

# Analysis of Woody Vegetation Clearing Rates in Queensland

Supplementary report to  
Land cover change in  
Queensland 2008–09

Prepared by:

Vegetation Management

Department of Environment and Resource Management

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# Message from the Minister

Vegetation clearing rates and patterns have been analysed through the Statewide Landcover and Trees Study (SLATS) since the late 1980s, using world-leading science based on satellite imagery. The information on land clearing rates collected through these studies formed a major driver for the introduction of the *Vegetation Management Act 1999* (VMA) in September 2000. Since that time, SLATS studies have shown a fall in woody vegetation clearing rates in Queensland from around 750 000 hectares per year (ha/yr) in 1999–2000 to 123 000 ha/yr in 2007–08.

This report describes the composition of the clearing and analyses the effect of Queensland’s vegetation management laws and policies on clearing rates. This latest analysis of the 2008–09 period—the second full year of reporting since broadscale clearing of remnant vegetation ended in December 2006—shows that clearing rates have declined again by nearly 19 per cent to approximately 99 900 ha/yr. This is a significant milestone, as it is the first time the vegetation clearing rates have fallen below 100 000 ha/yr since satellite analysis began.

This long term reduction in clearing represents a decline in greenhouse gas emissions of approximately 72 per cent, falling from an estimated 60 mega tonnes (Mt) of emissions when the end to broadscale clearing was first proposed in 2003–04, to an estimated 17 Mt in 2008–09.

In October 2009, the vegetation management laws were extended to protect high-value regrowth vegetation not cleared since 31 December 1989, and all regrowth vegetation along watercourses in priority Great Barrier Reef catchments. These regrowth reforms have not been considered in the compilation of this supplementary report analysis as the 2008–09 Landcover change in Queensland—Statewide Landcover and Trees Study (2008–09 SLATS report) covers a period prior to the commencement of these reforms. Analysis of the regrowth reforms will form part of the 2009–10 SLATS Supplementary Report.

The findings in this report demonstrate the effectiveness of Queensland’s vegetation management policy framework since its inception, particularly in protecting biodiversity, preventing land degradation and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Queensland’s draft biodiversity strategy—Building Nature’s Resilience—recognises the importance of a whole-of-landscape approach to the maintenance of biodiversity in which the extent, condition and connectivity of ecosystems are valued and protected across the state.

This report demonstrates the significant progress that Queensland has made to addressing declining biodiversity across an area of the state exceeding 70 million hectares. Along with the Government’s other significant commitments—a world class network of protected areas and protection of our threatened and iconic species—our strong action to end broadscale clearing is delivering real results for Queensland’s unique biodiversity and for our State’s future resilience.

**Kate Jones MP**

**Minister for Environment and Resource Management**

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## Executive summary

This report is a supplementary report to the 2008–09 SLATS report. The supplementary report is intended to identify trends in clearing associated with the *Vegetation Management Act 1999* (VMA). The report analyses trends in clearing within woody vegetation that has been done under a permit, as an exemption (where a permit is not required) or is unexplained during the 2008–09 period. The Department of Environment and Resource Management (the department) has been producing SLATS reports since the commencement of the VMA in 2000. This is the second supplementary report that evaluates the success of the vegetation management framework in achieving the objectives of the VMA.

Clearing of woody vegetation in the 2008–09 period was approximately 99 900 hectares per year (ha/yr). This is a 19 per cent decrease from the 123 000 ha/yr clearing rate in 2007–08.

The rate of clearing in areas mapped as remnant vegetation has fallen from approximately 56 000 ha/yr in 2007–08 to 37 600 ha/yr in 2008–09, while the rate of clearing in areas mapped as non-remnant vegetation has fallen from approximately 67 000 ha/yr to 62 300 ha/yr over the same period.

Analysis shows that 89 per cent of all clearing has been done lawfully either under a valid clearing permit or an exemption under the vegetation management framework.

The rate of clearing of woody vegetation under permit during the 2008–09 period was 37 700 ha/yr (17 300ha/yr in remnant and 20 400 ha/yr in non-remnant vegetation). The majority of this clearing was for the purpose of fodder harvesting to feed livestock, clearing of woody vegetation encroaching onto natural grasslands and clearing regrowth vegetation on leasehold land. Most of the clearing was undertaken in drought declared shires which indicates a link between the clearing and drought conditions. All permitted clearing—including that for fodder harvesting—is subject to code assessment which ensures that clearing is undertaken in a sustainable manner while the most sensitive parts of the landscape are protected.

Exempt clearing in remnant vegetation is approximately 11 000 ha/yr for the 2008–09 period. Exempt clearing includes clearing for infrastructure like fences or roads, selective harvesting of native forests on freehold land, mining and urban residential development. The clearing recorded in this process includes not only clearing that totally removes vegetative cover as is the case for infrastructure or mining, but also includes canopy thinning as a result of selective timber harvesting.

