

## **SCHEDULE FOUR - Report under the Native Vegetation Act 2003 in relation to a Minor Variation (Clause 27 of the Native Vegetation Regulation 2005)**

This report has been prepared by a Level 3 Accredited Expert for the purposes of clause 27(4) of the Native Vegetation Regulation 2005.

Accreditation number: 30619

PVP Request number: 8164

### **Summary**

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 in this particular case is unreasonable and unnecessary.

The majority of the property within this determination is located within the Central West CMA and approximately one quarter of the property lies within the Western CMA area. The extent of Invasive Native Scrub (INS) on the property equates to approximately 6389 hectares. The Central West CMA is the statutory body undertaking the assessment for request 8164.

The proposed minor variation is to allow Red Box (*Eucalyptus intertexta*) which is behaving invasively in a section of the property that lies within the Western CMA to be treated across approximately 218 hectares. Red Box is listed as an Invasive Native Species (INS) in the Cobar Peneplain of the Western CMA, however it is not listed in the Central West CMA, hence a discretionary decision is required to allow the Central West CMA to approve for its' treatment.

The proposed minor variation improves or maintains environmental outcomes by creating a mosaic of native vegetation dominated by open woodland. The invasive native species that is subject to this minor variation includes Red Box (*Eucalytus intertexta*).

The minor variation [see Clause 27 of the Native Vegetation (NV) Regulation 2005] is to allow for Red Box (*Eucalyptus intertexta*) to be treated in the Western CMA, where Central West CMA is making the determination.

All tree species above 25 cm dbh in the area subject to INS treatment will be retained. All hollow bearing trees will be retained.

Strict adherence to the Assessment Methodology in this particular case is unreasonable and unnecessary due to the fact that Red Box is listed as an Invasive Native Species in the Western CMA and the area subject to the clearance of Red Box lies within the Western CMA.

A mosaic of vegetation states with open woodland and areas of dense vegetation in the retained areas will be created following INS treatment and include: (i) retention of tree species above 25 cm dbh; (ii) retention of patches of 20 ha per 100 ha of native vegetation (20% retention); and (iii) retention of all other native vegetation as required by the EOAM for the clearing type.

**Description of the proposed clearing:**

The Invasive Native Scrub (INS) Property Vegetation Plan (PVP) involves the management of INS species in the Cobar Peneplain IBRA region, and within both the Central West CMA and Western CMA area.

The following species are behaving invasively throughout the property and are subject to clearing in accordance with the Environmental Outcomes Assessment Methodology: Bimble Box (*Eucalyptus populnea*), White Cypress Pine (*Callitris glaucophylla*), Budda (*Eremophila mitchelli*) and Wilga (*Geijera parviflora*). Red Box (*Eucalyptus intertexta*) is behaving invasively in an area of the property that lies within the Western CMA and will also be subject to treatment under this determination. In the opinion of the Central West Catchment Management Authority (or an officer of that Authority responsible for making this assessment) the invasive native species in the area to be managed satisfy the criteria for acting invasively.

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 over-cleared,
- f) the assessment of the regional value of vegetation.

**Details of the proposed minor variation:**

The Invasive Native Scrub Assessment of the Environmental Outcomes Assessment Methodology (EAOM) requires the following:

Invasive native species for the purposes of this Chapter (Chapter 7) means a plant species that satisfies the following criteria:

- 1) The species is listed in Table 7.1 in respect of the Catchment Management Authority Area or the Catchment Management Authority Area and IBRA region to which the clearing proposal relates.

The minor variation is to allow for Red Box (*Eucalyptus intertexta*) to be included as an INS species, where the determination is being made by the Central West CMA.

**Reasons for recommending the proposed minor variation: (include evidence that the minor variation will improve or maintain environmental outcomes)**

Red Box (*Eucalyptus intertexta*) is listed as an INS species in the Cobar Peneplain area of the Western CMA and the area of land under this PVP where Red Box is behaving invasively is located within the Western CMA. The Central West CMA is the assessing body and seek to include Red Box as an INS species.

The INS Research Program being undertaken in the central west and western NSW has included vegetation sampling for stem densities and hollows by dbh class of INS species on the Cobar Peneplain of the Western Catchment. The results show that hollows do not usually occur in tree species under 30 cm dbh.

Therefore:

The proposed minor variation improves or maintains environmental outcomes because the species that are subject to the minor variation are dense in the dbh class up to 20 cm. All hollow bearing trees and all stems above 20 cm dbh in the area will be retained. The retention of all tree species above 20 cm dbh will create a mosaic of vegetation states (the goal of the INS assessment process) and improve or maintain environmental values.

**Minor variation**

The minor variation for PVP Request Number 8164 is to allow for the Central West CMA to include Red Box (*Eucalyptus intertexta*) as an INS species in an area that is located in the Cobar Penneplain of the Western CMA, and where the Central West CMA is the assessing body.