

Comment/ Experience/ Feedback/ Suggestions
Native Vegetation Public Consultation Meeting 18 November 2011 @ Wentworth Services Club

From Wentworth Shire Council's perspective, the gravel pits and road widening exemptions (or lack of exemptions) or Native Vegetation processes are not clear. Council has worked through the process with the LMD CMA but the process and timelines are onerous. Would like to see a streamlined approach for gravel pits.

Council will send DA referrals to the LMD CMA about the Native Vegetation process because at times they are unsure if the NV Act needs to be considered. A simple flow chart outlining the referral processes may rectify this issue.

Is there a need for an offset or approval for a gravel pit to repair local roads?

Should there be an offset for non-permanent clearing ie gravel pits? –The process may be better if no offset is required but a clear definition of what needs to take place in the clearing and rehabilitation phases of gravel pits lifecycle. Ie. Removing top soil and timber to stock pile and rehabilitate afterwards to a set standard.

Council need to have gravel pits located close to the road work site. The current process with a PVP and offset slows the process thus leaving roads in disrepair for greater periods of time.

An approved rehabilitation plan should substitute for an offset when gravel pits are involved.

Local Government RAMA: Council would like to see it as a complete exemption.

The National Broadband Network can be installed with complete exemption, what is the difference between this and council gravel pits. Council are providing an essential service to the community to provide safe roads.

Non Telstra telecommunication towers at this stage have to go through a PVP process, can we use a system of pooled offsets where the Telecommunication company will manage for example 100 ha of offsets and pay a landholder to manage this offset and the telecommunication company can clear a combined 10 ha for a number of towers. Or failing this, can telecommunication towers be exempt from the NV Act as long as environmental factors are considered?

The council has to complete a Statement of Environmental Effects under the EP&A Act for a gravel pit which does take into account environmental factors; maybe the council could use the CMA as a concurrence body not another approval process.

Should there be a sub division RAMA to avoid stacking of current RAMAs. A sub division RAMA may make it clearer and simpler for developers to use and understand. It may also give greater protection to the environment.

The timeframe for a grazing PVP (partial clearing (Thinning) PVP) is far too long. Landholder would like a continuing use PVP to give assurance for the next 10 years or so.

The method for a thinning PVP in the LMD CMA area is almost impossible under the current assessment tools.

The thinning process must be guided by good information similar to the INS process that gives certain options on how to thin.

Until an INS species is more than 50% groundcover make up, the only option is to grub individual specimens. With INS it has to be really bad (heavy cover) before you can get an INS PVP which allows chaining or blade ploughing. It is a reactive tool not proactive.

Control of rabbits using warren ripping method where vegetation is destroyed can be picked up by SLATS, would landholders like a registration method for RAMAs so the organisation that investigate would be aware of the clearing taking place. Kevin indicated that he would use it but doubted other landholders would.

The above point would create a lot of work for CMAs, and landholders wouldn't take the time to this. It wouldn't be appropriate for the Western division. May work for coastal regions.

Comment on above 2 points. If there was an online registration web page this may reduce CMA workload if farmers register independently online, it may reduce compliance on site investigations.

NSW Farmers Fed will most likely oppose any registration of RAMAs.

Clarification of the Private Native Forest (River Red Gum). Do we as landholders need to apply to have a PNF on our land? PNF was an exemption under the old Conservation Act. When the NV Act came in there is now a requirement for a PNF PVP.

Gravel Pits could have Code of Practice with codes similar to PNF PVP.

A code of practice for INS control that doesn't involve soil disturbance, would this be a viable option to give the landholder methods to control smaller INS outbreaks? (ie. If you follow these guidelines you can control the INS without having to contact the CMA).

We would like Lucian to attend the Feb meeting as the OEH rep.