The clearing carried out under permit or exemption is considered to represent the underlying ‘background’ clearing allowed under Queensland’s vegetation management laws. This rate is not expected to change significantly unless affected by extreme climatic or economic influences.

The nature of some clearing makes it difficult to determine (using remote techniques) whether it is unlawful or exempt. There is uncertainty about the nature of clearing for about 11 000 ha/yr which is called ‘unexplained’ clearing in this report. Detailed analysis is required to determine the extent of exempt clearing in these areas. Areas that are unexplained will be prioritised for investigation and, where an offence has been found to occur, appropriate compliance responses will be undertaken.

The level of carbon dioxide emissions from clearing has generally followed the reduction in clearing rates, reducing from 24 Mt<sup>1</sup> (Mt) in 2007–08 to 17 Mt in 2008–09. Emissions of carbon dioxide from the clearing of woody vegetation in the 2008–09 reporting period represent a 43 Mt reduction compared to the 60 Mt recorded at the time of the Queensland Government’s commitment to end broadscale clearing in 2003.

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<sup>1</sup> This figure was previously reported at 32 Mt in the 2006–07 SLATS report. All previous emissions have been recalculated using a new, more accurate formula (Armston *et al.*, (2009), resulting in a revision upwards on average of 11 per cent for carbon dioxide emissions

## Introduction

The vegetation management framework, including the *Vegetation Management Act 1999* (VMA), regulates clearing of native woody vegetation in Queensland. This supplementary report provides an analysis of the clearing trends identified in the SLATS report in relation to the VMA. This report is one of the major tools for assessing the success of the VMA in protecting Queensland's native vegetation.

In the 2008–09 period, areas of mapped remnant vegetation were protected from broadscale clearing. This report outlines the second full reporting period since the end of broadscale clearing permits on 31 December 2006.

In the 2008–09 reporting period, the vegetation management laws also protected mature regrowth vegetation on leasehold land for agriculture and grazing purposes and all native woody vegetation on particular State land tenures including roads and unallocated State Land.

In April 2009, the Queensland Government placed a moratorium on clearing endangered regrowth vegetation and all regrowth vegetation along watercourses in priority reef catchments. In October 2009, the vegetation management laws were changed to extend protection of high-value regrowth vegetation not cleared since 31 December 1989 on freehold land, and protect all regrowth vegetation along watercourses in priority reef catchments. While this reporting period covers the first three months of the moratorium, the new regrowth clearing reforms are not included. The effects of these reforms on clearing rates will be considered as part of the 2009–10 SLATS Supplementary Report.

# Ten year overview of the *Vegetation Management Act 1999*

The Queensland vegetation management framework has demonstrated its effectiveness in protecting the State's native vegetation since the introduction of the VMA in late 2000, and subsequent amendments over the past 10 years.

Prior to the introduction of the VMA, SLATS reports showed that up to 750 000ha/yr of woody vegetation was being cleared, of which 70 000 ha/yr was cleared for conversion to pasture. The effects of these clearing rates on biodiversity, water quality and land degradation caused major public concern resulting in the introduction of the VMA.

Ongoing clearing rates after 2000 resulted in the Queensland Government placing a moratorium on broadscale clearing applications in 2003.

