**Report under the NV 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: 30617

PVP reference number: 8096

## 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 is in the particular case unreasonable and unnecessary.

The proposed minor variation improves or maintains environmental outcomes by creating a mosaic of vegetation states across the landscape in accordance with the assessment methodology. The invasive native species that is subject to the minor variation, White Cypress Pine *(Callitris glaucophylla)* is dense in the dbh class above 25 cm dbh in the area. The minor variation is the variation of the maximum allowable dbh to be cleared for White Cypress Pine *(Callitris glaucophylla)* to 35cm.

All White Cypress Pine trees above 35 cm dbh (the hollow-bearing trees) in the managed area will be retained. All other hollow bearing trees will be retained. There are approximately 31 trees per hectare on average above 35 cm dbh of White Cypress Pine. The result will be an open woodland with over 31 trees per hectare above 25 cm dbh.

Strict adherence to the Assessment Methodology in this particular case is unreasonable and unnecessary because of the relative high densities of White Cypress Pine trees between 25 cm dbh and 35 cm dbh (113 trees per ha) in the area. The following retentions will create a mosaic of vegetation states with open woodland and areas of dense vegetation in the retained areas: (i) the retention of White Cypress Pine above 35cm dbh; (ii) retention of all other INS trees above 25 cm dbh; (iii) retention of patches of 10 ha per 100 ha of native vegetation (10% retention); (iv) and the landscape retention requirements for the clearing type (which are additional to the 10 ha per 100 ha).

**Description of the proposed clearing:**
The proposed clearing involves the management of Invasive Native Scrub Species in the Cobar Peneplain IBRA region in Western CMA. Invasive native species (INS) in the area to be managed are Bimble Box *(Eucalytpus populnea)*, Red Box *(Eucalyptus intertexta),* Budda *(Eremophila mitchellii)*, Narrowleaf Hopbush *(Dodonaea viscosa subsp. Angustissima),* Broadleaf Hopbush *(Dodonaea viscosa subsp. Spatulata),* Emu Bush (*Eremophila longifolia),* Turpentine *(Eremophila sturtii),* Wilga *(Geijera parviflora),* Silver Cassia *(Senna form taxon 'artemisioides'),* Punty Bush *(Senna form taxon 'filifolia'),* White Cypress Pine *(Callitris glaucophylla),* Mulga *(Acacia aneura)* and Yarran *(Acacia homalophylla)*. In the opinion of the relevant 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 clearing type proposed is the paddock scale treatment option - Clearing Type f, ie. clearing of plants at paddock scale with longer term disturbance to soil and groundcover.

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 Environmental Outcomes Assessment Methodology (EAOM) requires:
*13) For methods other than burning, any invasive native species that has a stem or trunk with a diameter at breast height ("dbh") greater than the dbh specified in the column headed "Maximum dbh allowed to be cleared" in Table 7.1 is not cleared except as set out in 13A and 13C.*
*13A) The relevant Catchment Management Authority may vary the measurement in the column "Maximum dbh allowed to be cleared" in Table 7.1 by up to 5 centimetres if, in the judgement of the Catchment Management Authority, the variation is appropriate for the land to be cleared.*

Table 7.1 in the EOAM currently has the maximum dbh to be cleared for White Cypress Pine as 20 cm dbh which can be increased to 25cm dbh with CMA judgement. The proposed minor variation is to change the maximum allowable dbh to be cleared for White Cypress Pine to 35cm.

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

The INS Research Program being undertaken in 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 usually do not occur in White Cypress Pine trees, with only one hollow recorded in White Cypress Pine at 44 cm dbh. The information also shows there are size classes of White Cypress Pine from particular recruitment events, with very large numbers of White Cypress Pine trees between 25 cm dbh and 35 cm dbh. Also there are relatively large numbers of trees over 35 cm dbh per hectare for White Cypress Pine.

In order to achieve the intent of the EAOM, to maintain or create a mosaic of vegetation states across the landscape to improve or maintain environmental outcomes, the maximum allowable dbh to be cleared needs to be appropriate to the density and size classes of the invasive native species.

Therefore:
The proposed minor variation improves or maintains environmental outcomes because the species that are subject to the minor variation (White Cypress Pine) are dense in the dbh class above 25 cm dbh in the area to be managed, and all hollow bearing trees and all trees above 35 cm dbh in the area will be retained to produce an open woodland with over 31 trees per hectare above 25 cm dbh. Together with retention of all Bimble Box *(Eucalytpus populnea)* and Red Box *(Eucalyptus intertexta)* trees above 25 cm dbh, and all other INS plants above 20 cm dbh this will create a mosaic of vegetation states (the goal of the INS

assessment process) with open woodland and retained areas of dense vegetation (in the retention areas).

With consideration of the intent of Chapter 7 of the EAOM, the data collected from vegetation sampling as part of the INS Research Program and my expert assessment of the area proposed to be cleared it is my recommendation that the maximum allowable dbh to be cleared for White Cypress Pine to be varied to 35 cm for PVP Reference no. to be advised.

**Minor variation**

The minor variation for PVP reference no. 8096 is the variation of the maximum allowable dbh to be cleared for White Cypress Pine *(Callitris glaucophylla)* to 35 cm.