

**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: 30619

PVP reference number: 8612

**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, Bimble Box (*Eucalyptus populnea*) and White Cypress Pine (*Callitris glaucophylla*) is very dense in the dbh class above 25 cm dbh (an average of 146 stems per hectare) in the area. The minor variation is to remove stems of Bimble Box and White Cypress Pine up to 30 cm dbh rather than up to 25 cm dbh in the area to be managed. All stems above 30 cm dbh (the hollow-bearing trees) in the managed area will be retained to produce an open woodland with an average of 10-15 stems per hectare above 30 cm dbh retained. This creates a mosaic of vegetation states with open woodland and areas of dense vegetation in the retained areas.

Strict adherence to the Assessment Methodology in this particular case is unreasonable and unnecessary because of the high density of Bimble Box and White Cypress Pine trees between 25 cm dbh and 30 cm dbh in the area, the high density of Bimble Box and White Cypress Pine trees over 30 cm dbh (all of which will be retained) in the area and because removing Bimble Box and White Cypress Pine trees between 25 and 30 cm dbh together with the denser retained areas creates a mosaic of vegetation states.

**Description of the proposed clearing:**

The proposed clearing involves the management of Invasive Native Scrub Species in the Cobar Penneplain IBRA region in Central West CMA. Invasive native species (INS) in the area to be managed are Bimble Box, Budda (*Eremophila mitchellii*), Narrowleaf Hopbush (*Dodonaea viscosa subsp. Angustissima*), White Cypress Pine (*Callitris glaucophylla*) and Turpentine (*Eremophila sturtii*). 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.

All Bimble Box (*Eucalyptus populnea*) and White Cypress Pine (*Callitris glaucophylla*) over 30cm dbh will be retained and all other trees over 20cm dbh will be retained.

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 Bimble Box and 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 Bimble Box and White Cypress Pine to 30cm for the PVP.

**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 Central West Catchment. The results show that hollows usually do not occur in Bimble Box and White Cypress Pine trees under 35cm dbh. The information also show there are size classes from particular recruitment events, with relatively large numbers of stems 30-40 cm dbh per hectare.

In order to achieve the intent of the EAOM, to maintain or create a mosaic of vegetation states across the landscape, 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 is subject to the minor variation (Bimble Box and White Cypress Pine) is very dense in the dbh class above 25 cm dbh (146 stems per hectare) in the area to be managed, and all stems above 30 cm dbh (the hollow-bearing trees) in the area will be retained to produce on open woodland with 10-15 stems per hectare. This creates 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). No hollow bearing trees will be removed.

Strict adherence to the Assessment Methodology in this particular case is unreasonable and unnecessary because of the high density of Bimble Box and White Cypress Pine trees between 25 cm dbh and 35 cm dbh in the area, the high density of Bimble Box and White Cypress Pine trees over 30 cm dbh (all of which will be retained) in the area and because removing Bimble Box and White Cypress Pine trees between 25 and 35 cm dbh and the retained denser areas creates a mosaic of vegetation states.

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 Bimble Box (*Eucalyptus populnea*) and White Cypress Pine (*Callitris glaucophylla*) be varied to 30cm for PVP Reference no. 8612.

### **Minor variation**

The minor variation for PVP reference no. 8612 (the particular case) is the variation of the maximum allowable dbh to be cleared for Bimble Box (*Eucalyptus populnea*) and White Cypress Pine (*Callitris glaucophylla*) to 30cm.