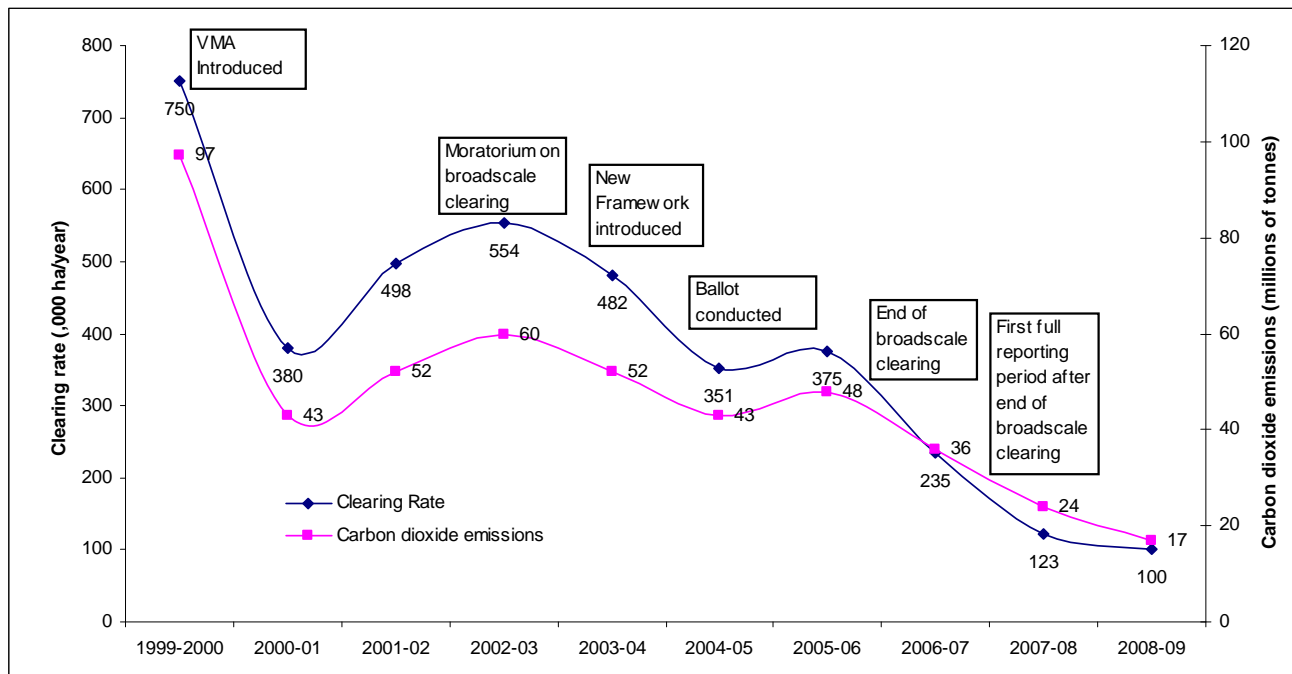
In 2004, amendments were made to the VMA to phase out broadscale clearing of remnant vegetation by the end of 2006 while still allowing clearing for rural property management such as weed control and fodder harvesting. This reform has meant that the vegetation management framework now protects about 70 million ha of woody remnant vegetation in Queensland from broadscale clearing. These reforms also included other significant improvements to the protection of native vegetation by aligning arrangements for leasehold and freehold land and assessment of clearing associated with applications to change land from non-urban to urban uses. These amendments resulted in clearing rates being reduced from a high of 750 000 ha/yr in 1999-2000 to 99 900 ha/yr in 2008-09. See Figure 1 below which shows the effect of the VMA on clearing rates.

Following concerns over the ongoing rate of regrowth clearing, the Queensland Government introduced a moratorium on clearing endangered regrowth vegetation while it consulted with stakeholders on the best way to manage regrowth. Following the moratorium, the clearing of high-value regrowth vegetation<sup>2</sup>, and also the clearing of all regrowth vegetation within 50 metres of watercourses in the priority Great Barrier Reef catchments became regulated through a self assessable code.

The effect of the regrowth clearing reforms will be analysed in subsequent SLATS and supplementary reports. However, it can be anticipated that they will achieve a further reduction in the overall clearing rate of non-remnant woody vegetation.

Associated with this decrease in clearing, there has been a 72 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from approximately 60 Mt in 2003-04 to 17 Mt in 2008-09. These reductions not only demonstrated that the vegetation management reforms were a significant milestone for the protection of natural resources in Queensland, but the associated carbon emissions reductions places Australia in a stronger position to meet its Kyoto Protocol obligations.

**Figure 1: Summary of woody vegetation clearing rates and carbon dioxide emissions in relation to VMA legislation reforms**



