

## **SCHEDULE FOUR – 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: 9093

### **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 intent of the assessment methodology. White Cypress Pine (*Callitris glaucophylla*) is behaving invasively throughout the area to be managed (refer to Map Unit 12a of Map 6). White Cypress Pine is dense in the tree size classes above 25 cm Diameter at Breast Height (DBH) up to and including 35 cm DBH (average of 90 stems per hectare). The minor variation is to allow the removal of White Cypress Pine stems up to 35 cm DBH within the area to be managed.

An average of at least 20 stems per hectare of White Cypress Pine 25 cm DBH and under, and at least 5 stems per hectare of White Cypress Pine from 25 cm DBH up to and including 35 cm DBH will be retained (where the latter occur) in the area to be managed. In addition, patches of dense, untreated White Cypress Pine will be retained across 20% of the area to be managed (refer to Map Unit 12a of Map 6). A mosaic of open woodland with a native dominated groundcover and more dense areas of woody native vegetation will therefore be created.

Strict adherence to the Assessment Methodology in this particular case is unreasonable and unnecessary because White Cypress Pine is highly dense in the size class greater than 25 cm DBH up to and including 35 cm DBH in the area to be managed. This growth-locked White Cypress Pine limits the ability for this native vegetation community to reach a mature sized age class of tree species.

In the opinion of the relevant Catchment Management Authority (or an officer of that Authority responsible for making this assessment) the invasive native species, White Cypress Pine (*Callitris glaucophylla*) in the area to be managed satisfies the criteria for acting invasively from 25 cm up to and including 35 cm DBH.

### **Description of the proposed clearing:**

The proposed clearing involves the management of Invasive Native Scrub in the Central West Catchment Management Area. Clearing is restricted to White Cypress Pine (*Callitris glaucophylla*), which is behaving invasively throughout the area subject to clearing (refer to Map Unit 12a of Map 6).

White Cypress Pine (*Callitris glaucophylla*) above 25 cm DBH and up to and including 35 cm DBH is subject to the minor variation.

An average of at least 20 stems per hectare of White Cypress Pine 25 cm DBH and under, and at least 5 stems per hectare of White Cypress Pine from 25 cm DBH up to and including 35 cm DBH will be retained (where the latter occur) in the area to be managed.

Patches of dense, untreated White Cypress Pine will be retained across 20% of the area to be managed.

No native vegetation other than White Cypress Pine will be cleared.

All White Cypress Pine trees above 35 cm DBH will be retained.

All hollow bearing trees 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 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 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 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 information shows that there are size classes of White Cypress Pine from particular recruitment events, with relatively large numbers of stems above 25 cm DBH per hectare. The White Cypress Pine in the area to be managed is growth locked and it is this reason that the ability of the woodland to achieve an open woodland structure is restricted. The White Cypress Pine in the area to be managed is extremely dense in DBH size classes between 25 cm and up to and including 35 cm (as well as smaller DBH classes).

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 due to the following reasons: Clearing is restricted to White Cypress Pine which is behaving invasively throughout the property; White Cypress Pine is growth locked and is restricting the ability of the open woodland vegetation structure achieving a late mature to mature stage of growth; the high density of White Cypress Pine in DBH size classes from 25 cm and up to and including 35 cm is restricting the ability of other native species to persist throughout the area subject to clearing.

**Minor variation**

The minor variation is to increase the maximum allowable DBH to be cleared for White Cypress Pine (*Callitris glaucophylla*) in Map Unit 12a of Map 6 to 35 cm DBH.

Note: An average of at least 20 stems per hectare of White Cypress Pine 25 cm DBH and under, and at least 5 stems per hectare of White Cypress Pine from 25 cm DBH up to and including 35 cm DBH will be retained (where the latter occur) in the area to be managed. In addition, patches of dense, untreated White Cypress Pine will be retained across 20% of the area to be managed.