

Monitoring land clearing

Early change monitoring of native vegetation



Why we monitor vegetation change

New rules introduced in August 2017 allow landholders more flexibility to manage native vegetation. You need to understand what is allowed under the new rules, but you can get help from Local Land Services.

The NSW Government needs to know whether the native vegetation management incentives and controls within these rules are working to maintain a healthy environment.

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (the Department) regularly compares satellite images to identify changes in woody vegetation across New South Wales and to check that you are making good decisions about land clearing.

Monitoring has shown that clearing of native vegetation has increased over recent years. While much of this was within the rules, unexplained clearing has also increased.

When clearing may be going beyond what is allowed, frequent monitoring allows us to see this and intervene quickly.

What this means for you

Early intervention means we can:

- help you understand what can be done within the rules
- help you avoid more serious breaches of the regulations
- avoid further environmental harm.

When clearing shows up in satellite imagery as a change in vegetation cover, we cross-check this information to see if it is covered by an exemption or an approval.

If we can access your approvals, or see that the clearing is within the guidelines, no further action is taken.

If not, we will contact you for more information.

Working with you

When we contact you, we will work with you to understand how the clearing fits within the rules. You can help by providing information such as:

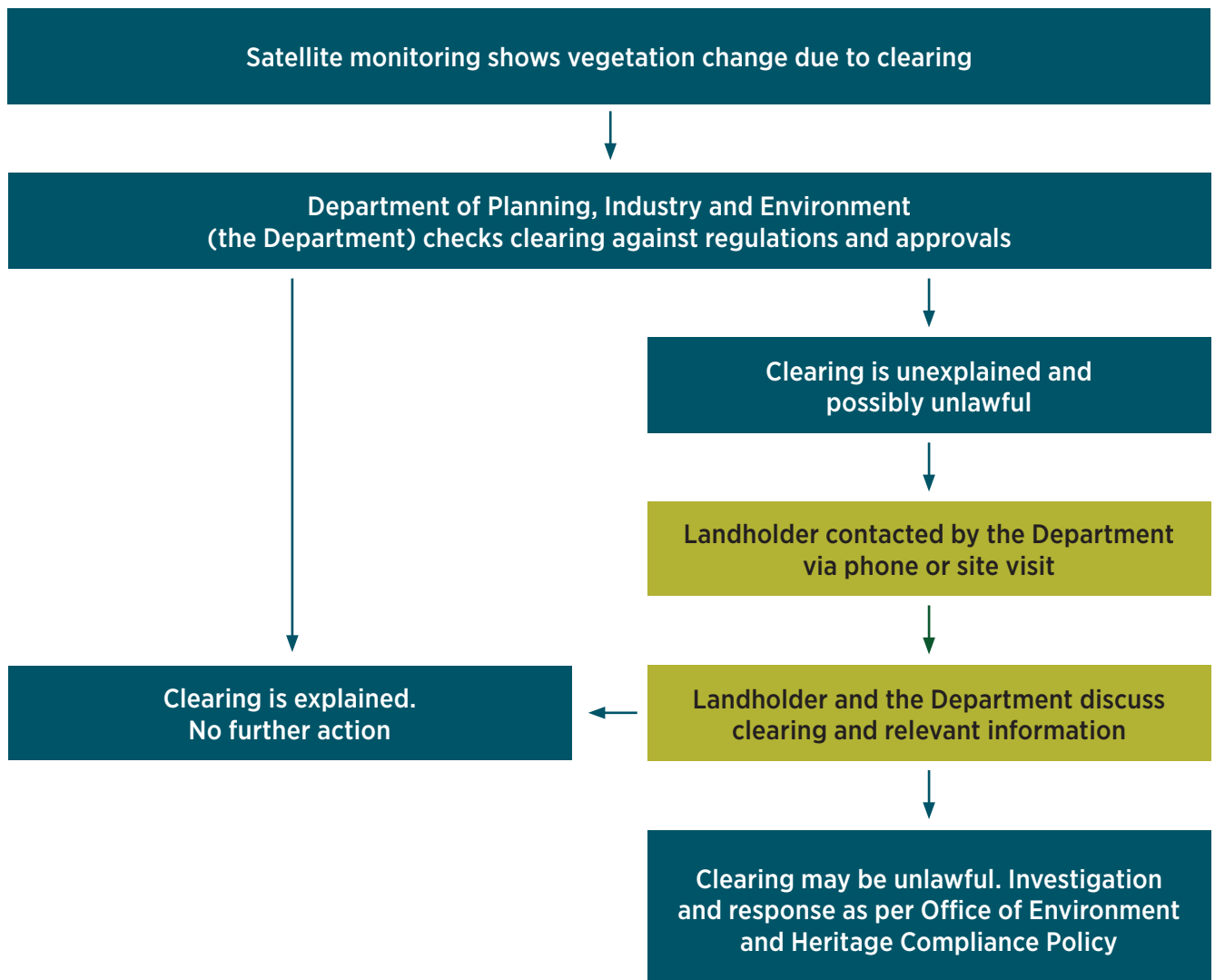
- self-assessments you undertook
- authorisations or certificates you obtained for clearing
- any advice you sought and received.

If we can determine the clearing was within the rules, no further action is taken.

If some clearing doesn't fit the rules, we may investigate for a potential breach of the law.

Where appropriate, we can issue a stop work order while we investigate to help you avoid further breaches and harm to the environment.

The following chart shows the steps used to understand and respond to vegetation change from clearing.





Investigation of native vegetation clearing

When investigating native vegetation clearing, an authorised Department officer gathers information and evidence to establish:

- whether a breach of the law has occurred
- the seriousness of the offence
- who might be responsible.

This may involve site inspections to collect photos, videos, vegetation samples, witness statements, and records of interview.

Decisions and actions following an investigation are guided by the Office of Environment and Heritage Compliance Policy.

The policy ensures that we respond proportionately to support the regulations and landholders who comply.

Where to get help

Resources are available to help you understand and manage clearing of native vegetation.

Managing native vegetation on your property

Local Land Services can help you understand the rules for clearing native vegetation. Contact details for all Local Land Services (LLS) offices can be found on the LLS website at www.lls.nsw.gov.au, along with information about sustainable land management.

Contact details for all NSW councils can be found on the Office of Local Government website at www.olg.nsw.gov.au

If you have been contacted by the Department about clearing and would like further information, you should talk to the authorised officer who made initial contact with you.

Other information

If you want general information or to provide feedback, please email Imbc.support@environment.nsw.gov.au.

Information on biodiversity conservation and native vegetation can be found under the Animal and Plants topic on the EES website.

Contact the Environment Line on 131 555 or email info@environment.nsw.gov.au to report possible illegal clearing.

Note: This information does not constitute legal advice. You may wish to seek independent legal advice. You should ask for specific technical advice from your Local Land Services office before undertaking any clearing.

Cover photo: *Acacia loderi* shrublands, M Westbrooke.
Above left to right: GPS satellite, NASA; Mapping vegetation, P Robey; sandstone rough-barked apple, L Copeland.

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