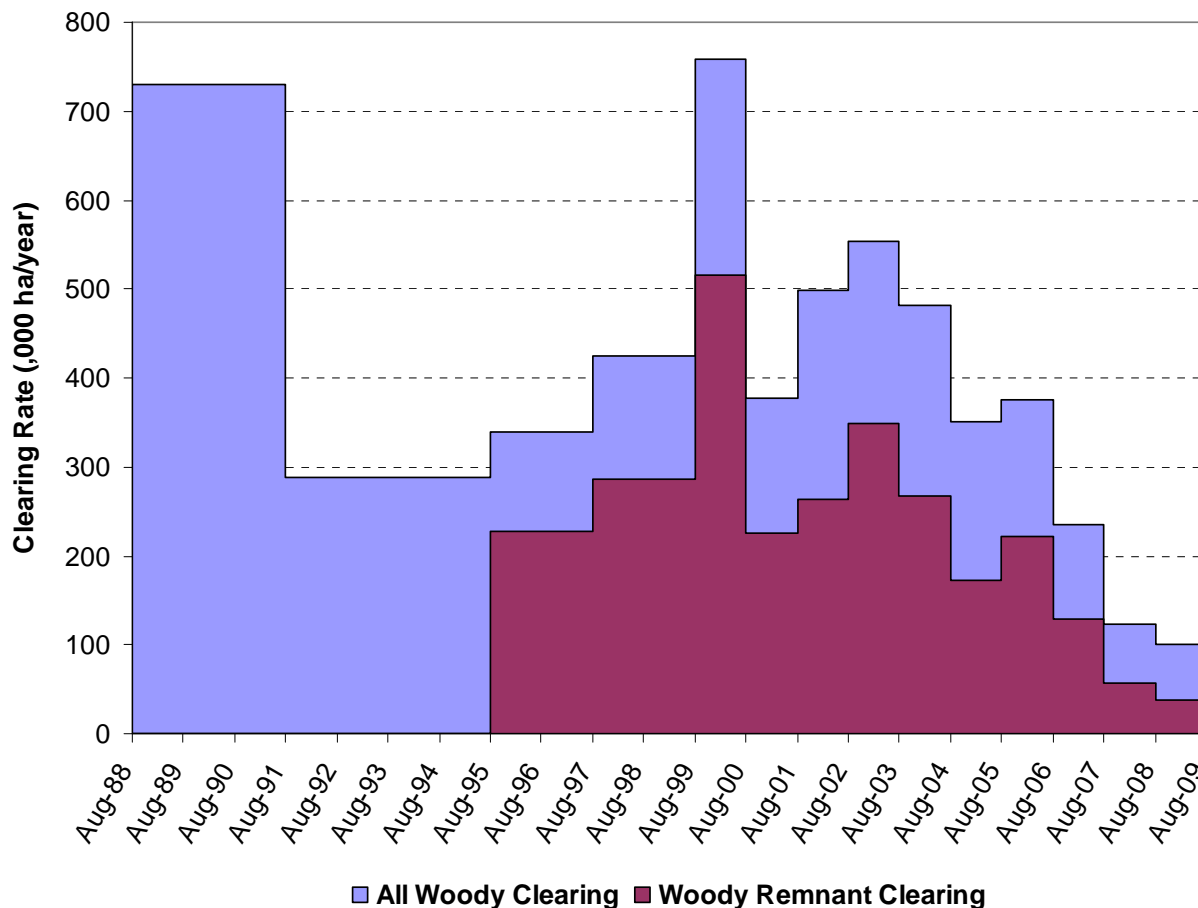
<sup>2</sup> High-value regrowth vegetation can include endangered regional ecosystems (REs), of concern REs or least concern REs that have not been cleared since 31 December 1989 and are shown on the regrowth vegetation map.

# Overview of vegetation clearing in Queensland

## Overall clearing rate in 2008–09

The overall rate of clearing of woody vegetation has fallen from 123 000 ha/yr in 2007–08 to 99 900 ha/yr in 2008–09—a 19 per cent reduction, and a reduction since 1999–2000 of 87 per cent. This is the first time vegetation clearing rates have fallen below 100 000 ha/yr in Queensland since satellite analysis began. See figure 2.

Figure 2: Annual woody vegetation clearing rate



## Extent of woody remnant clearing in Queensland

The area of Queensland is about 173 million hectares (ha). Of this, about 140 million ha is mapped as remnant vegetation, of which some 70 million ha is woody remnant vegetation protected from broadscale clearing by the vegetation management framework. The remaining 70 million hectares is predominantly grasslands with little or no woody vegetation or protected areas under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*.

The 37 600 ha/yr of clearing in remnant vegetation detected in the 2008–09 period equates to a decrease in the extent of woody remnant vegetation by 0.05 per cent over this period. This is a further reduction from 0.07 per cent decrease in the extent of woody remnant vegetation when comparing the 2007–08 period with 2006–07 period. It is expected that over time this reduction will continue as regrowth vegetation matures and is later mapped as remnant vegetation.

## Clearing by tenure

Clearing of woody vegetation on freehold land has reduced from 63 900 ha/yr in 2007–08 to 45 100 ha/yr in 2008–09, while clearing on leasehold land for the same period has slightly increased. For the first time since 2000–01, the amount of woody

vegetation cleared on leasehold land<sup>3</sup> (48 900 ha/yr) has exceeded that cleared on freehold land (45 100 ha/yr).

This is likely due to the majority of permitted clearing occurring on leasehold tenures for the purposes of fodder harvesting during drought conditions and reclearing of unregulated regrowth to maintain pasture.

## **Clearing in priority Great Barrier Reef catchments**

Clearing in reef catchments has reduced from 12 200 ha/yr in the 2007–08 period to 10 700 ha/yr in the 2008–09 period (approximately a 12 per cent reduction).

