

Routine Agricultural Management Activities on Private Native Forestry Land

This fact sheet applies only to those areas of a property that are covered by an approved Private Native Forestry Property Vegetation Plan (PNF PVP).



Photo: A boundary fence near Coffs Harbour (EPA);

What are routine agricultural management activities?

Routine agricultural management activities (RAMAs) include farming, safety and other activities where clearing of native vegetation does not require approval under the *Native Vegetation Act 2003*, provided that:

- clearing is done to the minimum extent necessary and within specified distance limitations where they apply, and
- any other approvals necessary for the work, such as building approval, are first obtained.

RAMAs can cover a wide range of activities, including clearing of noxious weeds, non-commercial collection of firewood, and lopping of native vegetation for stock fodder. Your local Catchment Management Authority has general information about RAMAs in your area.

RAMAs also include the construction, operation and maintenance of rural infrastructure. The amount of clearing permitted for rural infrastructure RAMAs is limited on land subject to a PNF PVP.

How do the PNF Code and RAMAs work together?

Under the *Native Vegetation Act 2003*, harvesting and associated forestry operations conducted for the purposes of PNF require an approved PNF PVP. The PNF Code of Practice (the Code) sets the requirements for how native forest areas identified under a PNF PVP must be managed.

Although the Code sets operating requirements for all areas of native forest covered by an approved PNF PVP, a landholder may clear small amounts of native vegetation in the areas covered by the PNF PVP for everyday farm management (i.e. for RAMA purposes).

This fact sheet explains **the types** of rural infrastructure for which you may clear for on land that is covered by a PNF PVP, and the **distance limitations** that apply to that clearing.



Photo: An excavator on a log dump (DPI).

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Construction, operation and maintenance of rural infrastructure in a PNF PVP area

Under the 'rural infrastructure RAMA', landholders may clear land for construction, operation and maintenance of the following rural infrastructure only:

- permanent boundary fence: 6 metres either side
- permanent internal fence: 6 metres total width of clearing
- farm roads and tracks: in accordance with the Code
- pipeline: 3 metres total width of clearing
- ground tank: 15 metres from outer edge of structure
- pumps: 3 metres from outer edge of structure
- tanks: 3 metres from outer edge of structure
- water point: 3 metres from outer edge of structure
- dam: 15 metres from outer edge of structure
- bore: 10 metres from outer edge of structure
- stockyard: 20 metres from outer edge of structure.

These distances or areas are the maximum ones allowable. As with any other RAMA, landholders must clear only to the minimum extent needed for construction, operation or maintenance of the works.

Following changes to the Native Vegetation Regulation in 2013, PNF PVP landholders clearing under the rural infrastructure RAMA in non-critical environmental areas are now required to implement minimum tree retention rates set out in clause 4.2 of the PNF Code of Practice. The change does not apply in critical environmental areas (riparian exclusion zones, old growth forest, rainforest, or on steep land) because these areas are already protected from logging under the PNF Code.

Landholders may not clear for any other type of rural infrastructure within the identified PNF PVP area. For example, landholders may not clear for construction of a windmill on land subject to a PNF PVP.

Can any of these distances or areas be increased?

Landholders may apply to the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) for approval to increase the distances or areas specified for the types of rural infrastructure listed above. The request may be approved if the EPA is satisfied that the clearing the landholder is proposing is minor, for a legitimate purpose, and necessary in the circumstances.

Can I clear along creeks, in old-growth forest or rainforest, or on steep land for rural infrastructure?

Clearing for rural infrastructure in a riparian exclusion zone, an old-growth forest or a rainforest, or on steep land (i.e. on a slope of more than 30°), is permitted only when this clearing is directly associated with the operation and/or maintenance of that infrastructure.

Landholders are not permitted to construct new infrastructure in these areas.

Can I apply to clear native vegetation to construct rural infrastructure along creeks, in old-growth forest or rainforest, or on steep land?

Landholders may apply to the EPA for approval to clear native vegetation for new construction of rural infrastructure within the areas or distances specified in the list above. The request may be approved if the EPA is satisfied that the clearing you are proposing is minor, for a legitimate purpose, and necessary in the circumstances.

Can I clear native vegetation for any other RAMA on land with an approved PNF PVP?

There are many types of RAMAs under the *Native Vegetation Act 2003*. These can be applied to land covered under a PNF PVP. For further information see www.environment.nsw.gov.au/vegetation/nvmanagement.htm.

More information

For more information:

- **Phone** the EPA on 131 555
- **email** forestry@epa.nsw.gov.au
- **fax** (02) 6640 2539
- **visit** www.epa.nsw.gov.au/pnf

Note: This information does not constitute formal legal advice. Please seek specific advice from the Environment Protection Authority before undertaking any forestry activity.

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