Assessment Methodology would result in a determination that the proposed clearing will improve or maintain environmental outcomes (other than a variation that is not allowable under this clause), and
- b) strict adherence to the Assessment Methodology is in the particular case unreasonable and unnecessary.

The proposed minor variation does not relate to any of the following aspects of the Assessment Methodology:

- a) riparian buffer distances or associated offset requirements,
- b) classification of vegetation as likely habitat for threatened species,
- c) classification of a plant species as a threatened species or a component of an endangered ecological community,
- d) classification of the condition of vegetation,
- e) classification of the vegetation type or landscape type as overcleared,
- f) the assessment of the regional value of vegetation.

Description of the proposed clearing:

In this application clearing involves the removal of paddock trees. Under the current assessment methodology, this proposal is automatically red-lighted because it occurs in a high salt store class.

Details of the proposed minor variation:

It is proposed that in this instance where clearing involves the removal of paddock trees, the clearing be green-lighted as their removal (from an otherwise cleared landscape) will have an insignificant impact on recharge and, hence, salt mobilisation and stream salinity outcomes.

Reasons for recommending the proposed minor variation:

The developers of the LSC and salinity assessment tools consider the hydrologic impact of removing paddock trees to be insignificant, hence having no impact on salinity outcomes. The PVP Developer salinity assessment tools are in the process of being changed to automatically green-light applications to clear paddock trees (as defined for the BioMetric tool) with respect to salinity outcomes. These changes have been considered by the NRC and been signed off by the Minister.

Recommendation: *That the proposal to clear paddock trees in this application be automatically green-lighted with respect to salinity outcomes.*