The 2009 regrowth reforms have resulted in the regulation of high-value regrowth vegetation clearing, and also clearing of all regrowth vegetation within 50 metres of watercourses in the priority Great Barrier Reef catchments (i.e. the Burdekin, Mackay-Whitsundays and Wet Tropics catchments). These reforms are expected to further reduce the rate of clearing in reef catchments in the 2009–10 period and beyond, which will assist in achieving the Queensland Government’s aim of reducing the amount of sediments and pollutants reaching the Great Barrier Reef.

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<sup>3</sup> Includes roads and rivers but not including Commonwealth lands, mining, main roads, railways, ports, state forest, timber reserves and national parks.

## Vegetation clearing regulated under the vegetation management framework

The VMA regulates the clearing of woody remnant and non-remnant vegetation. Clearing of native vegetation that is regulated under the vegetation management framework may be done lawfully under a permit or without approval under an exemption. Clearing that is not identified as exempt or approved under a permit is identified in this report as 'unexplained clearing'. This unexplained clearing will be further analysed and, if warranted, will be subject to formal investigation and compliance action by the department if found to be unlawful.

Table 2 shows the clearing rates of remnant and non-remnant woody vegetation under exemptions, permit and unexplained clearing in each bioregion in Queensland. The majority of clearing in each category was in the Brigalow Belt and Mulga Lands bioregions.

**Table 1: Woody vegetation clearing rate in areas of remnant vegetation and non-remnant vegetation in 2008-09\***

Bioregion	Exempt Clearing (ha/yr)	Permitted Clearing (ha/yr)	Unexplained Clearing (ha/yr)
Brigalow Belt	25 567	11 255	5 997
Cape York Peninsula	1 726	155	215
Central Queensland Coast	630	127	168
Channel Country	12	100	5
Desert Uplands	1 614	877	510
Einasleigh Uplands	1 360	450	496
Gulf Plains	270	103	259
Mitchell Grass Downs	2 798	7 902	722
Mulga Lands	7 810	16 001	1 449
New England Tableland	1 368	10	104
North West Highlands	91	4	8
South East Queensland	7 716	641	994
Wet Tropical Rainforest	310	33	80
Total	51 272	37 658	11 007

\*Based on regional ecosystem mapping version 6.0b

The 2008–09 period represents the second full SLATS reporting period after the end of broadscale clearing in Queensland. Clearing in remnant vegetation has fallen from 56 000 ha/yr in 2007-08 to 37 600 ha/yr in 2008–09, which is a 33 per cent reduction. Clearing in woody non-remnant vegetation also reduced from 67 000 to 62 300 over the same period (see Table 1).

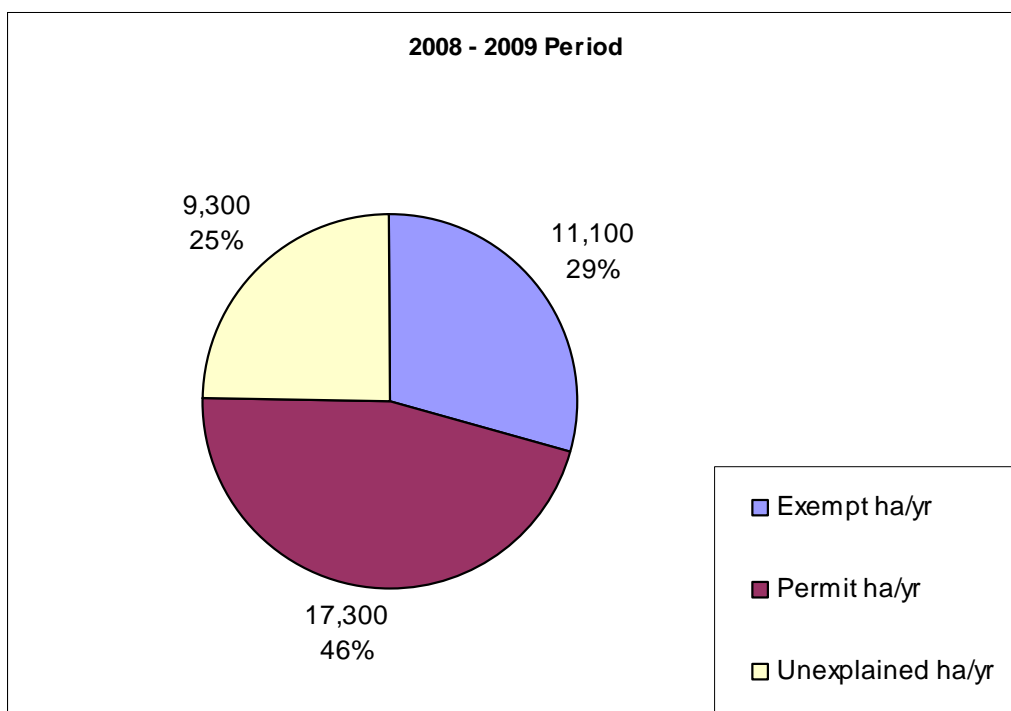
**Table 2: Woody vegetation clearing rate in areas of remnant vegetation and non-remnant vegetation\***

