

Managing regulated regrowth vegetation

The moratorium on clearing high-value regrowth ended on 7 October 2009. The new arrangements protecting regrowth take effect from 8 October 2009.

The new regrowth laws strike the right balance by protecting vital regrowth and its high biodiversity values while allowing landholders to continue to manage their property responsibly.

What regrowth is affected?

Clearing in category X areas on property maps of assessable vegetation (PMAV) is unaffected by the regrowth laws.

High-value regrowth vegetation and regrowth watercourses are now regulated under the vegetation management framework and are shown on the regrowth vegetation map.

High-value regrowth vegetation is mature native vegetation that hasn't been cleared since 31 December 1989. Regrowth not shown on the regrowth map is exempt and is unaffected.

All native vegetation within 50 metres of a regrowth watercourse is regulated in priority Great Barrier Reef catchments.

The regrowth vegetation map is available on the Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) website <www.derm.qld.gov.au> or at departmental business centres.

Regrowth vegetation map

The regrowth vegetation map is the first place to look because it shows the areas where clearing must comply with the regrowth vegetation code unless the clearing is exempt.

What clearing is exempt?

Clearing for things such as fire management and fence lines no wider than 10 metres and infrastructure like yards and buildings less than two hectares is exempt. Burning vegetation to reduce hazardous fuel loads is also exempt.

Landholders can find out if their clearing qualifies for an exemption from the DERM website <www.derm.qld.gov.au>.

The regrowth vegetation code

Any clearing that is not exempt must be carried out under the regrowth vegetation code. Landholders do not need to apply for a permit to clear regrowth vegetation under the code—they only need to notify DERM and follow the requirements set out in the code.

Under the code, most clearing can occur in 'of concern' and 'least concern' regional ecosystems on freehold land. It can also occur in 'least concern' regional ecosystems on leasehold land for agricultural and grazing purposes. The regrowth map shows the locations of these regional ecosystems.

However the code protects habitat for threatened species, vegetation near creeks and wetlands and on steep slopes. The code also protects native vegetation up to 50 metres from regrowth watercourses. Clearing for infrastructure, weed control, thinning and encroachment is permitted under the code.

What if the map is incorrect?

It is important to note that the satellite images used to create the regrowth vegetation maps may have been taken of areas that have since been legitimately cleared. This means that in some cases, areas may not contain a regional ecosystem.

The maps must not be read in isolation and should be considered with the legislation and what is on the ground. Landholders can apply for a PMAV if they want to clarify what is on the ground. If landholders have any concerns they should contact DERM.

Special provisions

If any farm business is made unviable by the new regrowth laws, special provisions may apply that allow for an assessment to permit clearing of protected regrowth vegetation.

Government commitment

The Queensland Government has committed \$2 million for partnerships with industry to assist landholders to understand the new arrangements and encourage best management practice.

Further information

Further information on the new regrowth vegetation laws is available on the DERM website at <www.derm.qld.gov.au>.

Landholders can also contact their local departmental business centre by calling 13 13 04 (8.30 am to 4.30 pm, Monday to Friday).

For general enquiries contact the
Queensland Government call centre 13 13 04
or visit www.derm.qld.gov.au