Type of woody vegetation	Clearing rate (ha/yr) 2007–08	Clearing rate (ha/yr) 2008–09
Remnant vegetation	56 000	37 600
Non-remnant vegetation	67 000	62 300
Total	123 000	99 900

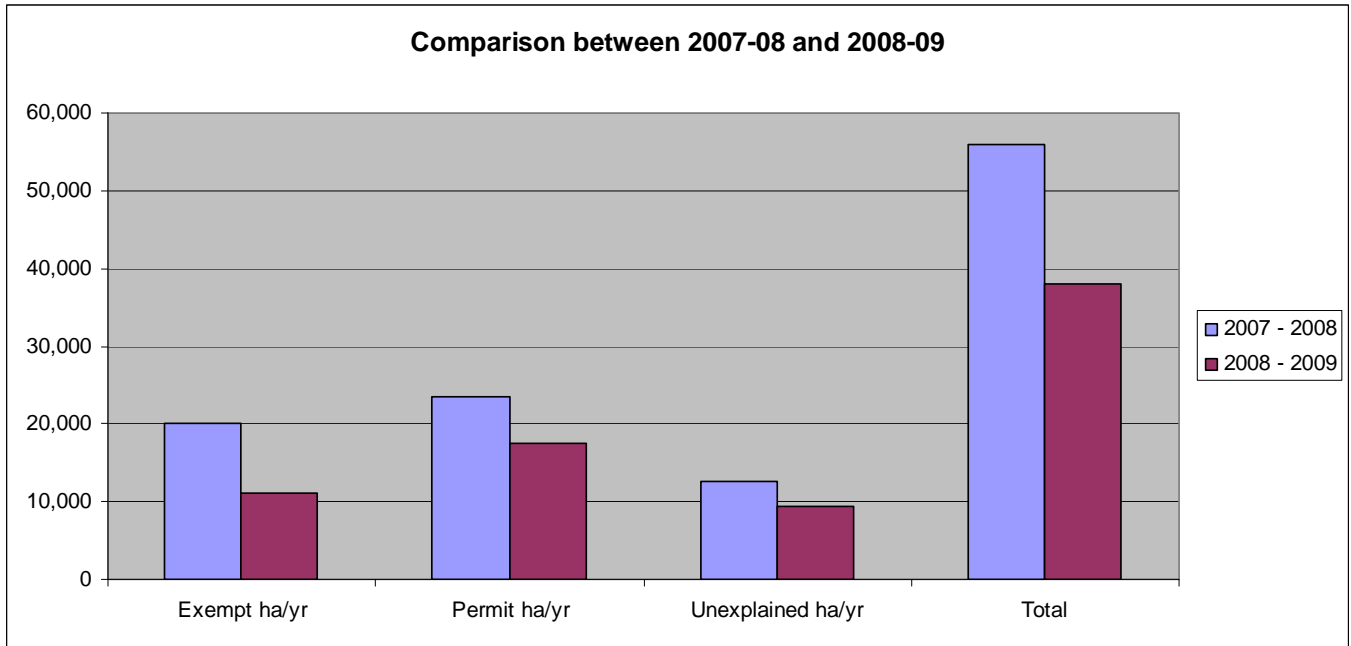
\*Based on regional ecosystem mapping version 6.0b

Of the total clearing rate for woody remnant vegetation in 2008–09, about 17 300 ha/yr was associated with a permit, 11 100 ha/yr was estimated to be exempt clearing, and 9300 ha/yr is unexplained. This is represented in Figure 3. Clearing in all of these categories has reduced from the 2007–08 period as shown in Figure 4.

**Figure 3: Type of woody remnant vegetation clearing rate (ha/yr) in the 2008–09 period**



**Figure 4: Comparison of woody remnant vegetation clearing between 2007–08 and 2008–09**



Approximately 83 per cent of the clearing in remnant vegetation in 2008–09 was within a ‘least concern’ regional ecosystem, while about 13 per cent and 4 per cent were within ‘of concern’ and ‘endangered’ regional ecosystems respectively.

Clearing will continue to occur in areas of remnant vegetation for a range of lawful purposes, which include:

- clearing associated with permits for essential infrastructure
- fodder harvesting
- thinning
- exemptions such as mining, and routine property management activities (e.g. clearing to construct fence lines, roads and firebreaks).

Many of these clearing activities and purposes involve selective clearing within remnant vegetation that does not result in the complete removal of vegetation from the landscape. It is expected that future clearing in remnant vegetation will reach a steady and consistent rate. However, this will be counterbalanced to some extent by protected regrowth becoming mature and mapped as remnant vegetation over time.

## Clearing woody remnant vegetation under permits

During the 2008–09 period, clearing under permit occurred at a rate of 17 300 ha/yr and accounted for approximately 46 per cent of the total rate of remnant vegetation clearing.

Clearing activities authorised by permit under the vegetation management framework are restricted to ‘relevant purposes’ prescribed in the VMA. Any permit issued under the framework is subject to assessment under statutory codes. Purposes for which these permits can be issued include clearing for thinning, encroachment, fodder harvesting, constructing infrastructure, public safety, State significant projects, controlling non-native weeds, and extractive industries.

About 87 per cent of clearing under permit in remnant vegetation during the 2008–09 was for the purpose of:

- fodder harvesting (65 per cent)
- clearing woody vegetation encroaching onto natural grasslands (12 per cent)
- thinning regional ecosystems that had thickened to unnatural levels (10 per cent).

Fodder clearing occurs to provide food for livestock during times of drought. This relatively high rate of fodder clearing correlates with over 50 per cent of the State’s land area being officially drought declared during the reporting period.

Permitted clearing within remnant vegetation for fodder harvesting and thinning are authorised under the framework in a way that does not allow the total removal of vegetation in the landscape. The vegetation management framework is also designed in a way to ensure that the areas cleared under permit for these purposes are maintained as protected. In addition, permit conditions require that these areas are allowed to regenerate to vegetation that is similar to the vegetation cleared and not

utilised or developed for another purpose.

It is expected that future clearing approved under permits will continue at a similar rate for each of these relevant purposes. However, variability will occur, particularly for the amount of clearing associated with fodder permits because these permits are influenced by seasonal conditions.

Clearing under permit for other purposes such as clearing necessary for infrastructure, public safety, significant projects and extractive industries generally results in the complete removal of woody vegetation. About 11 per cent of clearing in remnant vegetation under a permit was for these purposes. Permit conditions in some of these circumstances require that the clearing be offset through the protection or restoration of other vegetation to ensure that there is no net loss of vegetation in the long term.



Photo 1: Forest previously cleared, showing dense regeneration where thinning could be considered to restore the regional ecosystem.



Photo 2: Thinning, leaving a multilayered mix of size and age classes

## Exempt clearing in woody remnant vegetation

Clearing of remnant vegetation can occur without the need for approval if it is exempt under the vegetation management framework. Approximately 11 100 ha/yr or 29 per cent of all remnant vegetation clearing in the 2008–09 period was exempt from requiring approval under the vegetation management framework.

Some types of activities, such as mining or activities on State forests are exempt from the VMA because they are regulated under other State legislation. In 2008–09, approximately 1 800 ha/yr of clearing in woody remnant vegetation was associated with mining and 4 500 ha/yr for forestry practices in State forest reserves. The amount of clearing occurring for these activities represents about 17 per cent of all clearing in remnant vegetation.

Exemptions under the vegetation management framework allow landholders and public authorities to carry out routine activities such as the establishment and maintenance of residences on existing lots, sheds, roads, fences, firebreaks and farm dams. Approximately 4 100 ha/yr was identified as linear clearing and considered exempt clearing for roads fences and fire management.

Clearing can also occur in remnant vegetation to conduct sustainable forest practices. These activities must meet requirements under a code which ensures that the impacts of all forestry activities on freehold land are mitigated to protect the biodiversity values, prevent any land degradation and ensure remnant status will be maintained over time.



Photo 3: Selective harvesting under native forest practice on freehold land, leaving multilayered stands

## Unexplained clearing in woody remnant vegetation

The nature of some clearing makes it difficult to determine (using remote satellite imagery techniques) if it is unlawful or exempt. This is called ‘unexplained’ clearing, in this report, where detailed property scale analysis is required to determine the extent of exempt clearing in these areas.

A clearing rate of approximately 9 300 ha/yr within woody remnant vegetation has been identified as unexplained clearing in the 2008–09 period. This is a reduction from the 12 500 ha/yr identified in the 2007–08 period. There was also a decline in the number of large unexplained clearing events (greater than 100 ha/yr) from 16 individual properties in the 2007–08 period to 10 in the 2008–09 period. Figure 5 shows the unexplained clearing events that occurred across Queensland in the 2008–09 period relative to their size.

The highest rates of unexplained clearing occurred in the southern parts of the Brigalow Belt bioregion and northern parts of the Mulga Lands bioregion.

The unexplained clearing identified in the 2008–09 period will be prioritised for further site specific analysis. This further analysis and prioritisation will be undertaken to determine if clearing activities have been undertaken lawfully or if they require formal investigation. Larger clearing events will be a priority for further analysis. During the 2007–08 period, the total clearing rate for woody remnant vegetation of 56 000 ha/yr comprised 23 500 ha/yr associated with a permit, 20 000 ha/yr exempt and 12 500 ha/yr of unexplained clearing.

In 2007–08 there was 12 500 ha/yr of unexplained clearing. Following more detailed property scale analysis 1600 ha/yr was exempt clearing. Of the remaining 10 900 ha/yr, the highest priority cases have been identified and are being formally investigated by the department to determine if any unlawful clearing occurred.

Compliance action will be implemented where appropriate, based on the scale of clearing and the biodiversity value of the vegetation cleared. Compliance actions under the vegetation management framework can range from advice and warning letters to landholders through to restoration notices and prosecution.

## Clearing in areas of woody non-remnant vegetation

The total clearing of woody vegetation within areas mapped as non-remnant vegetation was approximately 62 300 ha/yr or 62 per cent of the total woody vegetation clearing rate in the 2008–09 period, a decline from 67 000 ha/yr in the 2007–08 period.

Approximately 97 per cent of the clearing identified within non-remnant woody vegetation during the 2008–09 period was carried out under an exemption or a permit. Some of this clearing involved repeat clearing to control vegetation that had regrown after the initial clearing event. An example of this is the re-clearing of Brigalow (*Acacia harpophylla*) regrowth on a 5–10 year cycle following the initial clearing event. It is estimated that approximately 15 per cent of all non-remnant woody vegetation clearing in 2008–09 was repeat clearing, which is similar to the 14 per cent identified in the 2007–08 period.

Property Maps of Assessable Vegetation (PMAVs) allow landholders to better determine their vegetation boundaries at a property scale and to lock in areas of unprotected vegetation as category X. No approval is required to clear in category X areas which gives landholders certainty to be able to manage woody vegetation in these areas over time. Over half of the clearing within woody non-remnant vegetation for the 2008–09 period was done in areas identified as category X on a PMAV.

Approximately 1700 ha/yr of unexplained clearing occurred in non-remnant woody vegetation. These clearing events occurred before the introduction of the state’s new regrowth reforms and will be prioritised for analysis and investigation, in conjunction with clearing in areas identified as remnant vegetation.

## Reduction in carbon dioxide emissions

In the 2002–03 period, the Queensland Government committed to reducing carbon dioxide emissions from clearing by 20 Mt by 2008. Since that time, carbon dioxide emissions arising from clearing of vegetation have decreased from approximately 60 Mt to 17 Mt in the 2008–09 period, a reduction of 43 Mt (Figure 1). This reduction is equivalent to removing about 11.5 million medium-sized vehicles off the road for a year—a significant achievement considering there are currently around 3.4 million registered vehicles in Queensland.

In the 2007–08 and the 2008–09 periods, emission rates for clearing vegetation decreased proportionally more than clearing rates. This is due to the fact that areas cleared each year are made up of a diversity of vegetation types which vary in the amount of carbon that they store. The areas cleared in 2008–09 stored less carbon per hectare compared to the previous years.

Emissions calculated from the national carbon accounting system (NCAS) are likely to differ from SLATS estimates because of different methodologies and estimates of areas cleared. In addition, NCAS calculates carbon flows from other sources such as vegetation decay, soil carbon changes and carbon stored in new regrowth, and accounts for delayed emissions. SLATS emission calculations are based solely on cleared biomass.

## **The vegetation management framework and its impact on vegetation clearing rates**

Queensland's vegetation management framework has resulted in a significant reduction in clearing rates and associated carbon dioxide emissions since its inception. Woody vegetation clearing rates have fallen from the peak of approximately 750 000 ha/yr between 1999–2000 to 99 900 ha/yr in the 2008–09 period (see Figure 1 and Figure 2).

Future clearing of remnant vegetation and the associated emissions are expected to remain stable and similar to the levels observed during the 2008–09 period. Future SLATS reporting periods are expected to again identify legitimate clearing associated with permits and exemptions under the vegetation management framework. Recent amendments to the framework in relation to regrowth clearing are expected to further reduce clearing rates of woody non-remnant vegetation over time.

The 2008–09 clearing rates lead to a reduction of woody remnant vegetation by 0.05 per cent or one hectare in every 2000 ha. The requirements of the VMA will ensure that over half of this clearing within remnant vegetation will remain protected and overtime regenerate back to remnant vegetation. In addition, protected regrowth vegetation will over time become mature and add to the extent of remnant vegetation.

The vegetation management framework will continue to ensure that Queensland's diverse vegetation is protected into the future, significantly reducing impacts on the environment—including carbon dioxide emissions, while allowing essential development and land management practices to continue.

Figure 5: Location and size of unexplained clearing events in Queensland in 2008–09

